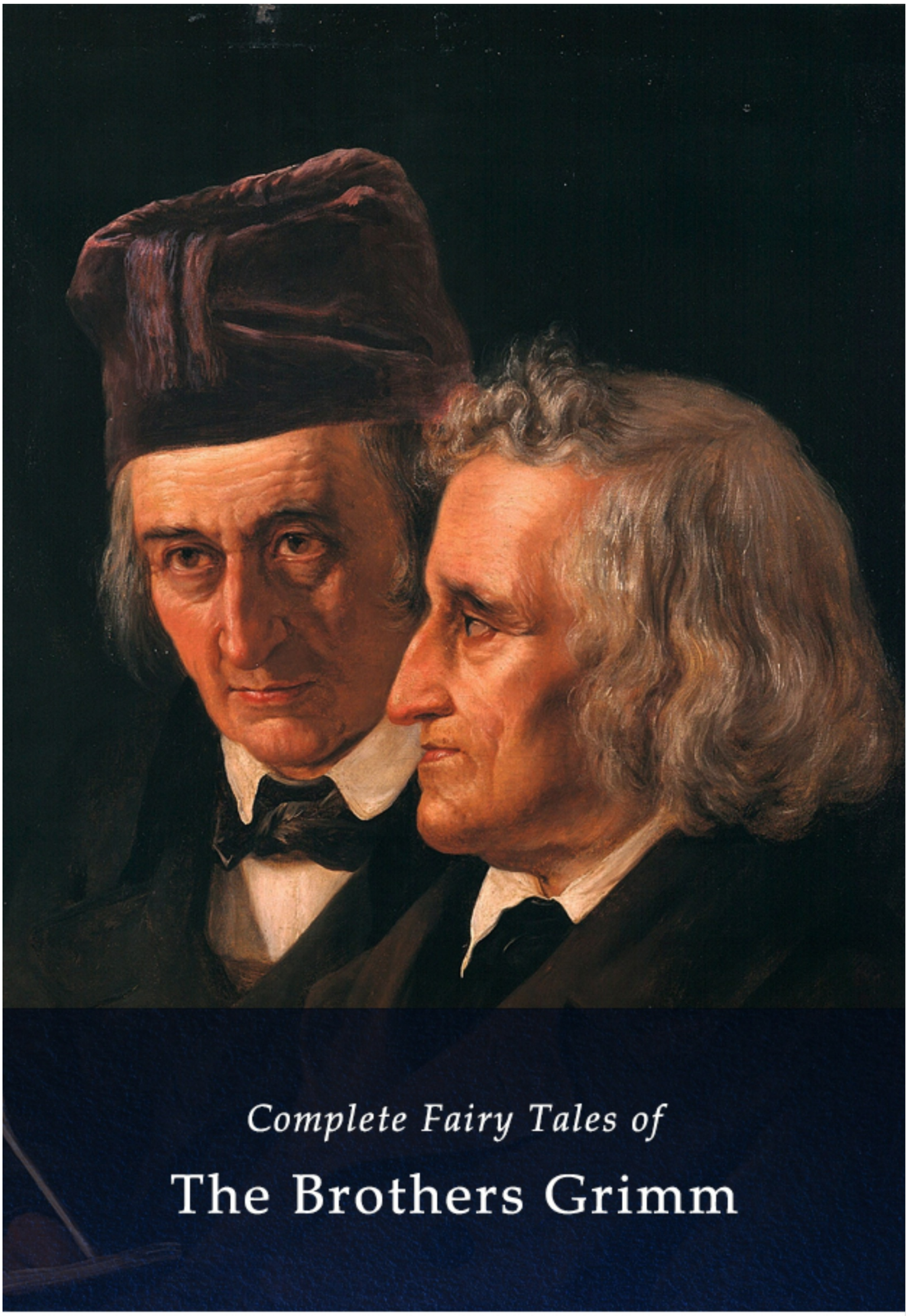

Complete Fairy Tales of

The Brothers Grimm

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Series Eight

The Collected Works of

THE BROTHERS GRIMM

Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859)

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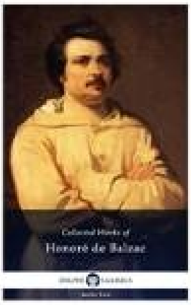
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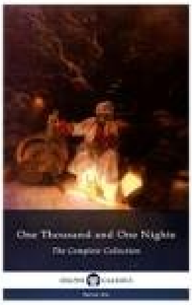
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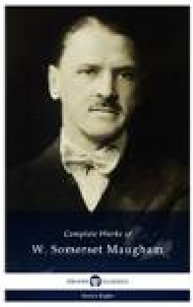
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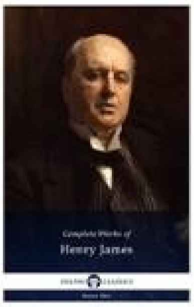
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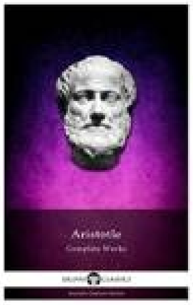
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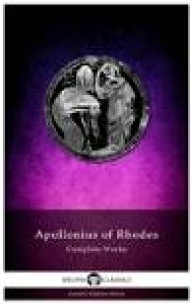
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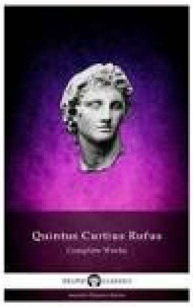
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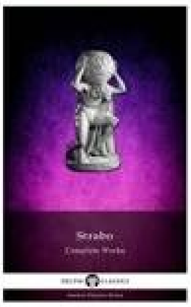
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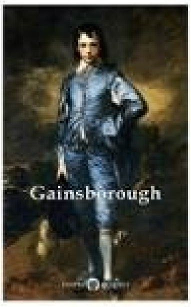
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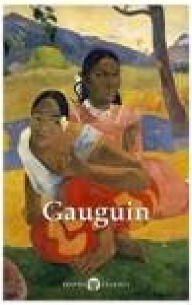
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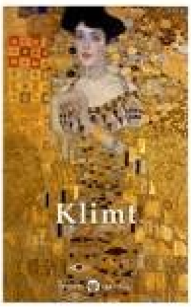
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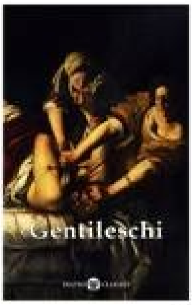
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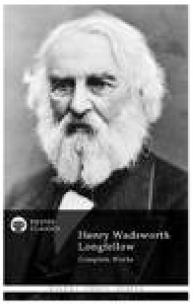
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The Collected Works of

THE BROTHERS GRIMM

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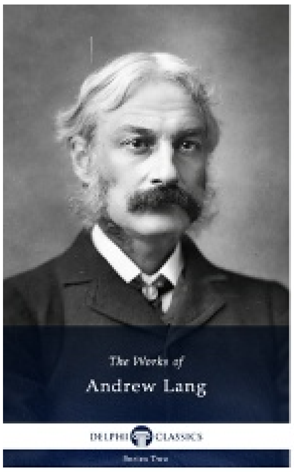
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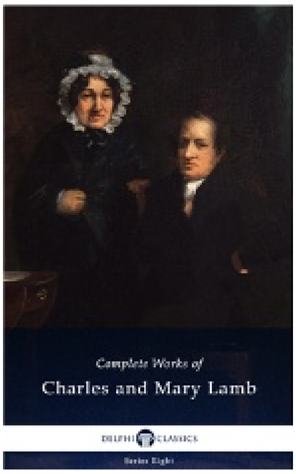
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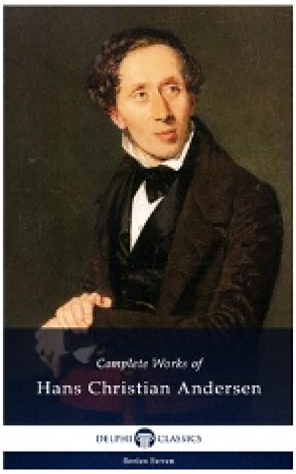
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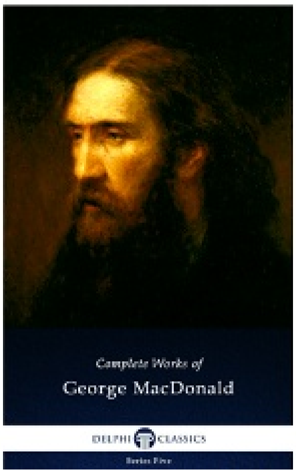
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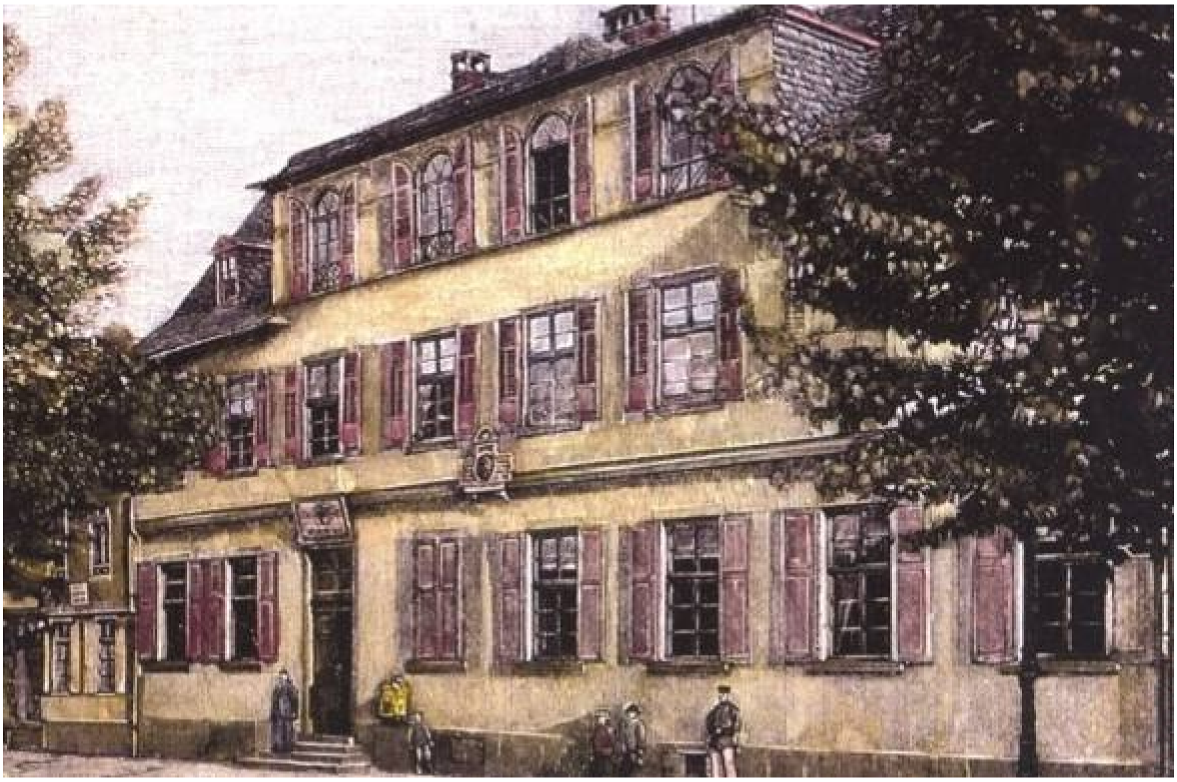
The Fairy Tales

Hanau, a town in Main-Kinzig-Kreis, Hesse, Germany, located 25km east of Frankfurt — the birthplace of the Bothers Grimm



The birthplace was destroyed by the devastating Allied land bombardment of 19 March 1945, which affected the entire inner city of Hanau. The site of birthplace is on the south side of the Paradeplatz (later used as a police building and Landratsamt) and is now marked only by a memorial stone on the opposite side of the road.

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

Published originally under the title *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*), this collection of fairy tales was first published in 1812 by the Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm. The first volume of the first edition featured 86 stories, with a second volume of 70 stories following in 1815. For the second edition, two volumes were issued in 1819 and a third in 1822, totalling 170 tales. Numerous tales were added to each subsequent edition, until the seventh edition contained 211 stories. All editions were extensively illustrated, first by Philipp Grot Johann and, after his death in 1892, by German illustrator Robert Leinweber.

The rise of romanticism in the early nineteenth century revived interest in fairy tales, which had declined since the late seventeenth century. Johann Karl August Musäus had published a popular collection of tales between 1782 and 1787, and so the Grimms aided the revival with this famous collection, building on the conviction that a national identity could be found in popular culture and with the common folk. They collected and published tales as a reflection of German cultural identity. In the first collection, though, they included Charles Perrault's tales, published in Paris in 1697 and written for the literary salons of an aristocratic French audience.

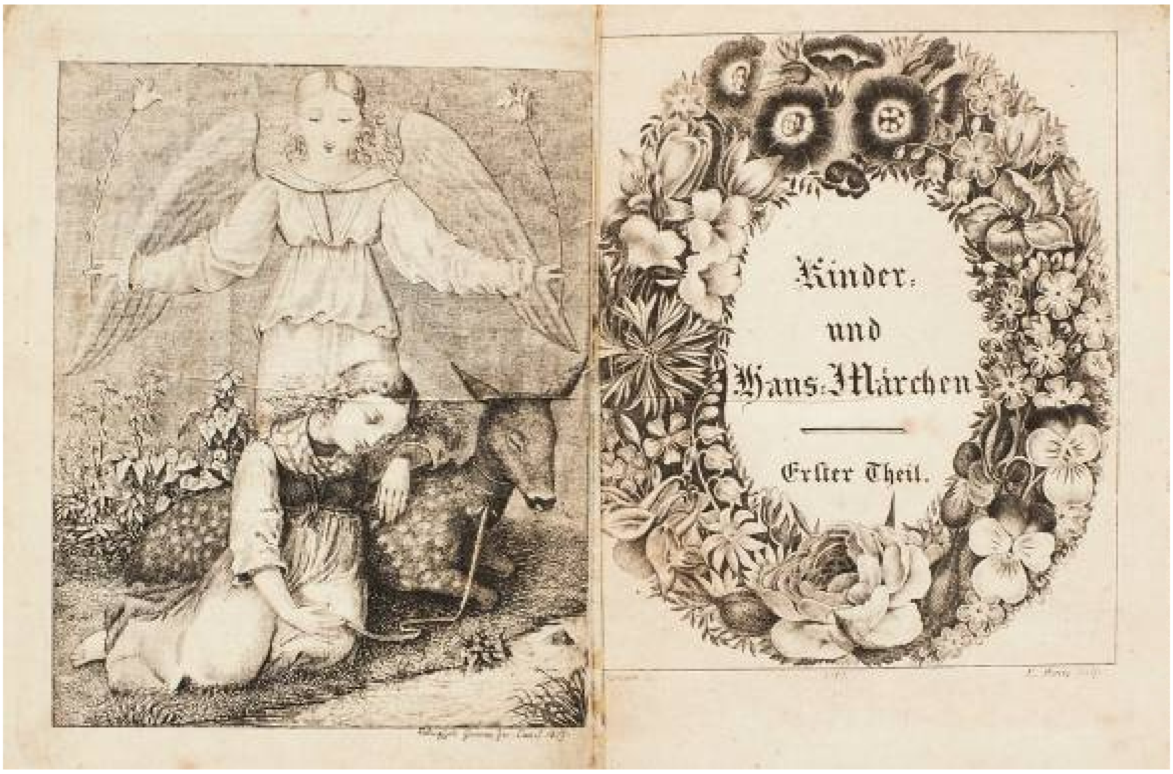
The first volumes roused much criticism as they were called 'Children's Tales', though they were not regarded as suitable for children, both due to the scholarly information included with the text and the subject matter. Many changes through the editions were made, removing violent and sexual references. The wicked mother of the first edition in *Snow White* and *Hansel and Gretel* was subsequently changed to a stepmother. In 1825, the Brothers published their *Kleine Ausgabe* (small edition), a selection of 50 tales designed for child readers, which went through ten editions between 1825 and 1858.

The brothers were directly influenced by Brentano and von Arnim, who edited and adapted the folk songs of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn or cornucopia). They began the collection with the purpose of creating a scholarly treatise of traditional stories and of preserving the stories as they had been handed from generation to generation — a practice they saw as being threatened by increased industrialisation. The Grimms appropriated stories as being uniquely German, such as "Little Red Riding Hood", which had existed in many versions and regions throughout Europe, as they believed such stories were reflections of Germanic culture. Furthermore, the brothers saw fragments of old religions and faiths reflected in the stories, which they argued would continue to exist and survive through the telling of stories.

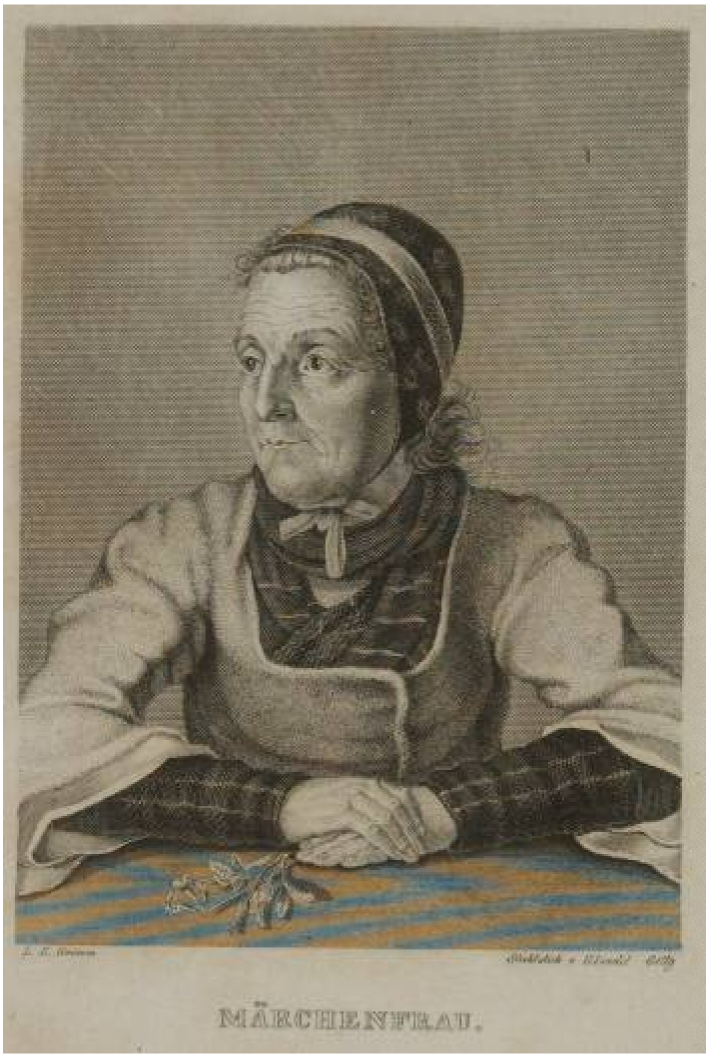
The brothers gained a reputation for collecting tales from peasants, although many tales came from middle-class or aristocratic acquaintances.

Wilhelm’s wife Dortchen Wild and her family, with their nursery maid, told the brothers some of the more well-known tales, such as “Hansel and Gretel” and “Sleeping Beauty”. Wilhelm collected a number of tales after befriending August von Haxthausen, whom he visited in 1811 in Westphalia where he heard stories from von Haxthausen’s circle of friends. Several of the storytellers were of Huguenot ancestry, telling tales of French origin such as those told to the Grimms by Marie Hassenpflug, an educated woman of French Huguenot ancestry and it is probable that these informants were familiar with Perrault’s *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (Stories from Past Times). Other tales were collected from Dorothea Viehmann, the wife of a middle-class tailor and also of French descent. In spite of her middle-class background, in the first English translation she was characterised as a peasant and given the name Gammer Gretel.

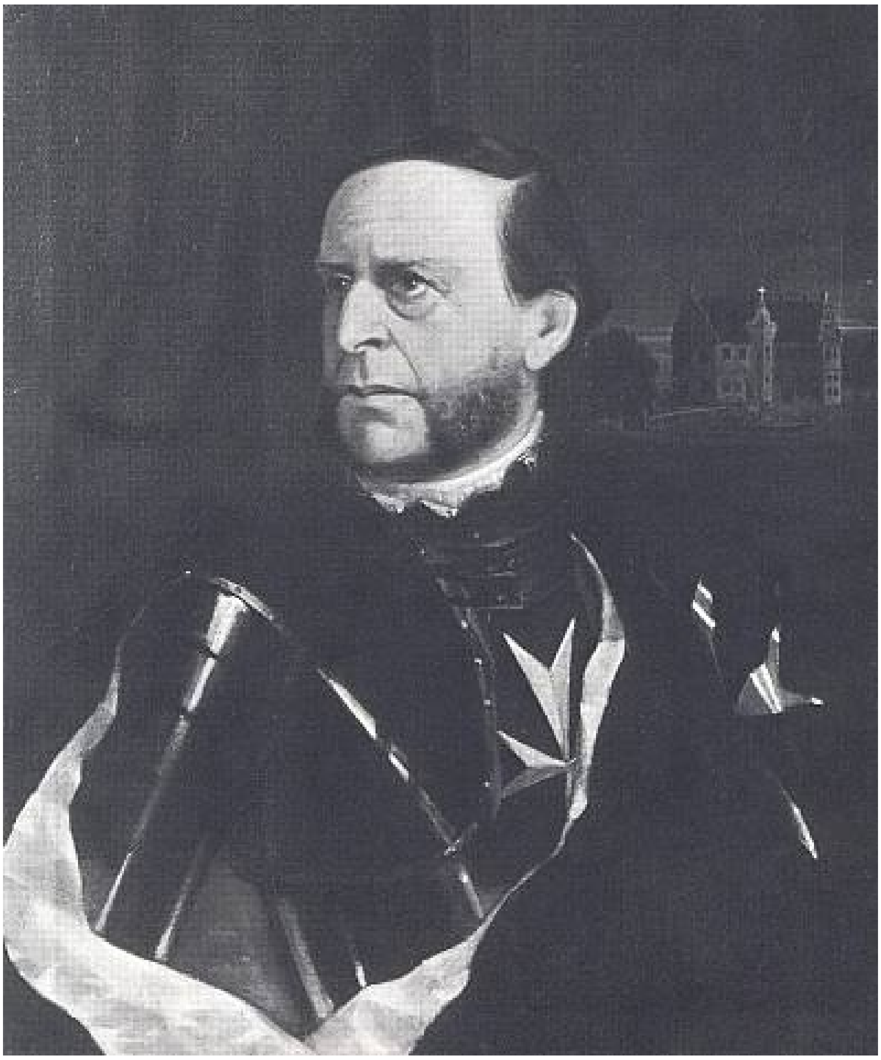
The work of the Brothers Grimm influenced other story collectors, both inspiring them to collect tales and leading them to similarly foster a spirit of romantic nationalism, which upheld that the fairy tales of a country were particularly representative of it, to the neglect of cross-cultural influence. Among those influenced were the Russian Alexander Afanasyev, the Norwegians Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, the English Joseph Jacobs and Jeremiah Curtin, an American that collected Irish tales.


Kinder-
und
Haus-Märchen
Erſter Theil.

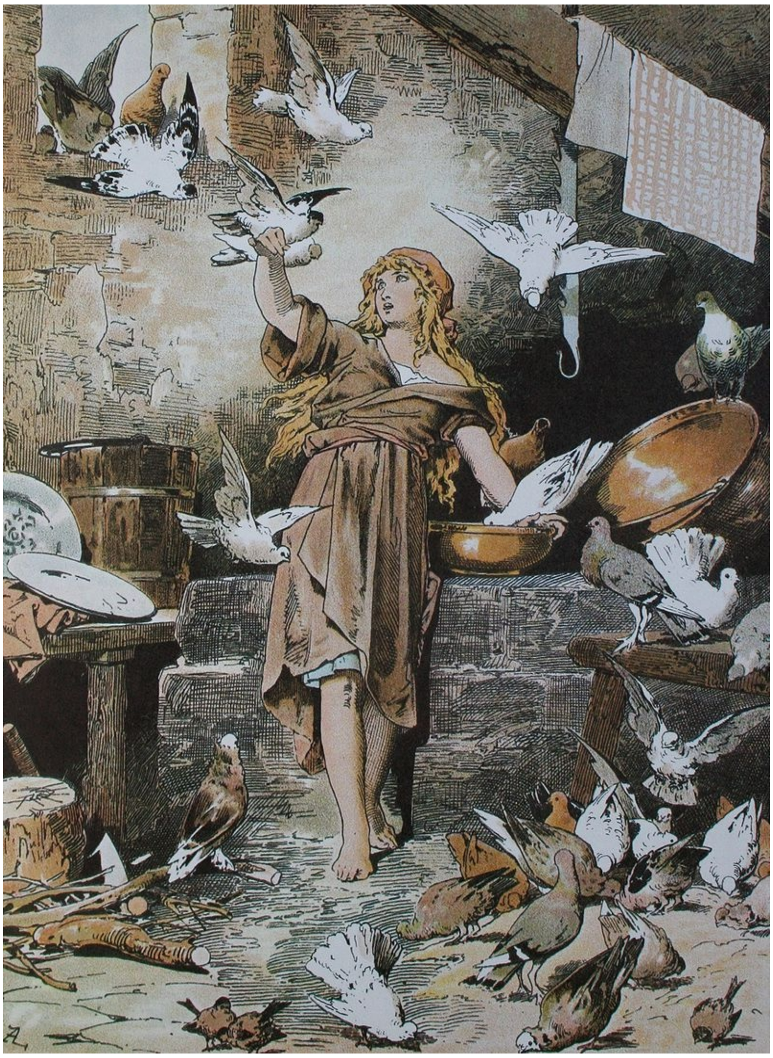
Frontispiece and title page of the second edition, 1812


L. E. Grimm
MÄRCHENFRAU.

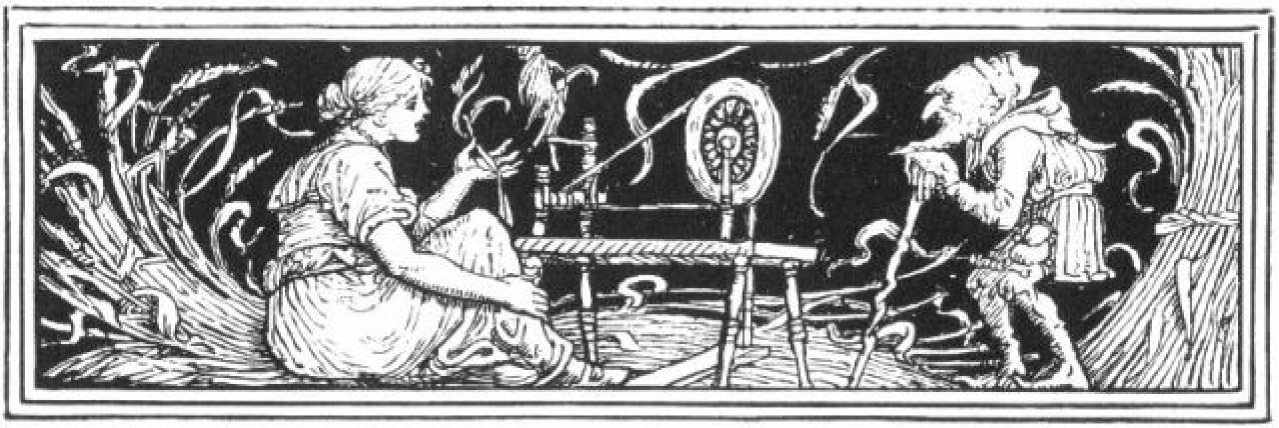
Frontispiece used for the second volume of the 1840 fourth edition. The portrait by Ludwig Emil Grimm bears resemblance to the storyteller Dorothea Viehmann.



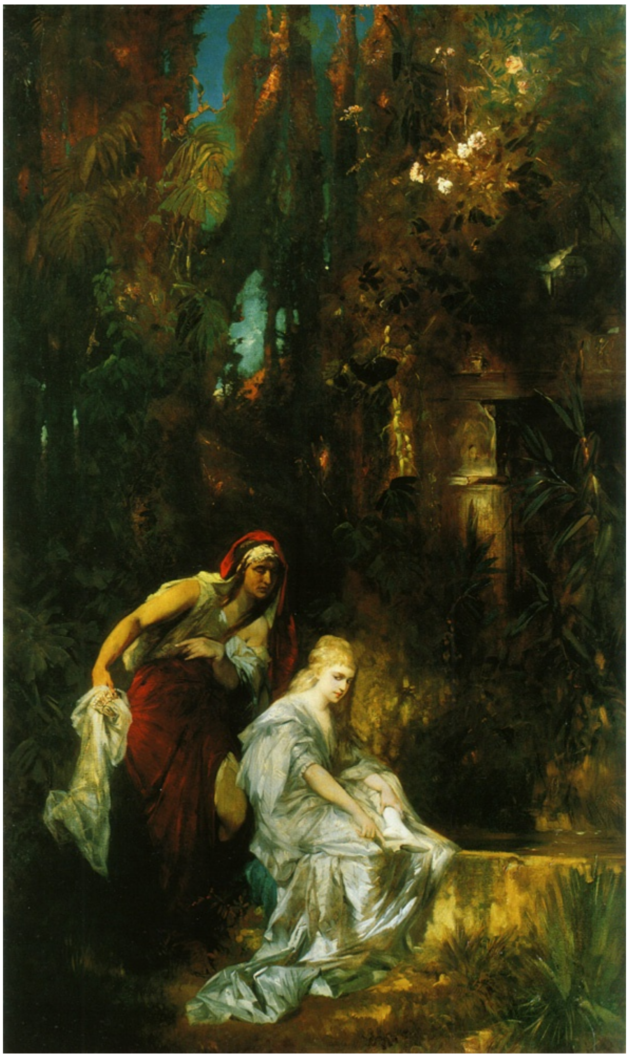
August von Haxthausen, a German agricultural scientist, economist, lawyer, writer and collector of folk songs, who influenced the Brothers Grimm



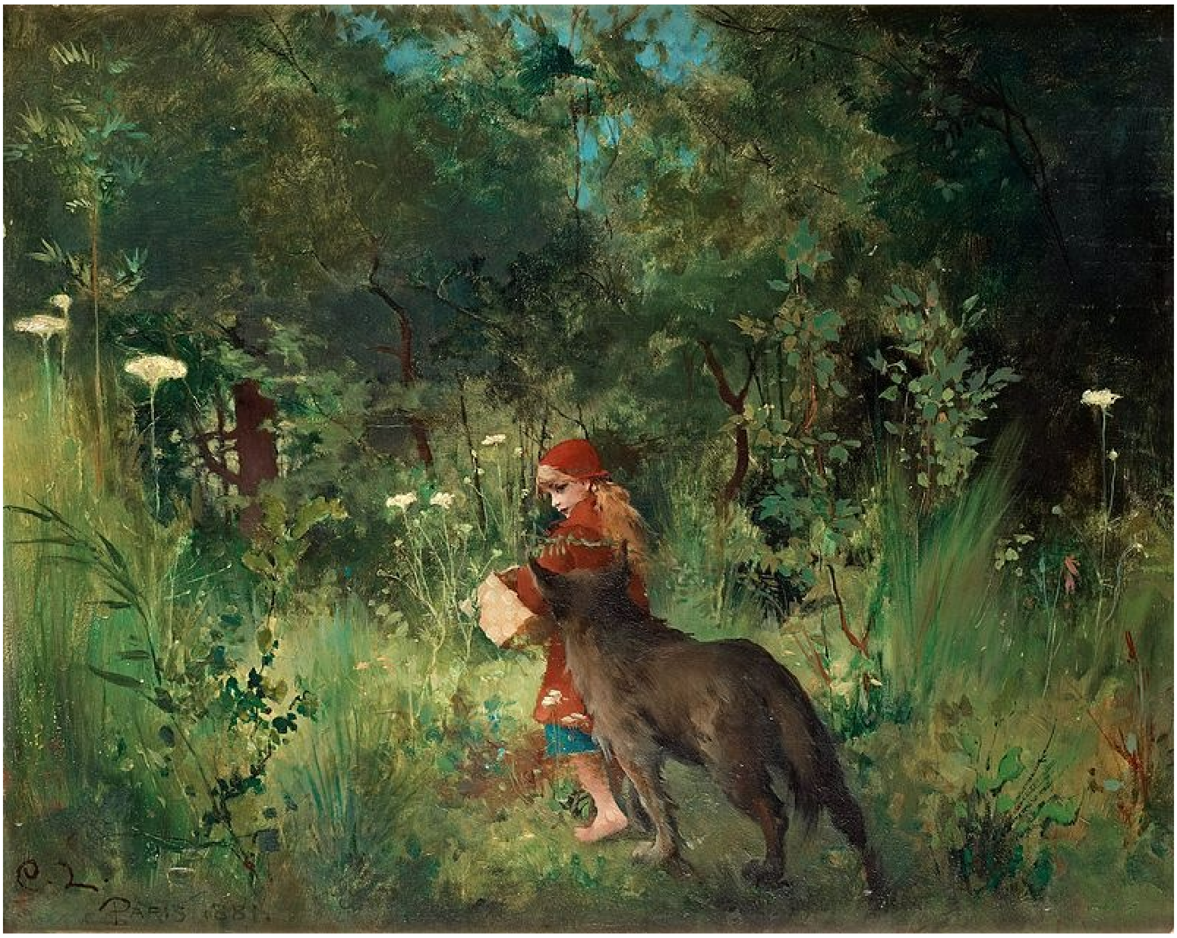
Cinderella by Alexander Zick, c. 1900



An illustration for the famous tale of Rumpelstiltskin by Walter Crane, 1886



Early illustration of Snow White, inspired by the famous Grimm tale: Schneewittchen erhält den Giftkamm by Ölgemälde von Hans Makart, 1872

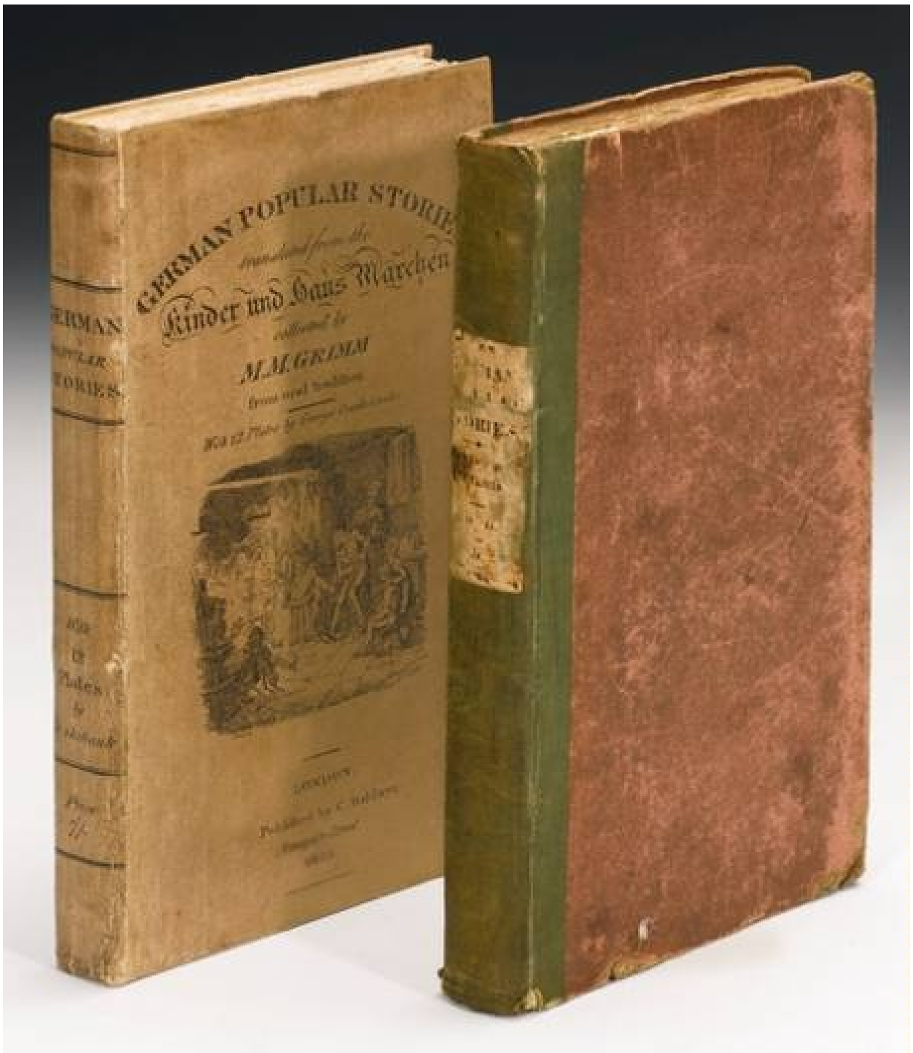

C.L.
PARIS 1881.

'Little Red Riding Hood' by Carl Larsson, 1881

EDGAR TAYLOR TRANSLATION, 1826

Translated by Edgar Taylor and Illustrated by George Cruikshank

Edgar Taylor (1793–1839) was a British solicitor and author of legal, historical and literary works. He was the first translator of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, published in English as *German Popular Stories* in 1823, with the translation of the second volume appearing in 1826. Taylor's translations were anonymous at the time and were released with illustrations by George Cruikshank. Taylor wrote to the Grimms that he created the translations with 'the amusement of some young friends principally in view'. A second edition, entitled *Gammer Grethel*, or *German Fairy Tales and Popular Stories*, appeared in 1839. Taylor's translations have been viewed by some as representative of a more general movement gathering support in the 1820's, tending to separate the fantasy elements of fairy tales from cruelty and bawdiness, with the addition of Christian teaching. Surprisingly, Taylor's English edition was more popular than the Grimms' first edition in German, due to the original text's scholarly approach. The popularity of *German Popular Stories* helped to make fairy tales an acceptable form of children's literature in England.



The first editions

GERMAN POPULAR STORIES,
Translated from the
Kinder und Haus Marchen,
COLLECTED BY
M. M. GRIMM,
From Oral Tradition.

Published by C. Baldwyn. Newgate Street.
LONDON,
1823.

The original frontispiece

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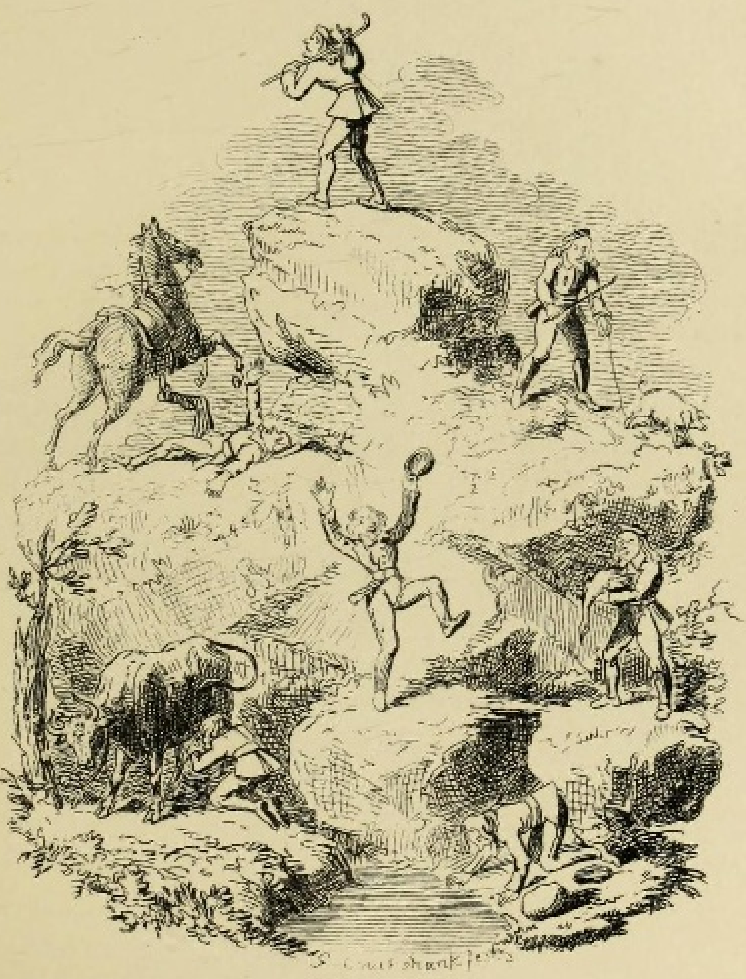

G. Cruikshank fecit

PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

THE Translators were first induced to compile this little work by the eager relish with which a few of the tales were received by the young friends to whom they were narrated. In this feeling, however, the Translators do not hesitate to avow their own participation. Popular fictions and traditions are somewhat gone out of fashion; yet most will own them to be associated with the brightest recollections of their youth. They are, like the Christmas Pantomime, ostensibly brought forth to tickle the palate of the young, but are often received with as keen an appetite by those of graver years. There is, at least, a debt of gratitude due to these ancient friends and comforters. To follow the words of the author, from whom the motto in the title-page is selected, “They have been the revivers of drowzy age at midnight; old and young have with such tales chimed mattins till the cock crew in the morning; batchelors and maids have compassed the Christmas fire-block till the curfew bell rang candle out; the old shepheard and the young plow-boy after their daye’s labor, have carold out the same to make them merrye with; and who but they have made long nightes seem short, and heavy toy les easie?”

But the amusement of the hour was not the translators’ only object. The rich collection from which the following tales are selected, is very interesting in a literary point of view, as affording a new proof of the wide and early diffusion of these gay creations of the imagination, apparently flowing from some great and mysterious fountain head, whence Calmuck, Russian, Celt, Scandinavian, and German, in their various ramifications, have imbibed their earliest lessons of moral instruction.

The popular tales of England have been too much neglected. They are nearly discarded from the libraries of childhood. Philosophy is made the companion of the nursery: we have lisping chemists and leading-string mathematicians: this is the age of reason, not of imagination; and the loveliest dreams of fairy innocence are considered as vain and frivolous. Much might be urged against this rigid and philosophic (or rather unphilosophic) exclusion of works of fancy and fiction. Our imagination is surely as susceptible of improvement by exercise, as our judgement or our memory; and so long as such fictions only are presented to the young mind as do not interfere with the important department of moral education, a beneficial effect must be produced by the pleasurable employment of a faculty in which so much of our happiness in every period of life consists.

It is, however, probably owing merely to accidental causes that some countries have carefully preserved their ancient stores of fiction, while here they have been suffered to pass to oblivion or corruption, notwithstanding the patriotic example of a few such names as Hearne, Spelman, and Le Neve, who did not disdain to turn towards them the light of their carefully trimmed lamp, scanty and ill-furnished as it often was. A very interesting and ingenious article in the *Quarterly Review* (No. XLI.), to which the Translators readily acknowledge their particular obligations, recently attracted attention to the subject, and has shown how wide a field is open, interesting to the antiquarian as well as to the reader who only seeks amusement.

The collection from which the following Tales are taken is one of great extent, obtained for the most part from the mouths of German peasants by the indefatigable exertions of John and William Grimm, brothers in kindred and taste. — The result of their labours ought to be peculiarly interesting to English readers, inasmuch as many of their national tales are proved to be of the highest Northern antiquity, and common to the parallel classes of society in countries whose populations have been long and widely disjointed. Strange to say, "Jack, commonly called the Giant-killer, and Thomas Thumb," as the reviewer observes, "landed in England from the same hulls and war ships which conveyed Hengist and Horsa, and Ebba the Saxon." Who would have expected that Whittington and his Cat, whose identity and London citizen* ship appeared so certain; — Tom Thumb, whose parentage Hearne had traced, and whose monumental honours were the boast of Lincoln; — or the Giant-destroyer of Tylney, whose bones were supposed to moulder in his native village in Norfolk, should be equally renowned amongst the humblest inhabitants of Munster and Paderborn?

A careful comparison would probably establish many other coincidences. The sports and songs of children, to which MM. Grimm have directed considerable attention, often excite surprise at their striking resemblance to the usages of our own country. We wish, with Leucadia Loblado, speaking of Spanish popular sports, "that antiquarians were a more jovial and volatile race, and that some one would trace up these amusements to their common source," if such a thing were possible, or at any rate would point out their affinities. A remarkable coincidence occurs in the German song to the Lady-bird, or "Marien-wiirmchen." The second verse alone has been preserved in England; but it is singular that the burthen of the song should have been so long preserved in countries whose inhabitants have been so completely separated. The whole song, which is to be found in *Wunderhorn*, i. 235, may be thus translated:

Lady-bird! Lady-bird! pretty one! stay:
Come sit on my finger, so happy and gay;
  With me shall no mischief betide thee;
No harm would I do thee, no foemau is near:
I only would gaze on thy beauties so dear,
  Those beautiful winglets beside thèe.

Lady-bird! Lady-bird! fly away home,
Thy house is a-fire, thy children will roam;
  List! list! to their cry and bewailing:
The pitiless spider is weaving their doom,
Then, Lady-bird! Lady-bird! fly away home;
  Hark! bark! to thy children's bewailing.

Fly back again, back again, Lady-bird dear!
Thy neighbours will merrily welcome thee here,
With them shall no perils attend thee;
They’ll guard thee so safely from danger or care,
They’ll gaze on thy beautiful winglets so fair,
And comfort, and love, and befriend thee.

The valuable notes and dissertations added by MM. Grimm to their work, have principally for their object to establish the connexion between many of these traditions and the ancient mythological fables of the Scandinavian and Teutonic nations. “In these popular stories,” they are sanguine enough to believe, “is concealed the pure and primitive mythology of the Teutons, which has been considered as lost for ever; and they are convinced, that if such researches are continued in the different districts of Germany, the traditions of this nature which are now neglected, will change into treasures of incredible worth, and assist in affording a new basis for the study of the origin of their ancient poetical fictions.” On these points their illustrations, though sometimes overstrained, are often highly interesting and satisfactory. Perhaps more attention might have been directed to illustrate the singular admixture of oriental incidents of fairy and romance, with the ruder features of Northern fable; and particularly to inform us how far the well-known vehicles of the lighter southern fictions were current at an early period in Germany. It often seems difficult to account for the currency, among the peasantry on the shores of the Baltic and the forests of the Hartz, of fictions which would seem to belong to the Entertainments of the Arabians, yet involved in legends referable to the highest Teutonic origin.

But it is curious to observe that this connexion between the popular tales of remote and unconnected regions, is equally remarkable in the richest collection of traditionary narrative which any country can boast; we mean the ““*Pentamerone, overo Trattenemiento de li Piccerilli*” (‘Fun for the Little Ones’), published by Giov. Battista Basile, very early in the 17th century, from the old stories current among the Neapolitans. It is singular that the German and Neapolitan tales (though the latter were till lately quite unknown to foreigners, and never translated out of the Italian tongues), bear the strongest and most minute resemblances. The French fairy tales that have become popular, were chiefly taken from “*The Nights (Notti piacevoli) of Straparola,*” published first in 1550; but in his collection such fictions occupy no prominent and apparently only an accidental station, the bulk of the tales being of what may be called the Classical Italian School. The P*entamerone* was drawn from original sources, and probably compiled without any knowledge of Straparola, although the latter is precedent in date. The two works have only four pieces in common. Mr. Dunlop would add greatly to the value of his excellent work on fiction, if he would include in his inquiries this most interesting branch of popular entertainment, to which Sir Walter Scott has already pointed in his notes to "*The Lady of the Lake.*"

Among the most pleasing of the German tales are those in which animals support the leading characters. They are perhaps more venerable in their origin than the heroic and fairy tales. They are not only amusing by their playful and dramatic character, but instructive by the purity of their morality. None bear more strongly the impress of a remote Eastern original, both in their principles and their form of conveying instruction. Justice always prevails, active talent is every where successful, the amiable and generous qualities are brought forward to excite the sympathies of the reader, and in the end are constantly rewarded by triumph over lawless power. It will be observed as a peculiarity of the German fables, that they introduce even inanimate objects among their actors, a circumstance sometimes attended with considerable effect. Even the sun, the moon, and the winds form part of the *dramatis personae.*

The Translators can do little more than direct the attention of the curious reader to the source whence they have selected their materials. The nature and immediate design of the present publication exclude the introduction of some of those stories which would, in a literary point of view, be most curious. With a view to variety, they have wished rather to avoid than to select those, the leading incidents of which are already familiar to the English reader, and have therefore often deprived themselves of the interest which comparison would afford. There were also many stories of great merit and tending highly to the elucidation of ancient mythology, customs, and opinions, which the scrupulous fastidiousness of modern taste, especially in works likely to attract the attention of youth, warned them to pass by. If they should ever be encouraged to resume their task, they might undertake it with different and more serious objects. In those tales which they have selected they had proposed to make no alteration whatever; but in a few instances they have been compelled to depart in some degree from their purpose. They have, however, endeavoured to notice these variations in the notes, and in most cases the alteration consists merely in the curtailment of adventures or circumstances not affecting the main plot or character of the story.

A few brief notes are added; but the Translators trust it will always be borne in mind, that their little work makes no literary pretensions; that its immediate design precludes the subjects most attractive as matters of research; and that professedly critical dissertations would therefore be out of place. Their object in what they have done in this department, has been merely to attract attention to a subject little noticed, and to point, however imperfectly, at a source of interesting and amusing inquiry.

London, 1823.

THE success of the first volume of *German Popular Stories*, has encouraged one of the translators to venture on a second. The majority of the Tales will be found to have more of the general character of fairy tales, and less of German peculiarity, than those of the first volume, in preparing which, the whole of MM. Grimm's collection was open for the choice of examples of all classes. Perhaps some readers may not think the worse of the present volume on that account.

Two or three stories have been taken from other collections, as pointed out in the notes.

The Translator cannot let pass the opportunity of thanking the Editor of the new and highly valuable edition of Warton's *History of English Poetry* for the notice he has been pleased to take of the first portion of this little work in his preface. He must apologize for the present volume having, like the first, too little of a character of research to satisfy the antiquarian reader; but he could not alter his plan without interfering too much with the original design, and the unity of its execution. He is, however, glad to see the subject in such able hands as those into which "the Editor's Preface" shows it has fallen.

The Translator once thought of following up these little volumes with one of selections from the Neapolitan *Pentamerone*\ but perhaps the public has had enough of subjects with which, though he amuses himself, he may tire his readers.

O the happy, happy season,
Ere bright Fancy bent to Reason;
When the spirit of our stories
Filled the mind with unseen glories;
Told of creatures of the air,
Spirits, fairies, goblins rare,
Guarding man with tenderest care;
When before the blazing hearth,
Listening to the tale of mirth,
Sons and daughters, mother, sire,
Neighbours all drew round the fire;
Lending open ear and faith
To what some learned gossip saith!
But the fays and all are gone,
Reason, Reason, reigns alone;
Every grace and charm is fled,
All by dulness banished;
Thus we ponder, slow and sad,
After Truth the world is mad;
Ah! believe me, Error too
Hath its charms, nor small, nor few.

Imitated from VOLTAIRE, *by a friend.*

London. 1826.

“Now you must imagine me to sit by a good fire, amongst a companye of good fellowes, over a well spiced wassel bowle of Christmas ale, telling of these merrie tales which hereafter followe.” — *Pref to Hist, of*”*Tom Thumbe the Little.*” — 1621.

“And so, Gentle Reader, craving thy kind acceptance, I wish thee as much willingness to the reading as I have been forward in the printing, and so I end — Farewell.” — *Pref to* “*Valentine and Orson.... with new* “*pictures lively expressing the history* — 1677.

The Travelling Musicians

An honest farmer had once an ass, that had been a faithful servant to him a great many years, but was now growing old and every day more and more unfit for work. His master therefore was tired of keeping him and began to think of putting an end to him; but the ass, who saw that some mischief was in the wind, took himself slyly off, and began his journey towards the great city, “for there,” thought he, “I may turn musician.”

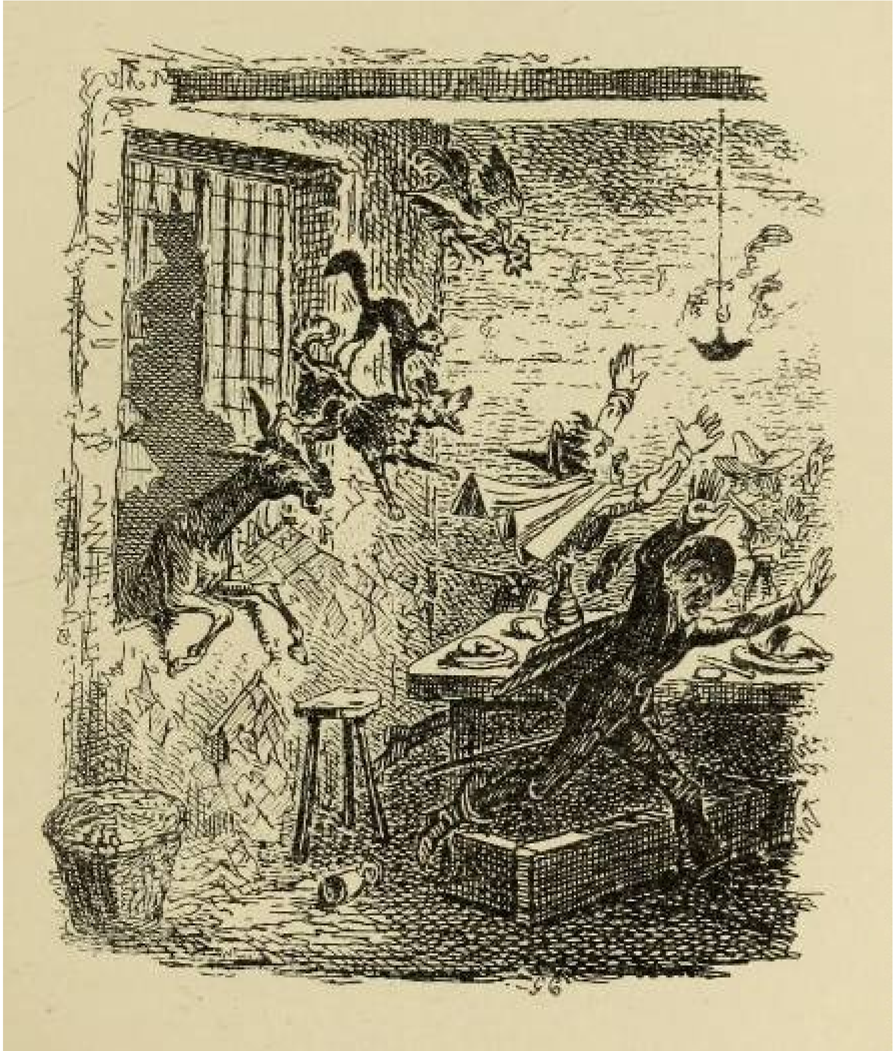
After he had travelled a little way, he spied a dog lying by the road-side and panting as if he were very tired. “What makes you pant so, my friend?” said the ass. “Alas!” said the dog, “my master was going to knock me on the head, because I am old and weak, and can no longer make myself useful to him in hunting; so I ran away: but what can I do to earn my livelihood?” “Hark ye!” said the ass, “I am going to the great city to turn musician: suppose you go with me, and try what you can do in the same way?” The dog said he was willing, and they jogged on together.

They had not gone far before they saw a cat sitting in the middle of the road and making a most rueful face. “Pray, my good lady,” said the ass, “what’s the matter with you? you look quite out of spirits!” “Ah me!” said the cat, “how can one be in good spirits when one’s life is in danger? Because I am beginning to grow old, and had rather lie at my ease by the fire than run about the house after the mice, my mistress laid hold of me, and was going to drown me; and though I have been lucky enough to get away from her, I do not know what I am to live upon.” “O!” said the ass, “by all means go with us to the great city; you are a good night singer, and may make your fortune as a musician.” The cat was pleased with the thought, and joined the party.

Soon afterwards, as they were passing by a farm-yard, they saw a cock perched upon a gate, and screaming out with all his might and main. “Bravo!” said the ass; “upon my word you make a famous noise; pray what is all this about?” “Why,” said the cock, “I was just now saying that we should have fine weather for our washing-day, and yet my mistress and the cook don’t thank me for my pains, but threaten to cut off my head to-morrow, and make broth of me for the guests that are coming on Sunday!” “Heaven forbid!” said the ass; “come with us, Master Chanticleer; it will be better, at any rate, than staying here to have your head cut off! Besides, who knows? If we take care to sing in tune, we may get up some kind of a concert: so come along with us.” “With all my heart,” said the cock: so they all four went on jollily together.

They could not, however, reach the great city the first day; so when night came on, they went into a wood to sleep. The ass and the dog laid themselves down under a great tree, and the cat climbed up into the branches; while the cock, thinking that the higher he sat the safer he should be, flew up to the very top of the tree, and then, according to his custom, before he went to sleep, looked out on all sides of him to see that everything was well. In doing this, he saw afar off something bright and shining; and calling to his companions said, “There must be a house no great way off, for I see a light.” “If that be the case,” said the ass, “we had better change our quarters, for our lodging is not the best in the world!” “Besides,” added the dog, “I should not be the worse for a bone or two, or a bit of meat.” So they walked off together towards the spot where Chanticleer had seen the light; and as they drew near, it became larger and brighter, till they at last came close to a house in which a gang of robbers lived.

The ass, being the tallest of the company, marched up to the window and peeped in. “Well, Donkey,” said Chanticleer, “what do you see?” “What do I see?” replied the ass, “why I see a table spread with all kinds of good things, and robbers sitting round it making merry.” “That would be a noble lodging for us,” said the cock. “Yes,” said the ass, “if we could only get in:” so they consulted together how they should contrive to get the robbers out; and at last they hit upon a plan. The ass placed himself upright on his hind-legs, with his fore-feet resting against the window; the dog got upon his back; the cat scrambled up to the dog’s shoulders, and the cock flew up and sat upon the cat’s head. When all was ready, a signal was given, and they began their music. The ass brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, and the cock screamed; and then they all broke through the window at once, and came tumbling into the room, amongst the broken glass, with a most hideous clatter! The robbers, who had been not a little frightened by the opening concert, had now no doubt that some frightful hobgoblin had broken in upon them, and scampered away as fast as they could.



The coast once clear, our travellers soon sat down, and dispatched what the robbers had left, with as much eagerness as if they had not expected to eat again for a month. As soon as they had satisfied themselves, they put out the lights, and each once more sought out a resting-place to his own liking. The donkey laid himself down upon a heap of straw in the yard; the dog stretched himself upon a mat behind the door; the cat rolled herself up on the hearth before the warm ashes; and the cock perched upon a beam on the top of the house; and, as they were all rather tired with their journey, they soon fell asleep.

But about midnight, when the robbers saw from afar that the lights were out and that all seemed quiet, they began to think that they had been in too great a hurry to run away; and one of them, who was bolder than the rest, went to see what was going on. Finding everything still, he marched into the kitchen, and groped about till he found a match in order to light a candle; and then, espying the glittering fiery eyes of the cat, he mistook them for live coals, and held the match to them to light it. But the cat, not understanding this joke, sprung at his face, and spit, and scratched at him. This frightened him dreadfully, and away he ran to the back door; but there the dog jumped up and bit him in the leg; and as he was crossing over the yard the ass kicked him; and the cock, who had been awakened by the noise, crowed with all his might. At this the robber ran back as fast as he could to his comrades, and told the captain “how a horrid witch had got into the house, and had spit at him and scratched his face with her long bony fingers; how a man with a knife in his hand had hidden himself behind the door, and stabbed him in the leg; how a black monster stood in the yard and struck him with a club, and how the devil sat upon the top of the house and cried out, ‘Throw the rascal up here!’” After this the robbers never dared to go back to the house: but the musicians were so pleased with their quarters, that they took up their abode there; and there they are, I dare say, at this very day.

Hans in Luck

Hans had served his master seven years, and at last said to him, “Master, my time is up, I should like to go home and see my mother; so give me my wages.” And the master said, “You have been a faithful and good servant, so your pay shall be handsome.” Then he gave him a piece of silver that was as big as his head.

Hans took out his pocket-handkerchief, put the piece of silver into it, threw it over his shoulder, and jogged off homewards. As he went lazily on, dragging one foot after another, a man came in sight, trotting along gaily on a capital horse. “Ah!” said Hans aloud, “what a fine thing it is to ride on horseback! there he sits as if he was at home in his chair; he trips against no stones, spares his shoes, and yet gets on he hardly knows how.” The horseman heard this, and said, “Well, Hans, why do you go on foot then?” “Ah!” said he, “I have this load to carry; to be sure it is silver, but it is so heavy that I can’t hold up my head, and it hurts my shoulder sadly.” “What do you say to changing?” said the horseman; “I will give you my horse, and you shall give me the silver.” “With all my heart,” said Hans: “but I tell you one thing, — you’ll have a weary task to drag it along.” The horseman got off, took the silver, helped Hans up, gave him the bridle into his hand, and said, “When you want to go very fast, you must smack your lips loud, and cry ‘Jip.’”

Hans was delighted as he sat on the horse, and rode merrily on. After a time he thought he should like to go a little faster, so he smacked his lips, and cried “Jip.” Away went the horse full gallop; and before Hans knew what he was about, he was thrown off, and lay in a ditch by the road side; and his horse would have run off, if a shepherd who was coming by, driving a cow, had not stopt it. Hans soon came to himself, and got upon his legs again. He was sadly vexed, and said to the shepherd, “This riding is no joke when a man gets on a beast like this, that stumbles and flings him off as if he would break his neck. However, I’m off now once for all: I like your cow a great deal better; one can walk along at one’s leisure behind her, and have milk, butter, and cheese, every day into the bargain. What would I give to have such a cow!” “Well,” said the shepherd, “if you are so fond of her, I will change my cow for your horse.” “Done!” said Hans merrily. The shepherd jumped upon the horse, and away he rode.

Hans drove off his cow quietly, and thought his bargain a very lucky one. “If I have only a piece of bread (and I certainly shall be able to get that), I can, whenever I like, eat my butter and cheese with it; and when I am thirsty I can milk my cow and drink the milk: what can I wish for more?” When he came to an inn, he halted, ate up all his bread, and gave away his last penny for a glass of beer: then he drove his cow towards his mother’s village; and the heat grew greater as noon came on, till at last he found himself on a wide heath that would take him more than an hour to cross, and he began to be so hot and parched that his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. “I can find a cure for this,” thought he, “now will I milk my cow and quench my thirst;” so he tied her to the stump of a tree, and held his leathern cap to milk into; but not a drop was to be had.

While he was trying his luck and managing the matter very clumsily, the uneasy beast gave him a kick on the head that knocked him down and there he lay a long while senseless. Luckily a butcher soon came by driving a pig in a wheel-barrow. “What is the matter with you?” said the butcher as he helped him up. Hans told him what had happened, and the butcher gave him a flask, saying “There, drink and refresh yourself; your cow will give you no milk, she is an old beast good for nothing but the slaughter-house.” “Alas, alas!” said Hans, “who would have thought it? If I kill her, what will she be good for? I hate cow-beef, it is not tender enough for me. If it were a pig now, one could do something with it, it would at any rate make some sausages.” “Well,” said the butcher, “to please you, I’ll change, and give you the pig for the cow.” “Heaven reward you for your kindness!” said Hans as he gave the butcher the cow, and took the pig off the wheel-barrow, and drove it off, holding it by the string that was tied to its leg.

So on he jogged, and all seemed now to go right with him; he had met with some misfortunes, to be sure; but he was now well repaid for all. The next person he met was a countryman carrying a fine white goose under his arm. The countryman stopped to ask what o’clock it was; and Hans told him all his luck, and how he had made so many good bargains. The countryman said he was going to take the goose to a christening; “Feel,” said he, “how heavy it is, and yet it is only eight weeks old. Whoever roasts and eats it may cut plenty of fat off it, it has lived so well!” “You’re right,” said Hans as he weighed it in his hand; “but my pig is no trifle.” Meantime the countryman began to look grave, and shook his head. “Hark ye,” said he, “my good friend; your pig may get you into a scrape; in the village I just come from, the squire has had a pig stolen out of his stye. I was dreadfully afraid, when I saw you, that you had got the squire’s pig; it will be a bad job if they catch you; the least they’ll do, will be to throw you into the horsepond.”

Poor Hans was sadly frightened. “Good man,” cried he, “pray get me out of this scrape; you know this country better than I, take my pig and give me the goose.” “I ought to have something into the bargain,” said the countryman; “however, I will not bear hard upon you, as you are in trouble.” Then he took the string in his hand, and drove off the pig by a side path; while Hans went on the way homewards free from care. “After all,” thought he, “I have the best of the bargain: first there will be a capital roast; then the fat will find me in goose grease for six months; and then there are all the beautiful white feathers; I will put them into my pillow, and then I am sure I shall sleep soundly without rocking. How happy my mother will be!”

As he came to the last village, he saw a scissor-grinder, with his wheel, working away, and singing

O’er hill and o’er dale so happy I roam,
Work light and live well, all the world is my home;

Who so blythe, so merry as I?

Hans stood looking for a while, and at last said “You must be well off, master grinder, you seem so happy at your work.” “Yes,” said the other, “mine is a golden trade; a good grinder never puts his hand in his pocket without finding money in it: — but where did you get that beautiful goose?” “I did not buy it, but changed a pig for it.” “And where did you get the pig?” “I gave a cow for it.” “And the cow?” “I gave a horse for it.” “And the horse?” “I gave a piece of silver as big as my head for that.” “And the silver?” “Oh! I worked hard for that seven long years.” “You have thriven well in the world hitherto,” said the grinder; “now if you could find money in your pocket whenever you put your hand into it, your fortune would be made.” “Very true: but how is that to be managed?” “You must turn grinder like me,” said the other; “you only want a grindstone; the rest will come of itself. Here is one that is a little the worse for wear: I would not ask more than the value of your goose for it; — will you buy?” “How can you ask such a question?” replied Hans; “I should be the happiest man in the world, if I could have money whenever I put my hand in my pocket; what could I want more? there’s the goose!” “Now,” said the grinder, as he gave him a common rough stone that lay by his side, “this is a most capital stone; do but manage it cleverly, and you can make an old nail cut with it.”

Hans took the stone and went off with a light heart: his eyes sparkled for joy, and he said to himself, “I must have been born in a lucky hour; everything that I want or wish for comes to me of itself.”

Meantime he began to be tired, for he had been travelling ever since day-break; he was hungry too, for he had given away his last penny in his joy at getting the cow. At last he could go no further, and the stone tired him terribly; he dragged himself to the side of a pond, that he might drink some water, and rest a while; so he laid the stone carefully by his side on the bank: but as he stooped down to drink, he forgot it, pushed it a little, and down it went plump into the pond. For a while he watched it sinking in the deep clear water, then sprang up for joy, and again fell upon his knees, and thanked heaven with tears in his eyes for its kindness in taking away his only plague, the ugly heavy stone. “How happy am I!” cried he: “no mortal was ever so lucky as I am.” Then up he got with a light and merry heart, and walked on free from all his troubles, till he reached his mother’s house.

The Golden Bird

A certain king had a beautiful garden, and in the garden stood a tree which bore golden apples. These apples were always counted, and about the time when they began to grow ripe it was found that every night one of them was gone. The king became very angry at this, and ordered the gardener to keep watch all night under the tree. The gardener set his eldest son to watch; but about twelve o'clock he fell asleep, and in the morning another of the apples was missing. Then the second son was ordered to watch; and at midnight he too fell asleep, and in the morning another apple was gone. Then the third son offered to keep watch; but the gardener at first would not let him, for fear some harm should come to him: however, at last he consented, and the young man laid himself under the tree to watch. As the clock struck twelve he heard a rustling noise in the air, and a bird came flying that was of pure gold; and as it was snapping at one of the apples with its beak, the gardener's son jumped up and shot an arrow at it. But the arrow did the bird no harm; only it dropped a golden feather from its tail, and then flew away. The golden feather was brought to the king in the morning, and all the council was called together. Every one agreed that it was worth more than all the wealth of the kingdom: but the king said, "One feather is of no use to me, I must have the whole bird."

Then the gardener's eldest son set out and thought to find the golden bird very easily; and when he had gone but a little way, he came to a wood, and by the side of the wood he saw a fox sitting; so he took his bow and made ready to shoot at it. Then the fox said, "Do not shoot me, for I will give you good counsel; I know what your business is, and that you want to find the golden bird. You will reach a village in the evening; and when you get there, you will see two inns opposite to each other, one of which is very pleasant and beautiful to look at: go not in there, but rest for the night in the other, though it may appear to you to be very poor and mean." But the son thought to himself, "What can such a beast as this know about the matter?" So he shot his arrow at the fox; but he missed it, and it set up its tail above its back and ran into the wood. Then he went his way, and in the evening came to the village where the two inns were; and in one of these were people singing, and dancing, and feasting; but the other looked very dirty, and poor. "I should be very silly," said he, "if I went to that shabby house, and left this charming place;" so he went into the smart house, and ate and drank at his ease, and forgot the bird, and his country too.

Time passed on; and as the eldest son did not come back, and no tidings were heard of him, the second son set out, and the same thing happened to him. He met the fox, who gave him the same good advice: but when he came to the two inns, his eldest brother was standing at the window where the merrymaking was, and called to him to come in; and he could not withstand the temptation, but went in, and forgot the golden bird and his country in the same manner.

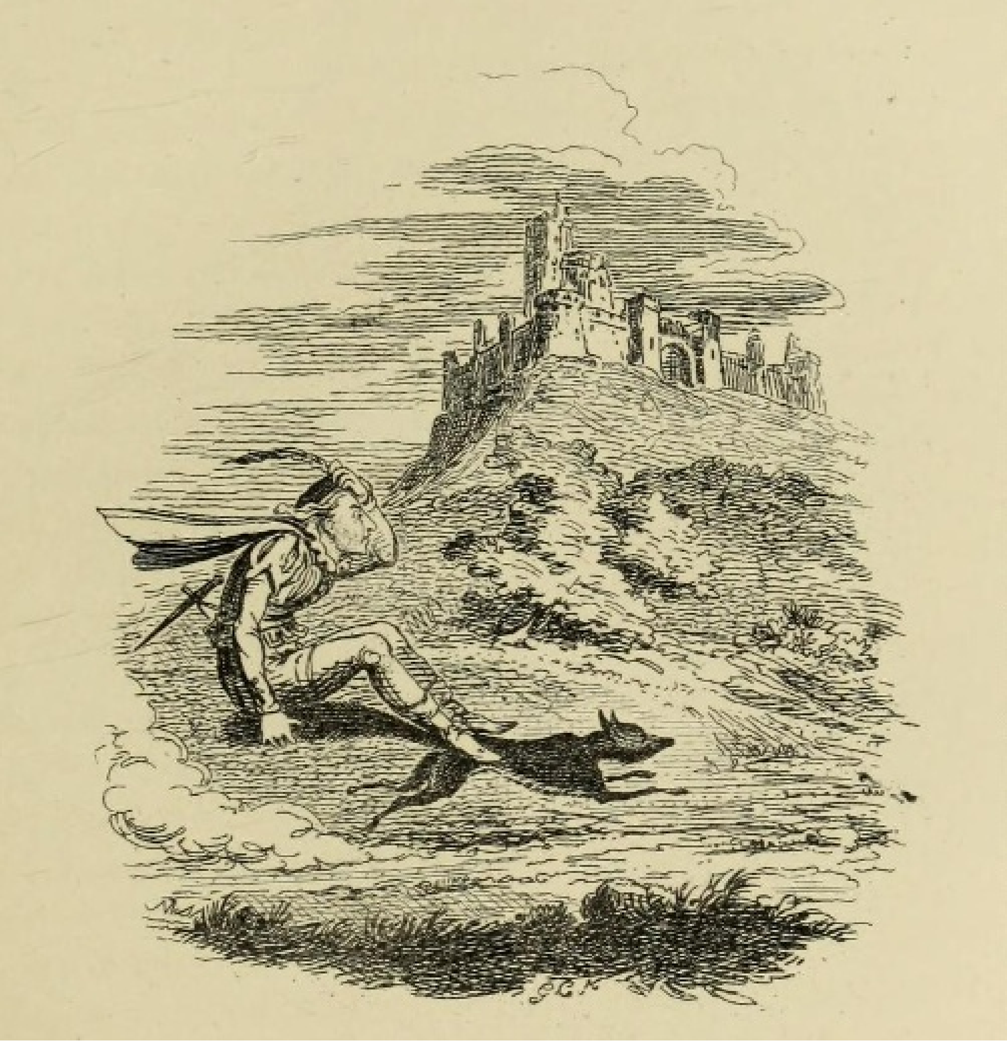
Time passed on again, and the youngest son too wished to set out into the wide world to seek for the golden bird; but his father would not listen to it for a long while, for he was very fond of his son, and was afraid that some ill luck might happen to him also, and prevent his coming back. However, at last it was agreed he should go, for he would not rest at home; and as he came to the wood, he met the fox, and heard the same good counsel. But he was thankful to the fox, and did not attempt his life as his brothers had done; so the fox said, “Sit upon my tail, and you will travel faster.” So he sat down, and the fox began to run, and away they went over stock and stone so quick that their hair whistled in the wind.

When they came to the village, the son followed the fox’s counsel, and without looking about him went to the shabby inn and rested there all night at his ease. In the morning came the fox again and met him as he was beginning his journey, and said, “Go straight forward, till you come to a castle, before which lie a whole troop of soldiers fast asleep and snoring: take no notice of them, but go into the castle and pass on and on till you come to a room, where the golden bird sits in a wooden cage; close by it stands a beautiful golden cage; but do not try to take the bird out of the shabby cage and put it into the handsome one, otherwise you will repent it.” Then the fox stretched out his tail again, and the young man sat himself down, and away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled in the wind.

Before the castle gate all was as the fox had said: so the son went in and found the chamber where the golden bird hung in a wooden cage, and below stood the golden cage, and the three golden apples that had been lost were lying close by it. Then thought he to himself, “It will be a very droll thing to bring away such a fine bird in this shabby cage;” so he opened the door and took hold of it and put it into the golden cage. But the bird set up such a loud scream that all the soldiers awoke, and they took him prisoner and carried him before the king. The next morning the court sat to judge him; and when all was heard, it sentenced him to die, unless he should bring the king the golden horse which could run as swiftly as the wind; and if he did this, he was to have the golden bird given him for his own.

So he set out once more on his journey, sighing, and in great despair, when on a sudden his good friend the fox met him, and said, “You see now what has happened on account of your not listening to my counsel. I will still, however, tell you how to find the golden horse, if you will do as I bid you. You must go straight on till you come to the castle where the horse stands in his stall: by his side will lie the groom fast asleep and snoring: take away the horse quietly, but be sure to put the old leathern saddle upon him, and not the golden one that is close by it.” Then the son sat down on the fox’s tail, and away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled in the wind.

All went right, and the groom lay snoring with his hand upon the golden saddle. But when the son looked at the horse, he thought it a great pity to put the leathern saddle upon it. “I will give him the good one,” said he; “I am sure he deserves it.” As he took up the golden saddle the groom awoke and cried out so loud, that all the guards ran in and took him prisoner, and in the morning he was again brought before the court to be judged, and was sentenced to die. But it was agreed, that, if he could bring thither the beautiful princess, he should live, and have the bird and the horse given him for his own.



Then he went his way again very sorrowful; but the old fox came and said, “Why did not you listen to me? If you had, you would have carried away both the bird and the horse; yet will I once more give you counsel. Go straight on, and in the evening you will arrive at a castle. At twelve o’clock at night the princess goes to the bathing-house: go up to her and give her a kiss, and she will let you lead her away; but take care you do not suffer her to go and take leave of her father and mother.” Then the fox stretched out his tail, and so away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled again.

As they came to the castle, all was as the fox had said, and at twelve o’clock the young man met the princess going to the bath and gave her the kiss, and she agreed to run away with him, but begged with many tears that he would let her take leave of her father. At first he refused, but she wept still more and more, and fell at his feet, till at last he consented; but the moment she came to her father’s house, the guards awoke and he was taken prisoner again.

Then he was brought before the king, and the king said, “You shall never have my daughter unless in eight days you dig away the hill that stops the view from my window.” Now this hill was so big that the whole world could not take it away: and when he had worked for seven days, and had done very little, the fox came and said, “Lie down and go to sleep; I will work for you.” And in the morning he awoke and the hill was gone; so he went merrily to the king, and told him that now that it was removed he must give him the princess.

Then the king was obliged to keep his word, and away went the young man and the princess; and the fox came and said to him, “We will have all three, the princess, the horse, and the bird.” “Ah!” said the young man, “that would be a great thing, but how can you contrive it?”

“If you will only listen,” said the fox, “it can soon be done. When you come to the king, and he asks for the beautiful princess, you must say, ‘Here she is!’ Then he will be very joyful; and you will mount the golden horse that they are to give you, and put out your hand to take leave of them; but shake hands with the princess last. Then lift her quickly on to the horse behind you; clap your spurs to his side, and gallop away as fast as you can.”

All went right: then the fox said, “When you come to the castle where the bird is, I will stay with the princess at the door, and you will ride in and speak to the king; and when he sees that it is the right horse, he will bring out the bird; but you must sit still, and say that you want to look at it, to see whether it is the true golden bird; and when you get it into your hand, ride away.”

This, too, happened as the fox said; they carried off the bird, the princess mounted again, and they rode on to a great wood. Then the fox came, and said, “Pray kill me, and cut off my head and my feet.” But the young man refused to do it: so the fox said, “I will at any rate give you good counsel: beware of two things; ransom no one from the gallows, and sit down by the side of no river.” Then away he went. “Well,” thought the young man, “it is no hard matter to keep that advice.”

He rode on with the princess, till at last he came to the village where he had left his two brothers. And there he heard a great noise and uproar; and when he asked what was the matter, the people said, “Two men are going to be hanged.” As he came nearer, he saw that the two men were his brothers, who had turned robbers; so he said, “Cannot they in any way be saved?” But the people said “No,” unless he would bestow all his money upon the rascals and buy their liberty. Then he did not stay to think about the matter, but paid what was asked, and his brothers were given up, and went on with him towards their home.

And as they came to the wood where the fox first met them, it was so cool and pleasant that the two brothers said, “Let us sit down by the side of the river, and rest a while, to eat and drink.” So he said, “Yes,” and forgot the fox’s counsel, and sat down on the side of the river; and while he suspected nothing, they came behind, and threw him down the bank, and took the princess, the horse, and the bird, and went home to the king their master, and said, “All this have we won by our labour.” Then there was great rejoicing made; but the horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the princess wept.

The youngest son fell to the bottom of the river’s bed: luckily it was nearly dry, but his bones were almost broken, and the bank was so steep that he could find no way to get out. Then the old fox came once more, and scolded him for not following his advice; otherwise no evil would have befallen him: “Yet,” said he, “I cannot leave you here, so lay hold of my tail and hold fast.” Then he pulled him out of the river, and said to him, as he got upon the bank, “Your brothers have set watch to kill you, if they find you in the kingdom.” So he dressed himself as a poor man, and came secretly to the king’s court, and was scarcely within the doors when the horse began to eat, and the bird to sing, and the princess left off weeping. Then he went to the king, and told him all his brothers’ roguery; and they were seized and punished, and he had the princess given to him again; and after the king’s death he was heir to his kingdom.

A long while after, he went to walk one day in the wood, and the old fox met him, and besought him with tears in his eyes to kill him, and cut off his head and feet. And at last he did so, and in a moment the fox was changed into a man, and turned out to be the brother of the princess, who had been lost a great many many years.

The Fisherman and His Wife

There was once a fisherman who lived with his wife in a ditch, close by the sea-side. The fisherman used to go out all day long a-fishing; and one day, as he sat on the shore with his rod, looking at the shining water and watching his line, all on a sudden his float was dragged away deep under the sea: and in drawing it up he pulled a great fish out of the water. The fish said to him, “Pray let me live: I am not a real fish; I am an enchanted prince, put me in the water again, and let me go.” “Oh!” said the man, “you need not make so many words about the matter; I wish to have nothing to do with a fish that can talk; so swim away as soon as you please.” Then he put him back into the water, and the fish darted straight down to the bottom, and left a long streak of blood behind him.

When the fisherman went home to his wife in the ditch, he told her how he had caught a great fish, and how it had told him it was an enchanted prince, and that on hearing it speak he had let it go again. “Did you not ask it for anything?” said the wife. “No,” said the man, “what should I ask for?” “Ah!” said the wife, “we live very wretchedly here in this nasty stinking ditch; do go back, and tell the fish we want a little cottage.”

The fisherman did not much like the business: however, he went to the sea, and when he came there the water looked all yellow and green. And he stood at the water’s edge, and said,

“O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!”

Then the fish came swimming to him, and said, “Well, what does she want?” “Ah!” answered the fisherman, “my wife says that when I had caught you, I ought to have asked you for something before I let you go again; she does not like living any longer in the ditch, and wants a little cottage.” “Go home, then,” said the fish, “she is in the cottage already.” So the man went home, and saw his wife standing at the door of a cottage. “Come in, come in,” said she; “is not this much better than the ditch?” And there was a parlour, and a bed-chamber, and a kitchen; and behind the cottage there was a little garden with all sorts of flowers and fruits, and a court-yard full of ducks and chickens. “Ah!” said the fisherman, “how happily we shall live!” “We will try to do so at least,” said his wife.

Everything went right for a week or two, and then Dame Alice said, “Husband, there is not room enough in this cottage, the court-yard and garden are a great deal too small; I should like to have a large stone castle to live in; so go to the fish again, and tell him to give us a castle.” “Wife,” said the fisherman, “I don’t like to go to him again, for perhaps he will be angry;

we ought to be content with the cottage." "Nonsense!" said the wife; "he will do it very willingly; go along, and try."

The fisherman went; but his heart was very heavy: and when he came to the sea, it looked blue and gloomy, though it was quite calm, and he went close to it, and said,

"O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!"

"Well, what does she want now?" said the fish. "Ah!" said the man very sorrowfully, "my wife wants to live in a stone castle." "Go home then," said the fish, "she is standing at the door of it already." So away went the fisherman, and found his wife standing before a great castle. "See," said she, "is not this grand?" With that they went into the castle together, and found a great many servants there, and the rooms all richly furnished and full of golden chairs and tables; and behind the castle was a garden, and a wood half a mile long, full of sheep, and goats, and hares, and deer; and in the court-yard were stables and cow-houses. "Well," said the man, "now will we live contented and happy in this beautiful castle for the rest of our lives." "Perhaps we may," said the wife; "but let us consider and sleep upon it before we make up our minds:" so they went to bed.

The next morning, when Dame Alice awoke, it was broad day-light, and she jogged the fisherman with her elbow, and said, "Get up, husband, and bestir yourself, for we must be king of all the land." "Wife, wife," said the man, "why should we wish to be king? I will not be king." "Then I will," said Alice. "But, wife," answered the fisherman, "how can you be king? the fish cannot make you a king." "Husband," said she, "say no more about it, but go and try; I will be king!" So the man went away, quite sorrowful to think that his wife should want to be king. The sea looked a dark grey colour, and was covered with foam as he cried out,

"O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!"

"Well, what would she have now?" said the fish. "Alas!" said the man, "my wife wants to be king." "Go home," said the fish; "she is king already."

Then the fisherman went home; and as he came close to the palace, he saw a troop of soldiers, and heard the sound of drums and trumpets; and when he entered in, he saw his wife sitting on a high throne of gold and diamonds, with a golden crown upon her head; and on each side of her stood six beautiful maidens, each a head taller than the other. "Well, wife," said the fisherman, “are you king?” “Yes,” said she, “I am king.” And when he had looked at her for a long time, he said, “Ah, wife! what a fine thing it is to be king! now we shall never have anything more to wish for.” “I don’t know how that may be,” said she; “never is a long time. I am king, ’tis true, but I begin to be tired of it, and I think I should like to be emperor.” “Alas, wife! why should you wish to be emperor?” said the fisherman. “Husband,” said she, “go to the fish; I say I will be emperor.” “Ah, wife!” replied the fisherman, “the fish cannot make an emperor, and I should not like to ask for such a thing.” “I am king,” said Alice, “and you are my slave, so go directly!” So the fisherman was obliged to go; and he muttered as he went along, “This will come to no good, it is too much to ask, the fish will be tired at last, and then we shall repent of what we have done.” He soon arrived at the sea, and the water was quite black and muddy, and a mighty whirlwind blew over it; but he went to the shore, and said,

“O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!”

“What would she have now!” said the fish. “Ah!” said the fisherman, “she wants to be emperor.” “Go home,” said the fish; “she is emperor already.”

So he went home again; and as he came near he saw his wife sitting on a very lofty throne made of solid gold, with a great crown on her head full two yards high, and on each side of her stood her guards and attendants in a row, each one smaller than the other, from the tallest giant down to a little dwarf no bigger than my finger. And before her stood princes, and dukes, and earls: and the fisherman went up to her and said, “Wife, are you emperor?” “Yes,” said she, “I am emperor.” “Ah!” said the man as he gazed upon her, “what a fine thing it is to be emperor!” “Husband,” said she, “why should we stay at being emperor; I will be pope next.” “O wife, wife!” said he, “how can you be pope? there is but one pope at a time in Christendom.” “Husband,” said she, “I will be pope this very day.” “But,” replied the husband, “the fish cannot make you pope.” “What nonsense!” said she, “if he can make an emperor, he can make a pope, go and try him.” So the fisherman went. But when he came to the shore the wind was raging, and the sea was tossed up and down like boiling water, and the ships were in the greatest distress and danced upon the waves most fearfully; in the middle of the sky there was a little blue, but towards the south it was all red as if a dreadful storm was rising. At this the fisherman was terribly frightened, and trembled, so that his knees knocked together: but he went to the shore and said,

“O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!”

“What does she want now?” said the fish. “Ah!” said the fisherman, “my wife wants to be pope.” “Go home,” said the fish, “she is pope already.”

Then the fisherman went home, and found his wife sitting on a throne that was two miles high; and she had three great crowns on her head, and around stood all the pomp and power of the Church; and on each side were two rows of burning lights, of all sizes, the greatest as large as the highest and biggest tower in the world, and the least no larger than a small rush-light. “Wife,” said the fisherman as he looked at all this grandeur, “are you pope?” “Yes,” said she, “I am pope.” “Well, wife,” replied he, “it is a grand thing to be pope; and now you must be content, for you can be nothing greater.” “I will consider of that,” said the wife. Then they went to bed: but Dame Alice could not sleep all night for thinking what she should be next. At last morning came, and the sun rose. “Ha!” thought she as she looked at it through the window, “cannot I prevent the sun rising?” At this she was very angry, and she wakened her husband, and said, “Husband, go to the fish and tell him I want to be lord of the sun and moon.” The fisherman was half asleep, but the thought frightened him so much, that he started and fell out of bed. “Alas, wife!” said he, “cannot you be content to be pope?” “No,” said she, “I am very uneasy, and cannot bear to see the sun and moon rise without my leave. Go to the fish directly.”

Then the man went trembling for fear; and as he was going down to the shore a dreadful storm arose, so that the trees and the rocks shook; and the heavens became black, and the lightning played, and the thunder rolled; and you might have seen in the sea great black waves like mountains with a white crown of foam upon them; and the fisherman said,

“O man of the sea!
Come listen to me,
For Alice my wife,
The plague of my life,
Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!”

“What does she want now?” said the fish. “Ah!” said he, “she wants to be lord of the sun and moon.” “Go home,” said the fish, “to your ditch again!” And there they live to this very day.

The Tom-Tit and the Bear

One summer day, as the wolf and the bear were walking together in a wood, they heard a bird singing most delightfully. “Brother,” said the bear, “what can that bird be that is singing so sweetly?” “O!” said the wolf, “that is his majesty the king of the birds, we must take care to show him all possible respect.” (Now I should tell you that this bird was after all no other than the tom-tit.) “If that is the case,” said the bear, “I should like to see the royal palace; so pray come along and show it to me.” “Gently, my friend,” said the wolf, “we cannot see it just yet, we must wait till the queen comes home.”

Soon afterwards the queen came with food in her beak, and she and the king began to feed their young ones. “Now for it!” said the bear; and was about to follow them, to see what was to be seen. “Stop a little, master Bruin,” said the wolf, “we must wait now till their majesties are gone again.” So they marked the hole where they had seen the nest, and went away. But the bear, being very eager to see the royal palace, soon came back again, and peeping into the nest, saw five or six young birds lying at the bottom of it. “What nonsense!” said Bruin, “this is not a royal palace: I never saw such a filthy place in my life; and you are no royal children, you little base-born brats!” As soon as the young tom-tits heard this they were very angry, and screamed out “We are not base-born, you stupid bear! our father and mother are honest good sort of people: and depend upon it you shall suffer for your insolence!” At this the wolf and the bear grew frightened, and ran away to their dens. But the young tom-tits kept crying and screaming; and when their father and mother came home and offered them food, they all said, “We will not touch a bit; no, not the leg of a fly, though we should die of hunger, till that rascal Bruin has been punished for calling us base-born brats.” “Make yourselves easy, my darlings,” said the old king, “you may be sure he shall meet with his deserts.”

So he went out and stood before the bear’s den, and cried out with a loud voice, “Bruin the bear! thou hast shamefully insulted our lawful children: we therefore hereby declare bloody and cruel war against thee and thine, which shall never cease until thou hast been punished as thou so richly deservest.” Now when the bear heard this, he called together the ox, the ass, the stag, and all the beasts of the earth, in order to consult about the means of his defence. And the tom-tit also enlisted on his side all the birds of the air, both great and small, and a very large army of hornets, gnats, bees, and flies, and other insects.

As the time approached when the war was to begin, the tom-tit sent out spies to see who was the commander-in-chief of the enemy’s forces; and the gnat, who was by far the cleverest spy of them all, flew backwards and forwards in the wood where the enemy’s troops were, and at last hid himself under a leaf on a tree, close by which the orders of the day were given out. And the bear, who was standing so near the tree that the gnat could hear all he said, called to the fox and said, “Reynard, you are the cleverest of all the beasts; therefore you shall be our general and lead us to battle: but we must first agree upon some signal, by which we may know what you want us to do.” “Behold,” said the fox, “I have a fine, long, bushy tail, which is very like a plume of red feathers, and gives me a very warlike air: now remember, when you see me raise up my tail, you may be sure that the battle is won, and you have then nothing to do but to rush down upon the enemy with all your force. On the other hand, if I drop my tail, the day is lost, and you must run away as fast as you can.” Now when the gnat had heard all this, she flew back to the tom-tit and told him everything that had passed.

At length the day came when the battle was to be fought; and as soon as it was light, behold! the army of beasts came rushing forward with such a fearful sound that the earth shook. And his majesty the tom-tit, with his troops, came flying along in warlike array, flapping and fluttering, and beating the air, so that it was quite frightful to hear; and both armies set themselves in order of battle upon the field. Now the tom-tit gave orders to a troop of hornets that at the first onset they should march straight towards Captain Reynard, and fixing themselves about his tail, should sting him with all their might and main. The hornets did as they were told: and when Reynard felt the first sting, he started aside and shook one of his legs, but still held up his tail with wonderful bravery; at the second sting he was forced to drop his tail for a moment; but when the third hornet had fixed itself, he could bear it no longer, but clapped his tail between his legs and scampered away as fast as he could. As soon as the beasts saw this, they thought of course all was lost, and scoured across the country in the greatest dismay, leaving the birds masters of the field.

And now the king and queen flew back in triumph to their children, and said, “Now, children, eat, drink, and be merry, for the victory is ours!” But the young birds said, “No: not till Bruin has humbly begged our pardon for calling us base-born.” So the king flew back to the bear’s den, and cried out, “Thou villain bear! come forthwith to my abode, and humbly beseech my children to forgive thee the insult thou hast offered them; for, if thou wilt not do this, every bone in thy wretched body shall be broken to pieces.” So the bear was forced to crawl out of his den very sulkily, and do what the king bade him: and after that the young birds sat down together, and ate and drank and made merry till midnight.

The Twelve Dancing Princesses

There was a king who had twelve beautiful daughters. They slept in twelve beds all in one room; and when they went to bed, the doors were shut and locked up; but every morning their shoes were found to be quite worn through, as if they had been danced in all night; and yet nobody could find out how it happened, or where they had been.

Then the king made it known to all the land, that if any person could discover the secret, and find out where it was that the princesses danced in the night, he should have the one he liked best for his wife, and should be king after his death; but whoever tried and did not succeed, after three days and nights, should be put to death.

A king’s son soon came. He was well entertained, and in the evening was taken to the chamber next to the one where the princesses lay in their twelve beds. There he was to sit and watch where they went to dance; and, in order that nothing might pass without his hearing it, the door of his chamber was left open. But the king’s son soon fell asleep; and when he awoke in the morning he found that the princesses had all been dancing, for the soles of their shoes were full of holes. The same thing happened the second and third night: so the king ordered his head to be cut off. After him came several others; but they had all the same luck, and all lost their lives in the same manner.

Now it chanced that an old soldier, who had been wounded in battle and could fight no longer, passed through the country where this king reigned; and as he was travelling through a wood, he met an old woman, who asked him where he was going. “I hardly know where I am going, or what I had better do,” said the soldier; “but I think I should like very well to find out where it is that the princesses dance, and then in time I might be a king.” “Well,” said the old dame, “that is no very hard task: only take care not to drink any of the wine which one of the princesses will bring to you in the evening; and as soon as she leaves you pretend to be fast asleep.”

Then she gave him a cloak, and said, “As soon as you put that on you will become invisible, and you will then be able to follow the princesses wherever they go.” When the soldier heard all this good counsel, he determined to try his luck: so he went to the king, and said he was willing to undertake the task.

He was as well received as the others had been, and the king ordered fine royal robes to be given him; and when the evening came he was led to the outer chamber. Just as he was going to lie down, the eldest of the princesses brought him a cup of wine; but the soldier threw it all away secretly, taking care not to drink a drop. Then he laid himself down on his bed, and in a little while began to snore very loud as if he was fast asleep. When the twelve princesses heard this they laughed heartily; and the eldest said, “This fellow too might have done a wiser thing than lose his life in this way!” Then they rose up and opened their drawers and boxes, and took out all their fine clothes, and dressed themselves at the glass, and skipped about as if they were eager to begin dancing. But the youngest said, “I don’t know how it is, while you are so happy I feel very uneasy; I am sure some mischance will befall us.” “You simpleton,” said the eldest, “you are always afraid; have you forgotten how many kings’ sons have already watched us in vain? And as for this soldier, even if I had not given him his sleeping draught, he would have slept soundly enough.”

When they were all ready, they went and looked at the soldier; but he snored on, and did not stir hand or foot: so they thought they were quite safe; and the eldest went up to her own bed and clapped her hands, and the bed sunk into the floor and a trap-door flew open. The soldier saw them going down through the trap-door one after another, the eldest leading the way; and thinking he had no time to lose, he jumped up, put on the cloak which the old woman had given him, and followed them; but in the middle of the stairs he trod on the gown of the youngest princess, and she cried out to her sisters, “All is not right; some one took hold of my gown.” “You silly creature!” said the eldest, “it is nothing but a nail in the wall.” Then down they all went, and at the bottom they found themselves in a most delightful grove of trees; and the leaves were all of silver, and glittered and sparkled beautifully. The soldier wished to take away some token of the place; so he broke off a little branch, and there came a loud noise from the tree. Then the youngest daughter said again, “I am sure all is not right — did not you hear that noise? That never happened before.” But the eldest said, “It is only our princes, who are shouting for joy at our approach.”

Then they came to another grove of trees, where all the leaves were of gold; and afterwards to a third, where the leaves were all glittering diamonds. And the soldier broke a branch from each; and every time there was a loud noise, which made the youngest sister tremble with fear; but the eldest still said it was only the princes, who were crying for joy. So they went on till they came to a great lake; and at the side of the lake there lay twelve little boats with twelve handsome princes in them, who seemed to be waiting there for the princesses.

One of the princesses went into each boat, and the soldier stepped into the same boat with the youngest. As they were rowing over the lake, the prince who was in the boat with the youngest princess and the soldier said, “I do not know why it is, but though I am rowing with all my might we do not get on so fast as usual, and I am quite tired: the boat seems very heavy to-day.” “It is only the heat of the weather,” said the princess; “I feel it very warm too.”

On the other side of the lake stood a fine illuminated castle, from which came the merry music of horns and trumpets. There they all landed, and went into the castle, and each prince danced with his princess; and the soldier, who was all the time invisible, danced with them too; and when any of the princesses had a cup of wine set by her, he drank it all up, so that when she put the cup to her mouth it was empty. All this, too, the youngest sister was terribly frightened, but the eldest always silenced her. They danced on till three o'clock in the morning, and then all their shoes were worn out, so that they were obliged to leave off. The princes rowed them back again over the lake; (but this time the soldier placed himself in the boat with the eldest princess;) and on the opposite shore they took leave of each other, the princesses promising to come again the next night.

When they came to the stairs, the soldier ran on before the princesses, and laid himself down; and as the twelve sisters slowly came up very much tired, they heard him snoring in his bed; so they said, "Now all is quite safe;" then they undressed themselves, put away their fine clothes, pulled off their shoes, and went to bed. In the morning the soldier said nothing about what had happened, but determined to see more of this strange adventure, and went again the second and third night; and everything happened just as before; the princesses danced each time till their shoes were worn to pieces, and then returned home. However, on the third night the soldier carried away one of the golden cups as a token of where he had been.

As soon as the time came when he was to declare the secret, he was taken before the king with the three branches and the golden cup; and the twelve princesses stood listening behind the door to hear what he would say. And when the king asked him "Where do my twelve daughters dance at night?" he answered, "With twelve princes in a castle underground." And then he told the king all that had happened, and showed him the three branches and the golden cup which he had brought with him. Then the king called for the princesses, and asked them whether what the soldier said was true: and when they saw that they were discovered, and that it was of no use to deny what had happened, they confessed it all. And the king asked the soldier which of them he would choose for his wife; and he answered, "I am not very young, so I will have the eldest." — And they were married that very day, and the soldier was chosen to be the king's heir.

Rose-Bud

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had no children; and this they lamented very much. But one day as the queen was walking by the side of the river, a little fish lifted its head out of the water, and said, “Your wish shall be fulfilled, and you shall soon have a daughter.” What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass; and the queen had a little girl that was so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on it for joy, and determined to hold a great feast. So he invited not only his relations, friends and neighbours, but also all the fairies, that they might be kind and good to his little daughter. Now there were thirteen fairies in his kingdom, and he had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, so that he was obliged to leave one of the fairies without an invitation. The rest came, and after the feast was over they gave all their best gifts to the little princess: one gave her virtue, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was excellent in the world. When eleven had done blessing her, the thirteenth, who had not been invited, and was very angry on that account, came in, and determined to take her revenge. So she cried out, “The king’s daughter shall in her fifteenth year be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead.” Then the twelfth, who had not yet given her gift, came forward and said, that the bad wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften it, and that the king’s daughter should not die, but fall asleep for a hundred years.

But the king hoped to save his dear child from the threatened evil, and ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and destroyed. All the fairies’ gifts were in the meantime fulfilled; for the princess was so beautiful, and well-behaved, and amiable, and wise, that every one who knew her loved her. Now it happened that on the very day she was fifteen years old the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself, and looked at all the rooms and chambers, till at last she came to an old tower, to which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily. “Why, how now, good mother,” said the princess, “what are you doing there?” “Spinning,” said the old lady, and nodded her head. “How prettily that little thing turns round!” said the princess, and took the spindle and began to spin. But scarcely had she touched it, before the prophecy was fulfilled, and she fell down lifeless on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep; and the king and the queen, who just then came home, and all their court, fell asleep too; and the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons on the house-top and the flies on the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep; and the meat that was roasting stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen-boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep; and so everything stood still, and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew round the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker, till at last the whole palace was surrounded and hid, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen. But there went a report through all the land of the beautiful sleeping Rose-Bud (for so was the king’s daughter called); so that from time to time several kings’ sons came, and tried to break through the thicket into the palace. This they could never do; for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them as it were with hands, and there they stuck fast and died miserably.

After many many years there came a king’s son into that land, and an old man told him the story of the thicket of thorns, and how a beautiful palace stood behind it, in which was a wondrous princess, called Rose-Bud, asleep with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many many princes had come, and had tried to break through the thicket, but had stuck fast and died. Then the young prince said, “All this shall not frighten me, I will go and see Rose-Bud.” The old man tried to dissuade him, but he persisted in going.

Now that very day were the hundred years completed; and as the prince came to the thicket, he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he passed with ease, and they closed after him as firm as ever. Then he came at last to the palace, and there in the court lay the dogs asleep, and the horses in the stables, and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep with their heads under their wings; and when he came into the palace, the flies slept on the walls, and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand as if she would beat the boy, and the maid sat with a black fowl in her hand ready to be plucked.

Then he went on still further, and all was so still that he could hear every breath he drew; till at last he came to the old tower and opened the door of the little room in which Rose-Bud was; and there she lay fast asleep, and looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off, and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him. Then they went out together, and presently the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and they gazed on each other with great wonder. And the horses got up and shook themselves, and the dogs jumped about and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked about and fled into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed away; the fire in the kitchen blazed up and cooked the dinner, and the roast meat turned round again; the cook gave the boy the box on his ear so that he cried out, and the maid went on plucking the fowl. And then was the wedding of the prince and Rose-Bud celebrated, and they lived happily together all their lives long.

Tom Thumb

There was once a poor woodman sitting by the fire in his cottage, and his wife sat by his side spinning. “How lonely it is,” said he, “for you and me to sit here by ourselves without any children to play about and amuse us, while other people seem so happy and merry with their children!” “What you say is very true,” said the wife, sighing and turning round her wheel, “how happy should I be if I had but one child! and if it were ever so small, nay, if it were no bigger than my thumb, I should be very happy, and love it dearly.” Now it came to pass that this good woman’s wish was fulfilled just as she desired; for, some time afterwards, she had a little boy who was quite healthy and strong, but not much bigger than my thumb. So they said, “Well, we cannot say we have not got what we wished for, and, little as he is, we will love him dearly;” and they called him Tom Thumb.

They gave him plenty of food, yet he never grew bigger, but remained just the same size as when he was born; still his eyes were sharp and sparkling, and he soon showed himself to be a clever little fellow, who always knew well what he was about. One day, as the woodman was getting ready to go into the wood to cut fuel, he said, “I wish I had some one to bring the cart after me, for I want to make haste.” “Oh father!” cried Tom, “I will take care of that; the cart shall be in the wood by the time you want it.” Then the woodman laughed, and said, “How can that be? you cannot reach up to the horse’s bridle.” “Never mind that, father,” said Tom, “if my mother will only harness the horse, I will get into his ear and tell him which way to go.” “Well,” said the father, “we will try for once.”

When the time came, the mother harnessed the horse to the cart, and put Tom into his ear; and as he sat there, the little man told the beast how to go, crying out, “Go on,” and “Stop,” as he wanted; so the horse went on just as if the woodman had driven it himself into the wood. It happened that, as the horse was going a little too fast, and Tom was calling out “Gently! gently!” two strangers came up. “What an odd thing that is!” said one, “there is a cart going along, and I hear a carter talking to the horse, but can see no one.” “That is strange,” said the other; “let us follow the cart and see where it goes.” So they went on into the wood, till at last they came to the place where the woodman was. Then Tom Thumb, seeing his father, cried out, “See, father, here I am, with the cart, all right and safe; now take me down.” So his father took hold of the horse with one hand, and with the other took his son out of the ear; then he put him down upon a straw, where he sat as merry as you please. The two strangers were all this time looking on, and did not know what to say for wonder. At last one took the other aside and said, “That little urchin will make our fortune if we can get him and carry him about from town to town as a show: we must buy him.” So they went to the woodman and asked him what he would take for the little man: “He will be better off,” said they, “with us than with you.” “I won’t sell him at all,” said the father, “my own flesh and blood is dearer to me than all the silver and gold in the world.” But Tom, hearing of the bargain they wanted to make, crept up his father’s coat to his shoulder, and whispered in his ear, “Take the money, father, and let them have me, I’ll soon come back to you.”

So the woodman at last agreed to sell Tom to the strangers for a large piece of gold. “Where do you like to sit?” said one of them. “Oh! put me on the rim of your hat, that will be a nice gallery for me; I can walk about there, and see the country as we go along.” So they did as he wished; and when Tom had taken leave of his father, they took him away with them. They journeyed on till it began to be dusky, and then the little man said, “Let me get down, I’m tired.” So the man took off his hat and set him down on a clod of earth in a ploughed field by the side of the road. But Tom ran about amongst the furrows, and at last slipt into an old mouse-hole. “Good night, masters,” said he, “I’m off! mind and look sharp after me the next time.” They ran directly to the place, and poked the ends of their sticks into the mouse-hole, but all in vain; Tom only crawled further and further in, and at last it became quite dark, so that they were obliged to go their way without their prize, as sulky as you please.

When Tom found they were gone, he came out of his hiding-place. “What dangerous walking it is,” said he, “in this ploughed field! If I were to fall from one of these great clods, I should certainly break my neck.” At last, by good luck, he found a large empty snail-shell. “This is lucky,” said he, “I can sleep here very well,” and in he crept. Just as he was falling asleep he heard two men passing, and one said to the other, “How shall we manage to steal that rich parson’s silver and gold?” “I’ll tell you,” cried Tom. “What noise was that?” said the thief, frightened, “I am sure I heard some one speak.” They stood still listening, and Tom said, “Take me with you, and I’ll soon show you how to get the parson’s money.” “But where are you?” said they. “Look about on the ground,” answered he, “and listen where the sound comes from.” At last the thieves found him out, and lifted him up in their hands. “You little urchin!” said they, “what can you do for us?” “Why I can get between the iron window-bars of the parson’s house, and throw you out whatever you want.” “That’s a good thought,” said the thieves, “come along, we shall see what you can do.”

When they came to the parson’s house, Tom slipt through the window-bars into the room, and then called out as loud as he could bawl, “Will you have all that is here?” At this the thieves were frightened, and said, “Softly, softly! Speak low, that you may not awaken anybody.” But Tom pretended not to understand them, and bawled out again, “How much will you have? Shall I throw it all out?” Now the cook lay in the next room, and hearing a noise she raised herself in her bed and listened. Meantime the thieves were frightened, and ran off to a little distance; but at last they plucked up courage, and said, “The little urchin is only trying to make fools of us.” So they came back and whispered softly to him, saying, “Now let us have no more of your jokes, but throw out some of the money.” Then Tom called out as loud as he could, “Very well: hold your hands, here it comes.” The cook heard this quite plain, so she sprang out of bed and ran to open the door. The thieves ran off as if a wolf was at their tails; and the maid, having groped about and found nothing, went away for a light. By the time she returned, Tom had slipt off into the barn; and when the cook had looked about and searched every hole and corner, and found nobody, she went to bed, thinking she must have been dreaming with her eyes open. The little man crawled about in the hay-loft, and at last found a glorious place to finish his night's rest in; so he laid himself down, meaning to sleep till day-light, and then find his way home to his father and mother. But, alas! how cruelly was he disappointed! what crosses and sorrows happen in this world! The cook got up early before day-break to feed the cows: she went straight to the hay-loft, and carried away a large bundle of hay with the little man in the middle of it fast asleep. He still, however, slept on, and did not awake till he found himself in the mouth of the cow, who had taken him up with a mouthful of hay. "Good lack-a-day!" said he, "how did I manage to tumble into the mill?" But he soon found out where he really was, and was obliged to have all his wits about him in order that he might not get between the cow's teeth, and so be crushed to death. At last down he went into her stomach. "It is rather dark here," said he; "they forgot to build windows in this room to let the sun in: a candle would be no bad thing."

Though he made the best of his bad luck, he did not like his quarters at all; and the worst of it was, that more and more hay was always coming down, and the space in which he was became smaller and smaller. At last he cried out as loud as he could, "Don't bring me any more hay! Don't bring me any more hay!" The maid happened to be just then milking the cow, and hearing some one speak and seeing nobody, and yet being quite sure it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so frightened that she fell off her stool and overset the milk-pail. She ran off as fast as she could to her master the parson, and said, "Sir, sir, the cow is talking!" But the parson said, "Woman, thou art surely mad!" However, he went with her into the cow-house to see what was the matter. — Scarcely had they set their foot on the threshold, when Tom called out, "Don't bring me any more hay!" Then the parson himself was frightened; and thinking the cow was surely bewitched, ordered that she should be killed directly. So the cow was killed, and the stomach, in which Tom lay, was thrown out upon a dunghill.

Tom soon set himself to work to get out, which was not a very easy task; but at last, just as he had made room to get his head out, a new misfortune befell him: a hungry wolf sprung out, and swallowed the whole stomach with Tom in it at a single gulp, and ran away. Tom, however, was not disheartened; and, thinking the wolf would not dislike having some chat with him as he was going along, he called out, "My good friend, I can show you a famous treat." "Where's that?" said the wolf. "In such and such a house," said Tom, describing his father's house, "you can crawl through the drain into the kitchen, and there you will find cakes, ham, beef, and everything your heart can desire." The wolf did not want to be asked twice; so that very night he went to the house and crawled through the drain into the kitchen, and ate and drank there to his heart's content. As soon as he was satisfied, he wanted to get away, but he had eaten so much that he could not get out the same way that he came in. This was just what Tom had reckoned upon; and he now began to set up a great shout, making all the noise he could. “Will you be quiet?” said the wolf: “you’ll awaken everybody in the house.” “What’s that to me?” said the little man: “you have had your frolic, now I’ve a mind to be merry myself;” and he began again singing and shouting as loud as he could.

The woodman and his wife, being awakened by the noise, peeped through a crack in the door; but when they saw that the wolf was there, you may well suppose that they were terribly frightened; and the woodman ran for his axe, and gave his wife a scythe.— “Now do you stay behind,” said the woodman; “and when I have knocked him on the head, do you rip up his belly for him with the scythe.” Tom heard all this, and said, “Father, father! I am here, the wolf has swallowed me:” and his father said, “Heaven be praised! we have found our dear child again;” and he told his wife not to use the scythe, for fear she should hurt him. Then he aimed a great blow, and struck the wolf on the head, and killed him on the spot; and when he was dead they cut open his body and set Tommy free. “Ah!” said the father, “what fears we have had for you!” “Yes, father,” answered he, “I have travelled all over the world, since we parted, in one way or other; and now I am very glad to get fresh air again.” “Why, where have you been?” said his father. “I have been in a mouse-hole, in a snail-shell, down a cow’s throat, and in the wolf’s belly; and yet here I am again safe and sound.” “Well,” said they, “we will not sell you again for all the riches in the world.” So they hugged and kissed their dear little son, and gave him plenty to eat and drink, and fetched new clothes for him, for his old ones were quite spoiled on his journey.

The Grateful Beasts

A certain man, who had lost almost all his money, resolved to set off with the little that was left him, and travel into the wide world. Then the first place he came to was a village, where the young people were running about crying and shouting. “What is the matter?” asked he. “See here,” answered they, “we have got a mouse that we make dance to please us. Do look at him: what a droll sight it is! how he jumps about!” But the man pitied the poor little thing, and said, “Let the mouse go, and I will give you money.” So he gave them some, and took the mouse and let him run; and he soon jumped into a hole that was close by, and was out of their reach.

Then he travelled on and came to another village, and there the children had got an ass that they made stand on its hind legs and tumble, at which they laughed and shouted, and gave the poor beast no rest. So the good man gave them also some money to let the poor ass alone.

At the next village he came to, the young people had got a bear that had been taught to dance, and they were plaguing the poor thing sadly. Then he gave them too some money to let the beast go, and the bear was very glad to get on his four feet, and seemed quite happy.

But the man had now given away all the money he had in the world, and had not a shilling in his pocket. Then said he to himself, “The king has heaps of gold in his treasury that he never uses; I cannot die of hunger, I hope I shall be forgiven if I borrow a little, and when I get rich again I will repay it all.”

Then he managed to get into the treasury, and took a very little money; but as he came out the king’s guards saw him; so they said he was a thief, and took him to the Judge, and he was sentenced to be thrown into the water in a box. The lid of the box was full of holes to let in air, and a jug of water and a loaf of bread were given him.

Whilst he was swimming along in the water very sorrowfully, he heard something nibbling and biting at the lock; and all of a sudden it fell off, the lid flew open, and there stood his old friend the little mouse, who had done him this service. And then came the ass and the bear, and pulled the box ashore; and all helped him because he had been kind to them.

But now they did not know what to do next, and began to consult together; when on a sudden a wave threw on the shore a beautiful white stone that looked like an egg. Then the bear said, “That’s a lucky thing: this is the wonderful stone, and whoever has it may have everything else that he wishes.” So the man went and picked up the stone, and wished for a palace and a garden, and a stud of horses; and his wish was fulfilled as soon as he had made it. And there he lived in his castle and garden, with fine stables and horses; and all was so grand and beautiful, that he never could wonder and gaze at it enough.

After some time, some merchants passed by that way. “See,” said they, “what a princely palace! The last time we were here, it was nothing but a desert waste.” They were very curious to know how all this had happened; so they went in and asked the master of the palace how it had been so quickly raised. “I have done nothing myself,” answered he, “it is the wonderful stone that did all.”— “What a strange stone that must be!” said they: then he invited them in and showed it to them. They asked him whether he would sell it, and offered him all their goods for it; and the goods seemed so fine and costly, that he quite forgot that the stone would bring him in a moment a thousand better and richer things, and he agreed to make the bargain.

Scarcely was the stone, however, out of his hands before all his riches were gone, and he found himself sitting in his box in the water, with his jug of water and loaf of bread by his side. The grateful beasts, the mouse, the ass, and the bear, came directly to help him; but the mouse found she could not nibble off the lock this time, for it was a great deal stronger than before. Then the bear said, “We must find the wonderful stone again, or all our endeavours will be fruitless.”

The merchants, meantime, had taken up their abode in the palace; so away went the three friends, and when they came near, the bear said, “Mouse, go in and look through the key-hole and see where the stone is kept: you are small, nobody will see you.” The mouse did as she was told, but soon came back and said, “Bad news! I have looked in, and the stone hangs under the looking-glass by a red silk string, and on each side of it sits a great cat with fiery eyes to watch it.”

Then the others took council together and said, “Go back again, and wait till the master of the palace is in bed asleep, then nip his nose and pull his hair.” Away went the mouse, and did as they directed her; and the master jumped up very angry, and rubbed his nose, and cried, “Those rascally cats are good for nothing at all, they let the mice eat my very nose and pull the hair off my head.” Then he hunted them out of the room; and so the mouse had the best of the game.

Next night as soon as the master was asleep, the mouse crept in again, and nibbled at the red silken string to which the stone hung, till down it dropped, and she rolled it along to the door; but when it got there, the poor little mouse was quite tired; so she said to the ass, “Put in your foot, and lift it over the threshold.” This was soon done: and they took up the stone, and set off for the water side. Then the ass said, “How shall we reach the box?” But the bear answered, “That is easily managed; I can swim very well, and do you, donkey, put your fore-feet over my shoulders; — mind and hold fast, and take the stone in your mouth: as for you, mouse, you can sit in my ear.”

It was all settled thus, and away they swam. After a time, the bear began to brag and boast: “We are brave fellows, are not we, ass?” said he; “what do you think?” But the ass held his tongue, and said not a word. “Why don’t you answer me?” said the bear, “you must be an ill-mannered brute not to speak when you’re spoken to.” When the ass heard this, he could hold no longer; so he opened his mouth, and dropped the wonderful stone. “I could not speak,” said he; “did not you know I had the stone in my mouth? now ’tis lost, and that’s your fault.” “Do but hold your tongue and be quiet,” said the bear; “and let us think what’s to be done.”

Then a council was held: and at last they called together all the frogs, their wives and families, relations and friends, and said, “A great enemy is coming to eat you all up; but never mind, bring us up plenty of stones, and we’ll build a strong wall to guard you.” The frogs hearing this were dreadfully frightened, and set to work, bringing up all the stones they could find. At last came a large fat frog pulling along the wonderful stone by the silken string: and when the bear saw it, he jumped for joy, and said, “Now we have found what we wanted.” So he released the old frog from his load, and told him to tell his friends they might go about their business as soon as they pleased.

Then the three friends swam off again for the box; and the lid flew open, and they found that they were but just in time, for the bread was all eaten, and the jug almost empty. But as soon as the good man had the stone in his hand, he wished himself safe and sound in his palace again; and in a moment there he was, with his garden and his stables and his horses; and his three faithful friends dwelt with him, and they all spent their time happily and merrily as long as they lived.

Jorinda and Jorindel

There was once an old castle that stood in the middle of a large thick wood, and in the castle lived an old fairy. All the day long she flew about in the form of an owl, or crept about the country like a cat; but at night she always became an old woman again. When any youth came within a hundred paces of her castle, he became quite fixed, and could not move a step till she came and set him free: but when any pretty maiden came within that distance, she was changed into a bird; and the fairy put her into a cage and hung her up in a chamber in the castle. There were seven hundred of these cages hanging in the castle, and all with beautiful birds in them.

Now there was once a maiden whose name was Jorinda: she was prettier than all the pretty girls that ever were seen; and a shepherd whose name was Jorindel was very fond of her, and they were soon to be married. One day they went to walk in the wood, that they might be alone; and Jorindel said, “We must take care that we don’t go too near to the castle.” It was a beautiful evening; the last rays of the setting sun shone bright through the long stems of the trees upon the green underwood beneath, and the turtledoves sang plaintively from the tall birches.

Jorinda sat down to gaze upon the sun; Jorindel sat by her side; and both felt sad, they knew not why; but it seemed as if they were to be parted from one another for ever. They had wandered a long way; and when they looked to see which way they should go home, they found themselves at a loss to know what path to take.

The sun was setting fast, and already half of his circle had disappeared behind the hill: Jorindel on a sudden looked behind him, and as he saw through the bushes that they had, without knowing it, sat down close under the old walls of the castle, he shrank for fear, turned pale, and trembled. Jorinda was singing,

The ring-dove sang from the willow spray,
Well-a-day! well-a-day!
He mourn’d for the fate
Of his lovely mate,
Well-a-day!

The song ceased suddenly. Jorindel turned to see the reason, and beheld his Jorinda changed into a nightingale; so that her song ended with a mournful *jug, jug*. An owl with fiery eyes flew three times round them, and three times screamed Tu whu! Tu whu! Tu whu! Jorindel could not move: he stood fixed as a stone, and could neither weep, nor speak, nor stir hand or foot. And now the sun went quite down; the gloomy night came; the owl flew into a bush; and a moment after the old fairy came forth pale and meagre, with staring eyes, and a nose and chin that almost met one another.

She mumbled something to herself, seized the nightingale, and went away with it in her hand. Poor Jorindel saw the nightingale was gone, — but what could he do? he could not speak, he could not move from the spot where he stood. At last the fairy came back, and sung with a hoarse voice,

Till the prisoner's fast,
And her doom is cast,
There stay! Oh, stay!
When the charm is around her,
And the spell has bound her,
Hie away! away!

On a sudden Jorindel found himself free. Then he fell on his knees before the fairy, and prayed her to give him back his dear Jorinda: but she said he should never see her again, and went her way.

He prayed, he wept, he sorrowed, but all in vain. "Alas!" he said, "what will become of me?"

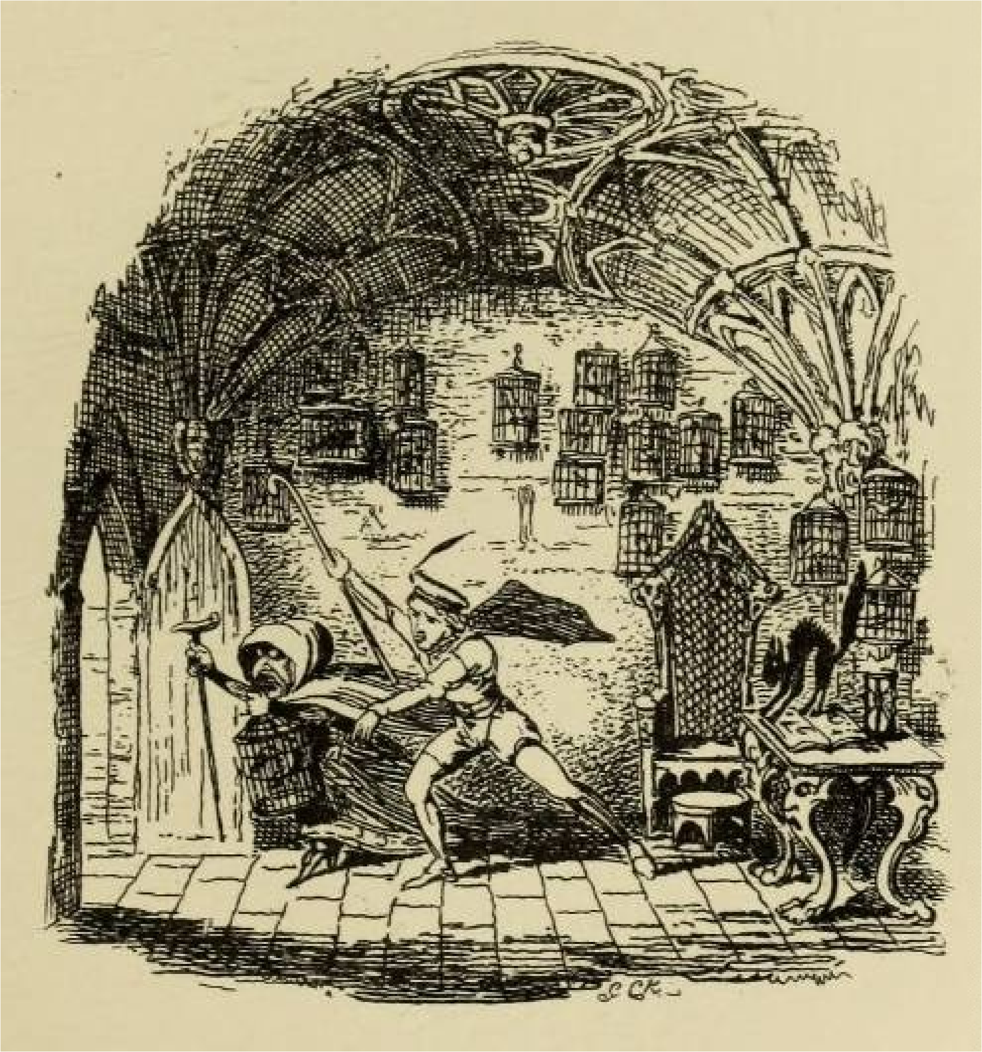
He could not return to his own home, so he went to a strange village, and employed himself in keeping sheep. Many a time did he walk round and round as near to the hated castle as he dared go. At last he dreamt one night that he found a beautiful purple flower, and in the middle of it lay a costly pearl; and he dreamt that he plucked the flower, and went with it in his hand into the castle, and that everything he touched with it was disenchanted, and that there he found his dear Jorinda again.

In the morning when he awoke, he began to search over hill and dale for this pretty flower; and eight long days he sought for it in vain: but on the ninth day early in the morning he found the beautiful purple flower; and in the middle of it was a large dew drop as big as a costly pearl.

Then he plucked the flower, and set out and travelled day and night till he came again to the castle. He walked nearer than a hundred paces to it, and yet he did not become fixed as before, but found that he could go close up to the door.

Jorindel was very glad to see this: he touched the door with the flower, and it sprang open, so that he went in through the court, and listened when he heard so many birds singing. At last he came to the chamber where the fairy sat, with the seven hundred birds singing in the seven hundred cages. And when she saw Jorindel she was very angry, and screamed with rage; but she could not come within two yards of him; for the flower he held in his hand protected him. He looked around at the birds, but alas! there were many many nightingales, and how then should he find his Jorinda? While he was thinking what to do, he observed that the fairy had taken down one of the cages, and was making her escape through the door. He ran or flew to her, touched the cage with the flower, — and his Jorinda stood before him. She threw her arms round his neck and looked as beautiful as ever, as beautiful as when they walked together in the wood.

Then he touched all the other birds with the flower, so that they resumed their old forms; and took his dear Jorinda home, where they lived happily together many years.


G. Ck

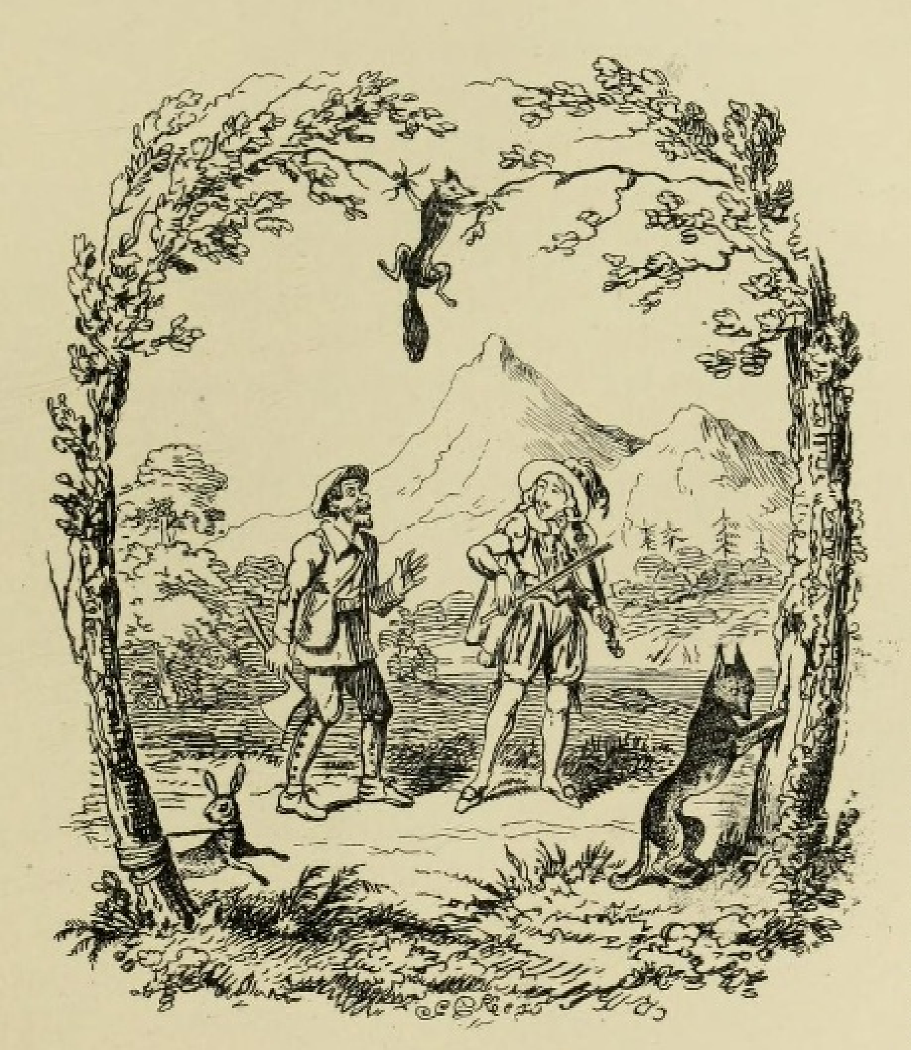
The Wonderful Musician

There was once a capital musician who played delightfully on the fiddle, and he went rambling in a forest in a merry mood. Then he said to himself, “Time goes rather heavily on, I must find a companion.” So he took up his fiddle, and fiddled away till the wood resounded with his music.

Presently up came a wolf. “Dear me! there’s a wolf coming to see me,” said the musician. But the wolf came up to him, and said, “How very prettily you play! I wish you would teach me.” “That is easily done,” said the musician, “if you will only do what I bid you.” “Yes,” replied the wolf, “I shall be a very apt scholar.” So they went on a little way together, and came at last to an old oak tree that was hollow within, and had a large crack in the middle of the trunk. “Look there,” said the musician, “if you wish to learn to fiddle, put your fore-feet into that crack.” The wolf did as he was bid: but the musician picked up a large stone and wedged both his fore-feet fast into the crack, so as to make him a prisoner. “Now be so good as to wait there till I come back,” said he, and jogged on.

After a while, he said again to himself, “Time goes very heavily, I must find another companion.” So he took his fiddle, and fiddled away again in the wood. Presently up came a fox that was wandering close by. “Ah! there is a fox,” said he. The fox came up and said, “You delightful musician, how prettily you play! I must and will learn to play as you do.” “That you may soon do,” said the musician, “if you do as I tell you.” “That I will,” said the fox. So they travelled on together till they came to a narrow footpath with high bushes on each side. Then the musician bent a stout hazel stem down to the ground from one side of the path, and set his foot on the top, and held it fast; and bent another from the other side, and said to the fox, “Now, pretty fox, if you want to fiddle, give me hold of your left paw.” So the fox gave him his paw; and he tied it fast to the top of one of the hazel stems. “Now give me your right,” said he; and the fox did as he was told: then the musician tied that paw to the other hazel; and took off his foot, and away up flew the bushes, and the fox too, and hung sprawling and swinging in the air. “Now be so kind as to stay there till I come back,” said the musician, and jogged on.

But he soon said to himself, “Time begins to hang heavy, I must find a companion.” So he took up his fiddle, and fiddled away divinely. Then up came a hare running along. “Ah! there is a hare,” said the musician. And the hare said to him, “You fine fiddler, how beautifully you play! will you teach me?” “Yes,” said the musician, “I will soon do that, if you will follow my orders.” “Yes,” said the hare, “I shall make a good scholar.” Then they went on together very well for a long while, till they came to an open space in the wood. The musician tied a string round the hare’s neck, and fastened the other end to the tree. “Now,” said he, “pretty hare, quick, jump about, run round the tree twenty times.” So the silly hare did as she was bid: and when she had run twenty times round the tree, she had twisted the string twenty times round the trunk, and was fast prisoner; and she might pull and pull away as long as she pleased, and only pulled the string faster about her neck. "Now wait there till I come back," said the musician.



But the wolf had pulled and bitten and scratched at the stone a long while, till at last he had got his feet out and was at liberty. Then he said in a great passion, "I will run after that rascally musician and tear him in pieces." As the fox saw him run by, he said, "Ah, brother wolf, pray let me down, the musician has played tricks with me." So the wolf set to work at the bottom of the hazel stem, and bit it in two; and away went both together to find the musician: and as they came to the hare, she cried out too for help. So they went and set her free, and all followed the enemy together.

Meantime the musician had been fiddling away, and found another companion; for a poor woodcutter had been pleased with the music, and could not help following him with his axe under his arm. The musician was pleased to get a man for his companion, and behaved very civilly to him, and played him no tricks, but stopped and played his prettiest tunes till his heart overflowed for joy. While the woodcutter was standing listening, he saw the wolf, the fox, and the hare coming, and knew by their faces that they were in a great rage, and coming to do some mischief. So he stood before the musician with his great axe, as much as to say, No one shall hurt him as long as I have this axe. And when the beasts saw this, they were so frightened that they ran back into the wood. Then the musician played the woodcutter one of his best tunes for his pains, and went on with his journey.

The Queen Bee

Two king's sons once upon a time went out into the world to seek their fortunes; but they soon fell into a wasteful foolish way of living, so that they could not return home again. Then their young brother, who was a little insignificant dwarf, went out to seek for his brothers: but when he had found them they only laughed at him, to think that he, who was so young and simple, should try to travel through the world, when they, who were so much wiser, had been unable to get on. However, they all set out on their journey together, and came at last to an ant-hill. The two elder brothers would have pulled it down, in order to see how the poor ants in their fright would run about and carry off their eggs. But the little dwarf said, "Let the poor things enjoy themselves, I will not suffer you to trouble them."

So on they went, and came to a lake where many many ducks were swimming about. The two brothers wanted to catch two, and roast them. But the dwarf said, "Let the poor things enjoy themselves, you shall not kill them." Next they came to a bees' nest in a hollow tree, and there was so much honey that it ran down the trunk; and the two brothers wanted to light a fire under the tree and kill the bees, so as to get their honey. But the dwarf held them back, and said, "Let the pretty insects enjoy themselves, I cannot let you burn them."

At length the three brothers came to a castle: and as they passed by the stables they saw fine horses standing there, but all were of marble, and no man was to be seen. Then they went through all the rooms, till they came to a door on which were three locks: but in the middle of the door there was a wicket, so that they could look into the next room. There they saw a little grey old man sitting at a table; and they called to him once or twice, but he did not hear: however, they called a third time, and then he rose and came out to them.

He said nothing, but took hold of them and led them to a beautiful table covered with all sorts of good things: and when they had eaten and drunk, he showed each of them to a bedchamber.

The next morning he came to the eldest and took him to a marble table, where were three tablets, containing an account of the means by which the castle might be disenchanted. The first tablet said— "In the wood, under the moss, lie the thousand pearls belonging to the king's daughter; they must all be found: and if one be missing by set of sun, he who seeks them will be turned into marble."

The eldest brother set out, and sought for the pearls the whole day; but the evening came, and he had not found the first hundred: so he was turned into stone as the tablet had foretold.

The next day the second brother undertook the task; but he succeeded no better than the first; for he could only find the second hundred of the pearls; and therefore he too was turned into stone.

At last came the little dwarf’s turn; and he looked in the moss; but it was so hard to find the pearls, and the job was so tiresome! — so he sat down upon a stone and cried. And as he sat there, the king of the ants (whose life he had saved) came to help him, with five thousand ants; and it was not long before they had found all the pearls and lay them in a heap.

The second tablet said— “The key of the princess’s bedchamber must be fished up out of the lake.” And as the dwarf came to the brink of it, he saw the two ducks whose lives he had saved swimming about; and they dived down and soon brought up the key from the bottom.

The third task was the hardest. It was to choose out the youngest and the best of the king’s three daughters. Now they were all beautiful, and all exactly alike: but he was told that the eldest had eaten a piece of sugar, the next some sweet syrup, and the youngest a spoonful of honey; so he was to guess which it was that had eaten the honey.

Then came the queen of the bees, who had been saved by the little dwarf from the fire, and she tried the lips of all three; but at last she sat upon the lips of the one that had eaten the honey; and so the dwarf knew which was the youngest. Thus the spell was broken, and all who had been turned into stones awoke, and took their proper forms. And the dwarf married the youngest and the best of the princesses, and was king after her father’s death; but his two brothers married the other two sisters.

The Dog and the Sparrow

A shepherd’s dog had a master who took no care of him, but often let him suffer the greatest hunger. At last he could bear it no longer; so he took to his heels, and off he ran in a very sad and sorrowful mood. On the road he met a sparrow, that said to him, “Why are you so sad, my friend?” “Because,” said the dog, “I am very very hungry, and have nothing to eat.” “If that be all,” answered the sparrow, “come with me into the next town, and I will soon find you plenty of food.” So on they went together into the town: and as they passed by a butcher’s shop, the sparrow said to the dog, “Stand there a little while, till I peck you down a piece of meat.” So the sparrow perched upon the shelf: and having first looked carefully about her to see if any one was watching her, she pecked and scratched at a steak that lay upon the edge of the shelf, till at last down it fell. Then the dog snapped it up, and scrambled away with it into a corner, where he soon ate it all up. “Well,” said the sparrow, “you shall have some more if you will; so come with me to the next shop, and I will peck you down another steak.” When the dog had eaten this too, the sparrow said to him, “Well, my good friend, have you had enough now?” “I have had plenty of meat,” answered he, “but I should like to have a piece of bread to eat after it.” “Come with me then,” said the sparrow, “and you shall soon have that too.” So she took him to a baker’s shop, and pecked at two rolls that lay in the window, till they fell down: and as the dog still wished for more, she took him to another shop and pecked down some more for him. When that was eaten, the sparrow asked him whether he had had enough now. “Yes,” said he; “and now let us take a walk a little way out of the town.” So they both went out upon the high road: but as the weather was warm, they had not gone far before the dog said, “I am very much tired, — I should like to take a nap.” “Very well,” answered the sparrow, “do so, and in the meantime I will perch upon that bush.” So the dog stretched himself out on the road, and fell fast asleep. Whilst he slept, there came by a carter with a cart drawn by three horses, and loaded with two casks of wine. The sparrow, seeing that the carter did not turn out of the way, but would go on in the track in which the dog lay, so as to drive over him, called out, “Stop! stop! Mr. Carter, or it shall be the worse for you.” But the carter, grumbling to himself, “You make it the worse for me, indeed! what can you do!” cracked his whip, and drove his cart over the poor dog, so that the wheels crushed him to death. “There,” cried the sparrow, “thou cruel villain, thou hast killed my friend the dog. Now mind what I say. This deed of thine shall cost thee all thou art worth.” “Do your worst, and welcome,” said the brute, “what harm can you do me?” and passed on. But the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked at the bung of one of the casks till she loosened it; and then all the wine ran out, without the carter seeing it. At last he looked round, and saw that the cart was dripping and the cask quite empty. “What an unlucky wretch I am!” cried he. “Not wretch enough yet!” said the sparrow, as she alighted upon the head of one of the horses, and pecked at him till he reared up and kicked. When the carter saw this, he drew out his hatchet and aimed a blow at the sparrow, meaning to kill her; but she flew away, and the blow fell upon the poor horse's head with such force, that he fell down dead. “Unlucky wretch that I am!” cried he. “Not wretch enough yet!” said the sparrow. And as the carter went on with the other two horses, she again crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked out the bung of the second cask, so that all the wine ran out. When the carter saw this, he again cried out, “Miserable wretch that I am!” But the sparrow answered “Not wretch enough yet!” and perched on the head of the second horse, and pecked at him too. The carter ran up and struck at her again with his hatchet; but away she flew, and the blow fell upon the second horse and killed him on the spot. “Unlucky wretch that I am!” said he. “Not wretch enough yet!” said the sparrow; and perching upon the third horse, she began to peck him too. The carrier was mad with fury; and without looking about him, or caring what he was about, struck again at the sparrow; but killed his third horse as he had done the other two. “Alas! miserable wretch that I am!” cried he. “Not wretch enough yet!” answered the sparrow as she flew away; “now will I plague and punish thee at thy own house.” The carter was forced at last to leave his cart behind him, and to go home overflowing with rage and vexation. “Alas!” said he to his wife, “what ill luck has befallen me! — my wine is all spilt, and my horses all three dead.” “Alas! husband,” replied she, “and a wicked bird has come into the house, and has brought with her all the birds in the world, I am sure, and they have fallen upon our corn in the loft, and are eating it up at such a rate!” Away ran the husband upstairs, and saw thousands of birds sitting upon the floor eating up his corn, with the sparrow in the midst of them. “Unlucky wretch that I am!” cried the carter; for he saw that the corn was almost all gone. “Not wretch enough yet!” said the sparrow; “thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life yet!” and away she flew.

The carter seeing that he had thus lost all that he had, went down into his kitchen; and was still not sorry for what he had done, but sat himself angrily and sulkily in the chimney corner. But the sparrow sat on the outside of the window, and cried, “Carter! thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life!” With that he jumped up in a rage, seized his hatchet, and threw it at the sparrow; but it missed her, and only broke the window. The sparrow now hopped in, perched upon the window-seat, and cried, “Carter! it shall cost thee thy life!” Then he became mad and blind with rage, and struck the window seat with such force that he cleft it in two: and as the sparrow flew from place to place, the carter and his wife were so furious, that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table, and at last the walls, without touching the bird at all. In the end, however, they caught her: and the wife said, “Shall I kill her at once?” “No,” cried he, “that is letting her off too easily: she shall die a much more cruel death; I will eat her.” But the sparrow began to flutter about, and stretched out her neck and cried, “Carter! it shall cost thee thy life yet!” With that he could wait no longer: so he gave his wife the hatchet, and cried, “Wife, strike at the bird and kill her in my hand.” And the wife struck; but she missed her aim, and hit her husband on the head so that he fell down dead, and the sparrow flew quietly home to her nest.

Frederick and Catherine

There was once a man called Frederick: he had a wife whose name was Catherine, and they had not long been married. One day Frederick said, “Kate! I am going to work in the fields; when I come back I shall be hungry, so let me have something nice cooked, and a good draught of ale.” “Very well,” said she, “it shall all be ready.” When dinner-time drew nigh, Catherine took a nice steak, which was all the meat she had, and put it on the fire to fry. The steak soon began to look brown, and to crackle in the pan; and Catherine stood by with a fork and turned it: then she said to herself, “The steak is almost ready, I may as well go to the cellar for the ale.” So she left the pan on the fire, and took a large jug and went into the cellar and tapped the ale cask. The beer ran into the jug, and Catherine stood looking on. At last it popped into her head, “The dog is not shut up — he may be running away with the steak; that’s well thought of.” So up she ran from the cellar; and sure enough the rascally cur had got the steak in his mouth, and was making off with it.

Away ran Catherine, and away ran the dog across the field: but he ran faster than she, and stuck close to the steak. “It’s all gone, and ‘what can’t be cured must be endured,’” said Catherine. So she turned round; and as she had run a good way and was tired, she walked home leisurely to cool herself.

Now all this time the ale was running too, for Catherine had not turned the cock; and when the jug was full the liquor ran upon the floor till the cask was empty. When she got to the cellar stairs she saw what had happened. “My stars!” said she, “what shall I do to keep Frederick from seeing all this slopping about?” So she thought a while; and at last remembered that there was a sack of fine meal bought at the last fair, and that if she sprinkled this over the floor it would suck up the ale nicely. “What a lucky thing,” said she, “that we kept that meal! we have now a good use for it.” So away she went for it: but she managed to set it down just upon the great jug full of beer, and upset it; and thus all the ale that had been saved was set swimming on the floor also. “Ah! well,” said she, “when one goes, another may as well follow.” Then she strewed the meal all about the cellar, and was quite pleased with her cleverness, and said, “How very neat and clean it looks!”

At noon Frederick came home. “Now, wife,” cried he, “what have you for dinner?” “O Frederick!” answered she, “I was cooking you a steak; but while I went down to draw the ale, the dog ran away with it; and while I ran after him, the ale all ran out; and when I went to dry up the ale with the sack of meal that we got at the fair, I upset the jug: but the cellar is now quite dry, and looks so clean!” “Kate, Kate,” said he, “how could you do all this? Why did you leave the steak to fry, and the ale to run, and then spoil all the meal?” “Why, Frederick,” said she, “I did not know I was doing wrong, you should have told me before.”

The husband thought to himself, If my wife manages matters thus, I must look sharp myself. Now he had a good deal of gold in the house: so he said to Catherine, “What pretty yellow buttons these are! I shall put them into a box and bury them in the garden; but take care that you never go near or meddle with them.” “No, Frederick,” said she, “that I never will.” As soon as he was gone, there came by some pedlars with earthenware plates and dishes, and they asked her whether she would buy. “Oh dear me, I should like to buy very much, but I have no money: if you had any use for yellow buttons, I might deal with you.” “Yellow buttons!” said they: “let us have a look at them.” “Go into the garden, and dig where I tell you, and you will find the yellow buttons: I dare not go myself.” So the rogues went: and when they found what these yellow buttons were, they took them all away, and left her plenty of plates and dishes. Then she set them all about the house for a show: and when Frederick came back, he cried out, “Kate, what have you been doing?” “See,” said she, “I have bought all these with your yellow buttons: but I did not touch them myself; the pedlars went themselves and dug them up.” “Wife, wife,” said Frederick, “what a pretty piece of work you have made! those yellow buttons were all my money: how came you to do such a thing?” “Why,” answered she, “I did not know there was any harm in it; you should have told me.”

Catherine stood musing for a while, and at last said to her husband, “Hark ye, Frederick, we will soon get the gold back: let us run after the thieves.” “Well, we will try,” answered he; “but take some butter and cheese with you, that we may have something to eat by the way.” “Very well,” said she; and they set out: and as Frederick walked the fastest, he left his wife some way behind. “It does not matter,” thought she: “when we turn back, I shall be so much nearer home than he.”

Presently she came to the top of a hill; down the side of which there was a road so narrow that the cart-wheels always chafed the trees on each side as they passed. “Ah, see now,” said she, “how they have bruised and wounded those poor trees; they will never get well.” So she took pity on them, and made use of the butter to grease them all, so that the wheels might not hurt them so much. While she was doing this kind office, one of her cheeses fell out of the basket, and rolled down the hill. Catherine looked, but could not see where it was gone; so she said, “Well, I suppose the other will go the same way and find you; he has younger legs than I have.” Then she rolled the other cheese after it; and away it went, nobody knows where, down the hill. But she said she supposed they knew the road, and would follow her, and she could not stay there all day waiting for them.

At last she overtook Frederick, who desired her to give him something to eat. Then she gave him the dry bread. “Where are the butter and cheese?” said he. “Oh!” answered she, “I used the butter to grease those poor trees that the wheels chafed so: and one of the cheeses ran away, so I sent the other after it to find it, and I suppose they are both on the road together somewhere.” “What a goose you are to do such silly things!” said the husband. “How can you say so?” said she; “I am sure you never told me not."

They ate the dry bread together; and Frederick said, "Kate, I hope you locked the door safe when you came away." "No," answered she, "you did not tell me." "Then go home, and do it now before we go any further," said Frederick, "and bring with you something to eat."

Catherine did as he told her, and thought to herself by the way, "Frederick wants something to eat; but I don't think he is very fond of butter and cheese: I'll bring him a bag of fine nuts, and the vinegar, for I have often seen him take some."

[Transcriber's Note: original image missing in source scans]

When she reached home, she bolted the back door, but the front door she took off the hinges, and said, "Frederick told me to lock the door, but surely it can nowhere be so safe as if I take it with me." So she took her time by the way: and when she overtook her husband she cried out, "There, Frederick, there is the door itself, now you may watch it as carefully as you please." "Alas! alas!" said he, "what a clever wife I have! I sent you to make the house fast, and you take the door away, so that everybody may go in and out as they please: — however, as you have brought the door, you shall carry it about with you for your pains." "Very well," answered she, "I'll carry the door; but I'll not carry the nuts and vinegar bottle also, — that would be too much of a load; so, if you please, I'll fasten them to the door."

Frederick of course made no objection to that plan, and they set off into the wood to look for the thieves; but they could not find them: and when it grew dark, they climbed up into a tree to spend the night there. Scarcely were they up, than who should come by but the very rogues they were looking for. They were in truth great rascals, and belonged to that class of people who find things before they are lost: they were tired; so they sat down and made a fire under the very tree where Frederick and Catherine were. Frederick slipped down on the other side, and picked up some stones. Then he climbed up again, and tried to hit the thieves on the head with them: but they only said, "It must be near morning, for the wind shakes the fir-apples down."

Catherine, who had the door on her shoulder, began to be very tired; but she thought it was the nuts upon it that were so heavy: so she said softly, "Frederick, I must let the nuts go." "No," answered he, "not now, they will discover us." "I can't help that, they must go." "Well then, make haste and throw them down, if you will." Then away rattled the nuts down among the boughs; and one of the thieves cried, "Bless me it is hailing."

A little while after, Catherine thought the door was still very heavy: so she whispered to Frederick, "I must throw the vinegar down." "Pray don't," answered he, "they will discover us." "I can't help that," said she, "go it must." So she poured all the vinegar down; and the thieves said, "What a heavy dew there is!"

At last it popped into Catherine's head that it was the door itself that was so heavy all the time: so she whispered Frederick, "I must throw the door down soon." But he begged and prayed her not to do so, for he was sure it would betray them. “Here goes, however,” said she: and down went the door with such a clatter upon the thieves, that they cried out “Murder!” and not knowing what was coming, ran away as fast as they could, and left all the gold. So when Frederick and Catherine came down, there they found all their money safe and sound.

The Three Children of Fortune

Once upon a time a father sent far his three sons, and gave to the eldest a cock, to the second a scythe, and to the third a cat. “I am now old,” said he, “my end is approaching, and I would fain provide for you before I die. Money I have none, and what I now give you seems of but little worth; yet it rests with yourselves alone to turn my gifts to good account. Only seek out for a land where what you have is as yet unknown, and your fortune is made.”

After the death of the father, the eldest set out with his cock: but wherever he went, in every town he saw from afar off a cock sitting upon the church steeple, and turning round with the wind. In the villages he always heard plenty of them crowing, and his bird was therefore nothing new; so there did not seem much chance of his making his fortune. At length it happened that he came to an island where the people who lived there had never heard of a cock, and knew not even how to reckon the time. They knew, indeed, if it were morning or evening; but at night, if they lay awake, they had no means of knowing how time went. “Behold,” said he to them, “what a noble animal this is! how like a knight he is! he carries a bright red crest upon his head, and spurs upon his heels; he crows three times every night, at stated hours, and at the third time the sun is about to rise. But this is not all; sometimes he screams in broad day-light, and then you must take warning, for the weather is surely about to change.” This pleased the natives mightily; they kept awake one whole night, and heard, to their great joy, how gloriously the cock called the hour, at two, four, and six o’clock. Then they asked him whether the bird was to be sold, and how much he would sell it for. “About as much gold as an ass can carry,” said he. “A very fair price for such an animal,” cried they with one voice; and agreed to give him what he asked.

When he returned home with his wealth, his brothers wondered greatly; and the second said, “I will now set forth likewise, and see if I can turn my scythe to as good an account.” There did not seem, however, much likelihood of this; for go where he would, he was met by peasants who had as good a scythe on their shoulders as he had. But at last, as good luck would have it, he came to an island where the people had never heard of a scythe: there, as soon as the corn was ripe, they went into the fields and pulled it up; but this was very hard work, and a great deal of it was lost. The man then set to work with his scythe; and mowed down their whole crop so quickly, that the people stood staring open-mouthed with wonder. They were willing to give him what he asked for such a marvellous thing: but he only took a horse laden with as much gold as it could carry.

Now the third brother had a great longing to go and see what he could make of his cat. So he set out: and at first it happened to him as it had to the others, so long as he kept upon the mainland, he met with no success; there were plenty of cats everywhere, indeed too many, so that the young ones were for the most part, as soon as they came into the world, drowned in the water. At last he passed over to an island, where, as it chanced most luckily for him, nobody had ever seen a cat; and they were overrun with mice to such a degree, that the little wretches danced upon the tables and chairs, whether the master of the house were at home or not. The people complained loudly of this grievance; the king himself knew not how to rid himself of them in his palace; in every corner mice were squeaking, and they gnawed everything that their teeth could lay hold of. Here was a fine field for Puss — she soon began her chase, and had cleared two rooms in the twinkling of an eye; when the people besought their king to buy the wonderful animal, for the good of the public, at any price. The king willingly gave what was asked, — a mule laden with gold and jewels; and thus the third brother returned home with a richer prize than either of the others.

Meantime the cat feasted away upon the mice in the royal palace, and devoured so many that they were no longer in any great numbers. At length, quite spent and tired with her work, she became extremely thirsty; so she stood still, drew up her head, and cried, “Miau, Miau!” The king gathered together all his subjects when they heard this strange cry, and many ran shrieking in a great fright out of the palace. But the king held a council below as to what was best to be done; and it was at length fixed to send a herald to the cat, to warn her to leave the castle forthwith, or that force would be used to remove her. “For,” said the counsellors, “we would far more willingly put up with the mice (since we are used to that evil), than get rid of them at the risk of our lives.” A page accordingly went, and asked the cat whether she were willing to quit the castle. But Puss, whose thirst became every moment more and more pressing, answered nothing but “Miau! Miau!” which the page interpreted to mean “No! No!” and therefore carried this answer to the king. “Well,” said the counsellors, “then we must try what force will do.” So the guns were planted, and the palace was fired upon from all sides. When the fire reached the room where the cat was, she sprang out of the window and ran away; but the besiegers did not see her, and went on firing until the whole palace was burnt to the ground.

King Grisly-Beard

A great king had a daughter who was very beautiful, but so proud and haughty and conceited, that none of the princes who came to ask her in marriage were good enough for her, and she only made sport of them.

Once upon a time the king held a great feast, and invited all her suitors; and they sat in a row according to their rank, kings and princes and dukes and earls. Then the princess came in and passed by them all, but she had something spiteful to say to every one. The first was too fat: “He’s as round as a tub,” said she. The next was too tall: “What a maypole!” said she. The next was too short: “What a dumpling!” said she. The fourth was too pale, and she called him “Wallface.” The fifth was too red, so she called him “Cockscomb.” The sixth was not straight enough, so she said he was like a green stick that had been laid to dry over a baker’s oven. And thus she had some joke to crack upon every one: but she laughed more than all at a good king who was there. “Look at him,” said she, “his beard is like an old mop, he shall be called Grisly-beard.” So the king got the nickname of Grisly-beard.

But the old king was very angry when he saw how his daughter behaved, and how she ill-treated all his guests; and he vowed that, willing or unwilling, she should marry the first beggar that came to the door.

Two days after there came by a travelling musician, who began to sing under the window, and beg alms: and when the king heard him, he said, “Let him come in.” So they brought in a dirty-looking fellow; and when he had sung before the king and the princess, he begged a boon. Then the king said, “You have sung so well, that I will give you my daughter for your wife.” The princess begged and prayed; but the king said, “I have sworn to give you to the first beggar and I will keep my word.” So words and tears were of no avail; the parson was sent for, and she was married to the musician. When this was over, the king said, “Now get ready to go; you must not stay here; you must travel on with your husband.”

Then the beggar departed, and took her with him; and they soon came to a great wood. “Pray,” said she, “whose is this wood?” “It belongs to king Grisly-beard,” answered he; “hadst thou taken him, all had been thine.” “Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!” sighed she, “would that I had married king Grisly-beard!” Next they came to some fine meadows. “Whose are these beautiful green meadows?” said she. “They belong to king Grisly-beard; hadst thou taken him, they had all been thine.” “Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!” said she, “would that I had married king Grisly-beard!”

Then they came to a great city. “Whose is this noble city?” said she. “It belongs to king Grisly-beard; hadst thou taken him, it had all been thine.” “Ah! miserable wretch that I am!” sighed she, “why did I not marry king Grisly-beard?” “That is no business of mine,” said the musician; “why should you wish for another husband? am not I good enough for you?”

At last they came to a small cottage. “What a paltry place!” said she; “to whom does that little dirty hole belong?” The musician answered, “That is your and my house, where we are to live.” “Where are your servants?” cried she. “What do we want with servants?” said he, “you must do for yourself whatever is to be done. Now make the fire, and put on water and cook my supper, for I am very tired.” But the princess knew nothing of making fires and cooking, and the beggar was forced to help her. When they had eaten a very scanty meal they went to bed; but the musician called her up very early in the morning to clean the house. Thus they lived for two days: and when they had eaten up all there was in the cottage, the man said, “Wife, we can’t go on thus, spending money and earning nothing. You must learn to weave baskets.” Then he went out and cut willows and brought them home, and she began to weave; but it made her fingers very sore. “I see this work won’t do,” said he, “try and spin; perhaps you will do that better.” So she sat down and tried to spin; but the threads cut her tender fingers till the blood ran. “See now,” said the musician, “you are good for nothing, you can do no work; — what a bargain I have got! However, I’ll try and set up a trade in pots and pans, and you shall stand in the market and sell them.” “Alas!” sighed she, “when I stand in the market and any of my father’s court pass by and see me there, how they will laugh at me!”

But the beggar did not care for that; and said she must work, if she did not wish to die of hunger. At first the trade went well; for many people, seeing such a beautiful woman, went to buy her wares, and paid their money without thinking of taking away the goods. They lived on this as long as it lasted, and then her husband bought a fresh lot of ware, and she sat herself down with it in the corner of the market; but a drunken soldier soon came by, and rode his horse against her stall and broke all her goods into a thousand pieces. Then she began to weep, and knew not what to do. “Ah! what will become of me!” said she; “what will my husband say?” So she ran home and told him all. “Who would have thought you would have been so silly,” said he, “as to put an earthenware stall in the corner of the market, where everybody passes? — But let us have no more crying; I see you are not fit for this sort of work: so I have been to the king’s palace, and asked if they did not want a kitchen-maid, and they have promised to take you, and there you will have plenty to eat.”

Thus the princess became a kitchen-maid, and helped the cook to do all the dirtiest work: she was allowed to carry home some of the meat that was left, and on this she and her husband lived.

She had not been there long, before she heard that the king’s eldest son was passing by, going to be married; and she went to one of the windows and looked out. Everything was ready, and all the pomp and splendour of the court was there. Then she thought with an aching heart on her own sad fate, and bitterly grieved for the pride and folly which had brought her so low. And the servants gave her some of the rich meats, which she put into her basket to take home.

All on a sudden, as she was going out, in came the king’s son in golden clothes: and when he saw a beautiful woman at the door, he took her by the hand, and said she should be his partner in the dance: but she trembled for fear, for she saw that it was king Grisly-beard, who was making sport of her. However, he kept fast hold and led her in; and the cover of the basket came off, so that the meats in it fell all about. Then everybody laughed and jeered at her; and she was so abashed that she wished herself a thousand feet deep in the earth. She sprang to the door to run away; but on the steps king Grisly-beard overtook and brought her back, and said, “Fear me not! I am the musician who has lived with you in the hut: I brought you there because I loved you. I am also the soldier who overset your stall. I have done all this only to cure you of pride, and to punish you for the ill-treatment you bestowed on me. Now all is over; you have learnt wisdom, your faults are gone, and it is time to celebrate our marriage feast!”

Then the chamberlains came and brought her the most beautiful robes; and her father and his whole court were there already, and congratulated her on her marriage. Joy was in every face. The feast was grand, and all were merry; and I wish you and I had been of the party.

The Adventures of Chanticleer and Partlet

1. How they went to the Mountains to eat Nuts.

“The nuts are quite ripe now,” said Chanticleer to his wife Partlet, “suppose we go together to the mountains, and eat as many as we can, before the squirrel takes them all away.” “With all my heart,” said Partlet, “let us go and make a holiday of it together.” So they went to the mountains; and as it was a lovely day they stayed there till the evening. Now, whether it was that they had eaten so many nuts that they could not walk, or whether they were lazy and would not, I do not know: however, they took it into their heads that it did not become them to go home on foot. So Chanticleer began to build a little carriage of nut-shells: and when it was finished, Partlet jumped into it and sat down, and bid Chanticleer harness himself to it and draw her home. “That’s a good joke!” said Chanticleer; “no, that will never do; I had rather by half walk home; I’ll sit on the box and be coachman, if you like, but I’ll not draw.” While this was passing, a duck came quacking up, and cried out, “You thieving vagabonds, what business have you in my grounds? I’ll give it you well for your insolence!” and upon that she fell upon Chanticleer most lustily. But Chanticleer was no coward, and returned the duck’s blows with his sharp spurs so fiercely, that she soon began to cry out for mercy; which was only granted her upon condition that she would draw the carriage home for them. This she agreed to do; and Chanticleer got upon the box, and drove, crying, “Now, duck, get on as fast as you can.” And away they went at a pretty good pace.

After they had travelled along a little way, they met a needle and a pin walking together along the road: and the needle cried out, “Stop! stop!” and said it was so dark that they could hardly find their way, and such dirty walking they could not get on at all: he told them that he and his friend, the pin, had been at a public house a few miles off, and had sat drinking till they had forgotten how late it was; he begged therefore that the travellers would be so kind as to give them a lift in their carriage. Chanticleer, observing that they were but thin fellows, and not likely to take up much room, told them they might ride, but made them promise not to dirty the wheels of the carriage in getting in, nor to tread on Partlet’s toes.

Late at night they arrived at an inn; and as it was bad travelling in the dark, and the duck seemed much tired, and waddled about a good deal from one side to the other, they made up their minds to fix their quarters there: but the landlord at first was unwilling, and said his house was full, thinking they might not be very respectable company: however, they spoke civilly to him, and gave him the egg which Partlet had laid by the way, and said they would give him the duck, who was in the habit of laying one every day: so at last he let them come in, and they bespoke a handsome supper, and spent the evening very jollily.

Early in the morning, before it was quite light, and when nobody was stirring in the inn, Chanticleer awakened his wife, and, fetching the egg, they pecked a hole in it, ate it up, and threw the shells into the fire-place: they then went to the pin and needle, who were fast asleep, and, seizing them by their heads, stuck one into the landlord’s easy-chair, and the other into his handkerchief; and having done this, they crept away as softly as possible. However, the duck, who slept in the open air in the yard, heard them coming, and jumping into the brook which ran close by the inn, soon swam out of their reach.

An hour or two afterwards the landlord got up, and took his handkerchief to wipe his face, but the pin ran into him and pricked him: then he walked into the kitchen to light his pipe at the fire, but when he stirred it up the egg-shells flew into his eyes, and almost blinded him. “Bless me!” said he, “all the world seems to have a design against my head this morning:” and so saying, he threw himself sulkily into his easy-chair; but, oh dear! the needle ran into him; and this time the pain was not in his head. He now flew into a very great passion, and, suspecting the company who had come in the night before, he went to look after them, but they were all off; so he swore that he never again would take in such a troop of vagabonds, who ate a great deal, paid no reckoning, and gave him nothing for his trouble but their apish tricks.

2. How Chanticleer and Partlet went to visit Mr. Korbes.

Another day, Chanticleer and Partlet wished to ride out together; so Chanticleer built a handsome carriage with four red wheels, and harnessed six mice to it; and then he and Partlet got into the carriage, and away they drove. Soon afterwards a cat met them, and said, “Where are you going?” And Chanticleer replied,

“All on our way
A visit to pay
To Mr. Korbes, the fox, to-day.”

Then the cat said, “Take me with you.” Chanticleer said, “With all my heart: get up behind, and be sure you do not fall off.”

“Take care of this handsome coach of mine,
Nor dirty my pretty red wheels so fine!
Now, mice, be ready,
And, wheels, run steady!
For we are going a visit to pay
To Mr. Korbes, the fox, to-day.”

Soon after came up a mill-stone, an egg, a duck, and a pin; and Chanticleer gave them all leave to get into the carriage and go with them.

When they arrived at Mr. Korbes’s house, he was not at home; so the mice drew the carriage into the coach-house, Chanticleer and Partlet flew upon a beam, the cat sat down in the fire-place, the duck got into the washing cistern, the pin stuck himself into the bed pillow, the mill-stone laid himself over the house door, and the egg rolled herself up in the towel.

When Mr. Korbes came home, he went to the fire-place to make a fire; but the cat threw all the ashes in his eyes: so he ran to the kitchen to wash himself; but there the duck splashed all the water in his face; and when he tried to wipe himself, the egg broke to pieces in the towel all over his face and eyes. Then he was very angry, and went without his supper to bed; but when he laid his head on the pillow, the pin ran into his cheek: at this he became quite furious, and, jumping up, would have run out of the house; but when he came to the door, the mill-stone fell down on his head, and killed him on the spot.

3. How Partlet died and was buried, and how Chanticleer died of grief.

Another day Chanticleer and Partlet agreed to go again to the mountains to eat nuts; and it was settled that all the nuts which they found should be shared equally between them. Now Partlet found a very large nut; but she said nothing about it to Chanticleer, and kept it all to herself: however, it was so big that she could not swallow it, and it stuck in her throat. Then she was in a great fright, and cried out to Chanticleer, “Pray run as fast as you can, and fetch me some water, or I shall be choked.” Chanticleer ran as fast as he could to the river, and said, “River, give me some water, for Partlet lies on the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.” The river said, “Run first to the bride, and ask her for a silken cord, to draw up the water.” Chanticleer ran to the bride, and said, “Bride, you must give me a silken cord, for then the river will give me water, and the water I will carry to Partlet, who lies on the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.” But the bride said, “Run first, and bring me my garland that is hanging on a willow in the garden.” Then Chanticleer ran to the garden, and took the garland from the bough where it hung, and brought it to the bride; and then the bride gave him the silken cord, and he took the silken cord to the river, and the river gave him water, and he carried the water to Partlet; but in the meantime she was choked by the great nut, and lay quite dead, and never moved any more.

Then Chanticleer was very sorry, and cried bitterly; and all the beasts came and wept with him over poor Partlet. And six mice built a little hearse to carry her to her grave; and when it was ready they harnessed themselves before it, and Chanticleer drove them. On the way they met the fox. “Where are you going, Chanticleer?” said he. “To bury my Partlet,” said the other. “May I go with you?” said the fox. “Yes; but you must get up behind, or my horses will not be able to draw you.” Then the fox got up behind; and presently the wolf, the bear, the goat, and all the beasts of the wood, came and climbed upon the hearse.

So on they went till they came to a rapid stream. “How shall we get over?” said Chanticleer. Then said a straw, “I will lay myself across, and you may pass over upon me.” But as the mice were going over, the straw slipped away and fell into the water, and the six mice all fell in and were drowned. What was to be done? Then a large log of wood came and said, “I am big enough; I will lay myself across the stream, and you shall pass over upon me.” So he laid himself down; but they managed so clumsily, that the log of wood fell in and was carried away by the stream. Then a stone, who saw what had happened, came up and kindly offered to help poor Chanticleer by laying himself across the stream; and this time he got safely to the other side with the hearse, and managed to get Partlet out of it; but the fox and the other mourners, who were sitting behind, were too heavy, and fell back into the water and were all carried away by the stream and drowned.

Thus Chanticleer was left alone with his dead Partlet; and having dug a grave for her, he laid her in it, and made a little hillock over her. Then he sat down by the grave, and wept and mourned, till at last he died too: and so all were dead.

Snow-Drop

It was in the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that a certain queen sat working at a window, the frame of which was made of fine black ebony; and as she was looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully upon the red drops which sprinkled the white snow, and said, “Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as the blood, and as black as the ebony window-frame!” And so the little girl grew up: her skin was as white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as the blood, and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snow-drop.

But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who was very beautiful, but so proud that she could not bear to think that any one could surpass her. She had a magical looking-glass, to which she used to go and gaze upon herself in it, and say,

“Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is the fairest? tell me who?”

And the glass answered,

“Thou, queen, art fairest in the land.”

But Snow-drop grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old, she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered the queen, when she went to consult it as usual,

“Thou, queen, may’st fair and beauteous be,
But Snow-drop is lovelier far than thee!”

When she heard this, she turned pale with rage and envy; and called to one of her servants and said, “Take Snow-drop away into the wide wood, that I may never see her more.” Then the servant led her away; but his heart melted when she begged him to spare her life, and he said, “I will not hurt thee, thou pretty child.” So he left her by herself; and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her in pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her, but leave her to her fate.

Then poor Snow-drop wandered along through the wood in great fear; and the wild beasts roared about her, but none did her any harm. In the evening she came to a little cottage, and went in there to rest herself, for her little feet would carry her no further. Every thing was spruce and neat in the cottage: on the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven little plates with seven little loaves, and seven little glasses with wine in them; and knives and forks laid in order; and by the wall stood seven little beds. Then, as she was very hungry, she picked a little piece off each loaf, and drank a very little wine out of each glass; and after that she thought she would lie down and rest. So she tried all the little beds; and one was too long, and another was too short, till at last the seventh suited her; and there she laid herself down, and went to sleep.

Presently in came the masters of the cottage, who were seven little dwarfs that lived among the mountains, and dug and searched about for gold. They lighted up their seven lamps, and saw directly that all was not right. The first said, “Who has been sitting on my stool?” The second, “Who has been eating off my plate?” The third, “Who has been picking my bread?” The fourth, “Who has been meddling with my spoon?” The fifth, “Who has been handling my fork?” The sixth, “Who has been cutting with my knife?” The seventh, “Who has been drinking my wine?” Then the first looked round and said, “Who has been lying on my bed?” And the rest came running to him, and every one cried out that somebody had been upon his bed. But the seventh saw Snow-drop, and called all his brethren to come and see her; and they cried out with wonder and astonishment, and brought their lamps to look at her, and said, “Good heavens! what a lovely child she is!” And they were delighted to see her, and took care not to wake her; and the seventh dwarf slept an hour with each of the other dwarfs in turn, till the night was gone.

In the morning, Snow-drop told them all her story; and they pitied her, and said if she would keep all things in order, and cook and wash, and knit and spin for them, she might stay where she was, and they would take good care of her. Then they went out all day long to their work, seeking for gold and silver in the mountains; and Snow-drop remained at home: and they warned her, and said, “The queen will soon find out where you are, so take care and let no one in.”

But the queen, now that she thought Snow-drop was dead, believed that she was certainly the handsomest lady in the land; and she went to her glass and said,

“Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest? tell me who?”

And the glass answered,

“Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land;
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snow-drop is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.”

Then the queen was very much alarmed; for she knew that the glass always spoke the truth, and was sure that the servant had betrayed her. And she could not bear to think that any one lived who was more beautiful than she was; so she disguised herself as an old pedlar, and went her way over the hills to the place where the dwarfs dwelt. Then she knocked at the door, and cried “Fine wares to sell!” Snow-drop looked out at the window, and said “Good-day, good-woman; what have you to sell?” “Good wares, fine wares,” said she; “laces and bobbins of all colours.” “I will let the old lady in; she seems to be a very good sort of body,” thought Snow-drop; so she ran down, and unbolted the door. “Bless me!” said the old woman, “how badly your stays are laced! Let me lace them up with one of my nice new laces.” Snow-drop did not dream of any mischief; so she stood up before the old woman; but she set to work so nimbly, and pulled the lace so tight, that Snow-drop lost her breath, and fell down as if she were dead. “There’s an end of all thy beauty,” said the spiteful queen, and went away home.

In the evening the seven dwarfs returned; and I need not say how grieved they were to see their faithful Snow-drop stretched upon the ground motionless, as if she were quite dead. However, they lifted her up, and when they found what was the matter, they cut the lace; and in a little time she began to breathe, and soon came to life again. Then they said, “The old woman was the queen herself; take care another time, and let no one in when we are away.”

When the queen got home, she went straight to her glass, and spoke to it as usual; but to her great surprise it still said,

“Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land;
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snow-drop is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.”

Then the blood ran cold in her heart with spite and malice to see that Snow-drop still lived; and she dressed herself up again in a disguise, but very different from the one she wore before, and took with her a poisoned comb. When she reached the dwarfs’ cottage, she knocked at the door, and cried “Fine wares to sell!” But Snow-drop said, “I dare not let any one in.” Then the queen said, “Only look at my beautiful combs;” and gave her the poisoned one. And it looked so pretty that she took it up and put it into her hair to try it; but the moment it touched her head the poison was so powerful that she fell down senseless. “There you may lie,” said the queen, and went her way. But by good luck the dwarfs returned very early that evening; and when they saw Snow-drop lying on the ground, they thought what had happened, and soon found the poisoned comb. And when they took it away, she recovered, and told them all that had passed; and they warned her once more not to open the door to any one.

Meantime the queen went home to her glass, and trembled with rage when she received exactly the same answer as before; and she said, “Snow-drop shall die, if it costs me my life.” So she went secretly into a chamber, and prepared a poisoned apple: the outside looked very rosy and tempting, but whoever tasted it was sure to die. Then she dressed herself up as a peasant’s wife, and travelled over the hills to the dwarfs’ cottage, and knocked at the door; but Snow-drop put her head out of the window and said, “I dare not let any one in, for the dwarfs have told me not.” “Do as you please,” said the old woman, “but at any rate take this pretty apple; I will make you a present of it.” “No,” said Snow-drop, “I dare not take it.” “You silly girl!” answered the other, “what are you afraid of? do you think it is poisoned? Come! do you eat one part, and I will eat the other.” Now the apple was so prepared that one side was good, though the other side was poisoned. Then Snow-drop was very much tempted to taste, for the apple looked exceedingly nice; and when she saw the old woman eat, she could refrain no longer. But she had scarcely put the piece into her mouth, when she fell down dead upon the ground. “This time nothing will save thee,” said the queen; and she went home to her glass, and at last it said,

“Thou, queen, art the fairest of all the fair.”

And then her envious heart was glad, and as happy as such a heart could be.

When evening came, and the dwarfs returned home, they found Snow-drop lying on the ground: no breath passed her lips, and they were afraid that she was quite dead. They lifted her up, and combed her hair, and washed her face with wine and water; but all was in vain, for the little girl seemed quite dead. So they laid her down upon a bier, and all seven watched and bewailed her three whole days; and then they proposed to bury her: but her cheeks were still rosy, and her face looked just as it did while she was alive; so they said, “We will never bury her in the cold ground.” And they made a coffin of glass, so that they might still look at her, and wrote her name upon it, in golden letters, and that she was a king’s daughter. And the coffin was placed upon the hill, and one of the dwarfs always sat by it and watched. And the birds of the air came too, and bemoaned Snow-drop: first of all came an owl, and then a raven, but at last came a dove.

And thus Snow-drop lay for a long long time, and still only looked as though she were asleep; for she was even now as white as snow, and as red as blood, and as black as ebony. At last a prince came and called at the dwarfs’ house; and he saw Snow-drop, and read what was written in golden letters. Then he offered the dwarfs money, and earnestly prayed them to let him take her away; but they said, “We will not part with her for all the gold in the world.” At last however they had pity on him, and gave him the coffin: but the moment he lifted it up to carry it home with him, the piece of apple fell from between her lips, and Snow-drop awoke, and said, “Where am I?” And the prince answered, “Thou art safe with me.” Then he told her all that had happened, and said, “I love you better than all the world: come with me to my father’s palace, and you shall be my wife.” And Snow-drop consented, and went home with the prince; and everything was prepared with great pomp and splendour for their wedding.

To the feast was invited, among the rest, Snow-drop’s old enemy the queen; and as she was dressing herself in fine rich clothes, she looked in the glass, and said,

“Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest? tell me who?”

And the glass answered,

“Thou, lady, art loveliest *here*, I ween;
But lovelier far is the new-made queen.”

When she heard this, she started with rage; but her envy and curiosity were so great, that she could not help setting out to see the bride. And when she arrived, and saw that it was no other than Snow-drop, who, as she thought, had been dead a long while, she choked with passion, and fell ill and died; but Snow-drop and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land many many years.

The Elves and the Shoemaker

There was once a shoemaker who worked very hard and was very honest; but still he could not earn enough to live upon, and at last all he had in the world was gone, except just leather enough to make one pair of shoes. Then he cut them all ready to make up the next day, meaning to get up early in the morning to work. His conscience was clear and his heart light amidst all his troubles; so he went peaceably to bed, left all his cares to heaven, and fell asleep. In the morning, after he had said his prayers, he set himself down to his work, when, to his great wonder, there stood the shoes, all ready made, upon the table. The good man knew not what to say or think of this strange event. He looked at the workmanship; there was not one false stitch in the whole job; and all was so neat and true, that it was a complete masterpiece.

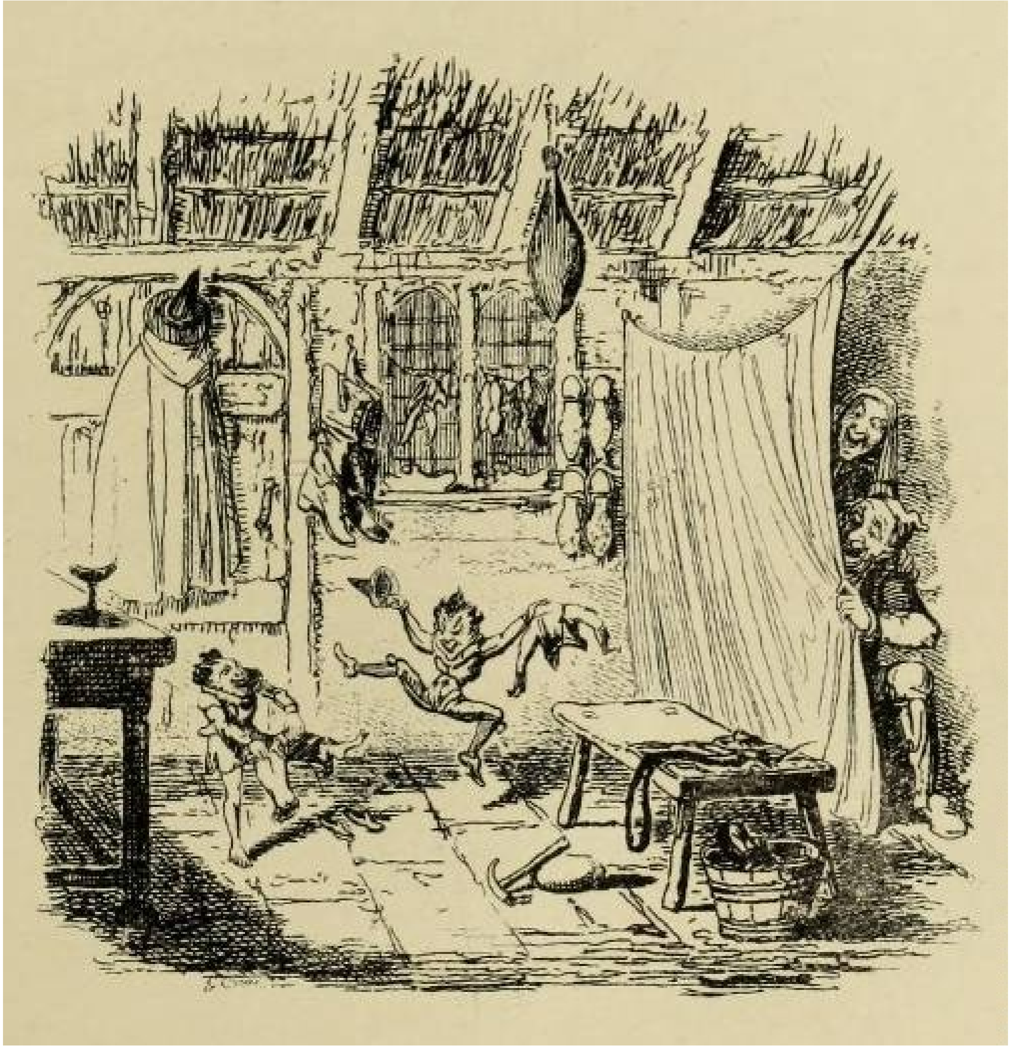
That same day a customer came in, and the shoes pleased him so well that he willingly paid a price higher than usual for them; and the poor shoemaker with the money bought leather enough to make two pairs more. In the evening he cut out the work, and went to bed early that he might get up and begin betimes next day: but he was saved all the trouble, for when he got up in the morning the work was finished ready to his hand. Presently in came buyers, who paid him handsomely for his goods, so that he bought leather enough for four pairs more. He cut out the work again overnight, and found it finished in the morning as before; and so it went on for some time: what was got ready in the evening was always done by day-break, and the good man soon became thriving and prosperous again.

One evening about Christmas time, as he and his wife were sitting over the fire chatting together, he said to her, “I should like to sit up and watch to-night, that we may see who it is that comes and does my work for me.” The wife liked the thought; so they left a light burning, and hid themselves in the corner of the room behind a curtain that was hung up there, and watched what should happen.

As soon as it was midnight, there came two little naked dwarfs; and they sat themselves upon the shoemaker’s bench, took up all the work that was cut out, and began to ply with their little fingers, stitching and rapping and tapping away at such a rate, that the shoemaker was all amazement, and could not take his eyes off for a moment. And on they went till the job was quite finished, and the shoes stood ready for use upon the table. This was long before day-break; and then they bustled away as quick as lightning.

The next day the wife said to the shoemaker, “These little wights have made us rich, and we ought to be thankful to them, and do them a good office in return. I am quite vexed to see them run about as they do; they have nothing upon their backs to keep off the cold. I’ll tell you what, I will make each of them a shirt, and a coat and waistcoat, and a pair of pantaloons into the bargain; do you make each of them a little pair of shoes.”

The thought pleased the good shoemaker very much; and one evening, when all the things were ready, they laid them on the table instead of the work that they used to cut out, and then went and hid themselves to watch what the little elves would do. About midnight they came in, and were going to sit down to their work as usual; but when they saw the clothes lying for them, they laughed and were greatly delighted. Then they dressed themselves in the twinkling of an eye, and danced and capered and sprang about as merry as could be, till at last they danced out at the door over the green; and the shoemaker saw them no more: but everything went well with him from that time forward, as long as he lived.



The Turnip

There were two brothers who were both soldiers; the one was rich, and the other poor. The poor man thought he would try to better himself; so, pulling off his red coat, he became a gardener, and dug his ground well, and sowed turnips.

When the seed came up, there was one plant bigger than all the rest; and it kept getting larger and larger, and seemed as if it would never cease growing; so that it might have been called the prince of turnips, for there never was such a one seen before, and never will again. At last it was so big that it filled a cart, and two oxen could hardly draw it; and the gardener knew not what in the world to do with it, nor whether it would be a blessing or a curse to him. One day he said to himself, “What shall I do with it? if I sell it, it will bring no more than another; and for eating, the little turnips are better than this; the best thing perhaps is to carry it and give it to the king as a mark of respect.”

Then he yoked his oxen, and drew the turnip to the Court, and gave it to the king. “What a wonderful thing!” said the king; “I have seen many strange things, but such a monster as this I never saw. Where did you get the seed? or is it only your good luck? If so, you are a true child of fortune.” “Ah, no!” answered the gardener, “I am no child of fortune; I am a poor soldier, who never could get enough to live upon; so I laid aside my red coat, and set to work, tilling the ground. I have a brother, who is rich, and your majesty knows him well, and all the world knows him; but because I am poor, everybody forgets me.”

The king then took pity on him, and said, “You shall be poor no longer. I will give you so much that you shall be even richer than your brother.” Then he gave him gold and lands and flocks, and made him so rich that his brother’s fortune could not at all be compared with his.

When the brother heard of all this, and how a turnip had made the gardener so rich, he envied him sorely, and bethought himself how he could contrive to get the same good fortune for himself. However, he determined to manage more cleverly than his brother, and got together a rich present of gold and fine horses for the king; and thought he must have a much larger gift in return: for if his brother had received so much for only a turnip, what must his present be worth?

The king took the gift very graciously, and said he knew not what to give in return more valuable and wonderful than the great turnip; so the soldier was forced to put it into a cart, and drag it home with him. When he reached home, he knew not upon whom to vent his rage and spite; and at length wicked thoughts came into his head, and he resolved to kill his brother.

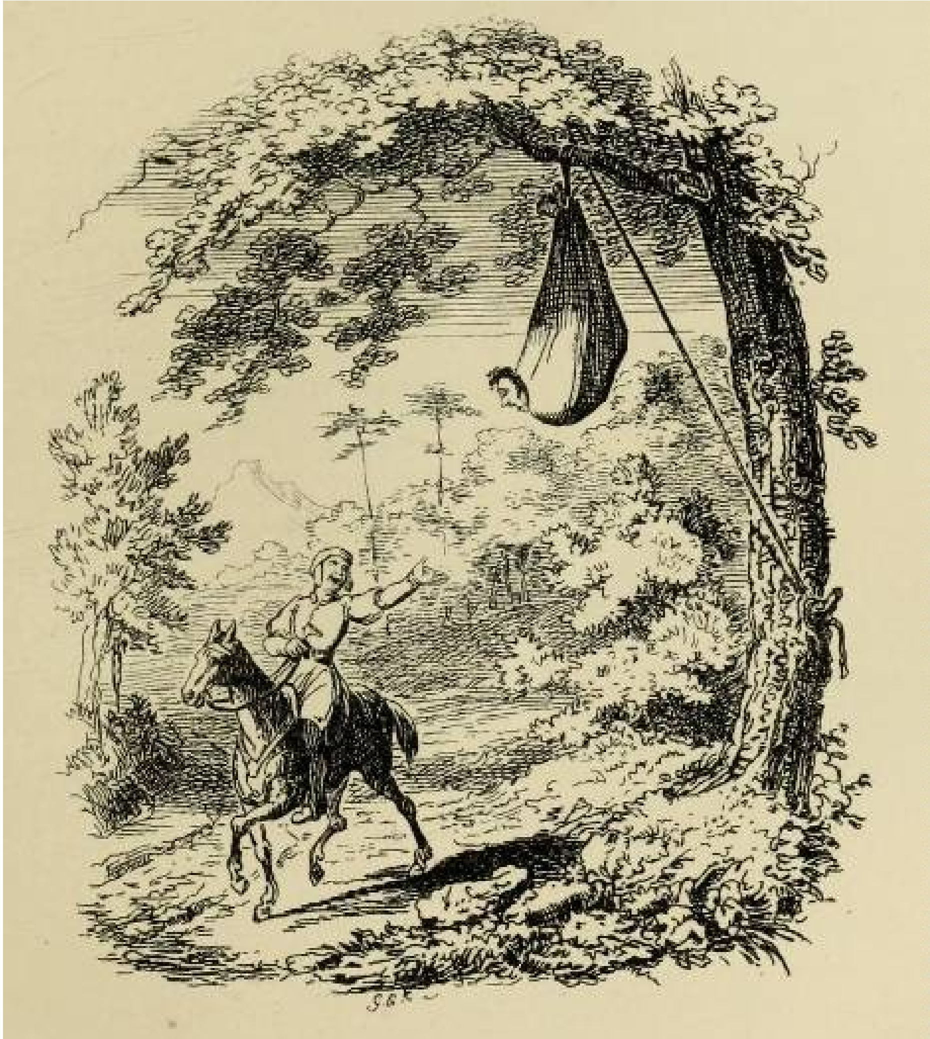
So he hired some villains to murder him; and having shown them where to lie in ambush, he went to his brother, and said, “Dear brother, I have found a hidden treasure; let us go and dig it up, and share it between us.” The other had no suspicions of his roguery: so they went out together, and as they were travelling along, the murderers rushed out upon him, bound him, and were going to hang him on a tree.

But whilst they were getting all ready, they heard the trampling of a horse at a distance, which so frightened them that they pushed their prisoner neck and shoulders together into a sack, and swung him up by a cord to the tree, where they left him dangling, and ran away. Meantime he worked and worked away, till he made a hole large enough to put out his head.

When the horseman came up, he proved to be a student, a merry fellow, who was journeying along on his nag, and singing as he went. As soon as the man in the sack saw him passing under the tree, he cried out, “Good morning! good morning to thee, my friend!” The student looked about everywhere; and seeing no one, and not knowing where the voice came from, cried out, “Who calls me?”

Then the man in the tree answered, “Lift up thine eyes, for behold here I sit in the sack of wisdom; here have I, in a short time, learned great and wondrous things. Compared to this seat, all the learning of the schools is as empty air. A little longer, and I shall know all that man can know, and shall come forth wiser than the wisest of mankind. Here I discern the signs and motions of the heavens and the stars; the laws that control the winds; the number of the sands on the sea-shore; the healing of the sick; the virtues of all simples, of birds, and of precious stones. Wert thou but once here, my friend, thou wouldst feel and own the power of knowledge.”

The student listened to all this and wondered much; at last he said, “Blessed be the day and hour when I found you; cannot you contrive to let me into the sack for a little while?” Then the other answered, as if very unwillingly, “A little space I may allow thee to sit here, if thou wilt reward me well and entreat me kindly; but thou must tarry yet an hour below, till I have learnt some little matters that are yet unknown to me.”



So the student sat himself down and waited a while; but the time hung heavy upon him, and he begged earnestly that he might ascend forthwith, for his thirst of knowledge was great. Then the other pretended to give way, and said, “Thou must let the sack of wisdom descend, by untying yonder cord, and then thou shalt enter.” So the student let him down, opened the sack, and set him free. “Now then,” cried he, “let me ascend quickly.” As he began to put himself into the sack heels first, “Wait a while,” said the gardener, “that is not the way.” Then he pushed him in head first, tied up the sack, and soon swung up the searcher after wisdom dangling in the air. “How is it with thee, friend?” said he, “dost thou not feel that wisdom comes unto thee? Rest there in peace, till thou art a wiser man than thou wert.”

So saying, he trotted off on the student’s nag, and left the poor fellow to gather wisdom till somebody should come and let him down.

Old Sultan

A shepherd had a faithful dog, called Sultan, who was grown very old, and had lost all his teeth. And one day when the shepherd and his wife were standing together before the house, the shepherd said, “I will shoot old Sultan to-morrow morning, for he is of no use now.” But his wife said, “Pray let the poor faithful creature live; he has served us well a great many years, and we ought to give him a livelihood for the rest of his days.” “But what can we do with him?” said the shepherd, “he has not a tooth in his head, and the thieves don’t care for him at all; to be sure he has served us, but then he did it to earn his livelihood; to-morrow shall be his last day, depend upon it.”

Poor Sultan, who was lying close by them, heard all that the shepherd and his wife said to one another, and was very much frightened to think to-morrow would be his last day; so in the evening he went to his good friend the wolf, who lived in the wood, and told him all his sorrows, and how his master meant to kill him in the morning. “Make yourself easy,” said the wolf, “I will give you some good advice. Your master, you know, goes out every morning very early with his wife into the field; and they take their little child with them, and lay it down behind the hedge in the shade while they are at work. Now do you lie down close by the child, and pretend to be watching it, and I will come out of the wood and run away with it: you must run after me as fast as you can, and I will let it drop; then you may carry it back, and they will think you have saved their child, and will be so thankful to you that they will take care of you as long as you live.” The dog liked this plan very well; and accordingly so it was managed. The wolf ran with the child a little way; the shepherd and his wife screamed out; but Sultan soon overtook him, and carried the poor little thing back to his master and mistress. Then the shepherd patted him on the head, and said, “Old Sultan has saved our child from the wolf, and therefore he shall live and be well taken care of, and have plenty to eat. Wife, go home, and give him a good dinner, and let him have my old cushion to sleep on as long as he lives.” So from this time forward Sultan had all that he could wish for.

Soon afterwards the wolf came and wished him joy, and said, “Now, my good fellow, you must tell no tales, but turn your head the other way when I want to taste one of the old shepherd’s fine fat sheep.” “No,” said Sultan; “I will be true to my master.” However, the wolf thought he was in joke, and came one night to get a dainty morsel. But Sultan had told his master what the wolf meant to do; so he laid wait for him behind the barn-door, and when the wolf was busy looking out for a good fat sheep, he had a stout cudgel laid about his back, that combed his locks for him finely.

Then the wolf was very angry, and called Sultan “an old rogue,” and swore he would have his revenge. So the next morning the wolf sent the boar to challenge Sultan to come into the wood to fight the matter out. Now Sultan had nobody he could ask to be his second but the shepherd’s old three-legged cat; so he took her with him, and as the poor thing limped along with some trouble, she stuck up her tail straight in the air.

The wolf and the wild boar were first on the ground; and when they espied their enemies coming, and saw the cat’s long tail standing straight in the air, they thought she was carrying a sword for Sultan to fight with; and every time she limped, they thought she was picking up a stone to throw at them; so they said they should not like this way of fighting, and the boar lay down behind a bush, and the wolf jumped up into a tree. Sultan and the cat soon came up, and looked about, and wondered that no one was there. The boar, however, had not quite hidden himself, for his ears stuck out of the bush; and when he shook one of them a little, the cat, seeing something move, and thinking it was a mouse, sprang upon it, and bit and scratched it, so that the boar jumped up and grunted, and ran away, roaring out, “Look up in the tree, there sits the one who is to blame.” So they looked up, and espied the wolf sitting amongst the branches; and they called him a cowardly rascal, and would not suffer him to come down till he was heartily ashamed of himself, and had promised to be good friends again with old Sultan.

The Lady and the Lion

A merchant, who had three daughters, was once setting out upon a journey; but before he went he asked each daughter what gift he should bring back for her. The eldest wished for pearls; the second for jewels; but the third said, “Dear father, bring me a rose.” Now it was no easy task to find a rose, for it was the middle of winter; yet, as she was the fairest daughter, and was very fond of flowers, her father said he would try what he could do. So he kissed all three, and bid them good-bye. And when the time came for his return, he had bought pearls and jewels for the two eldest, but he had sought everywhere in vain for the rose; and when he went into any garden and inquired for such a thing, the people laughed at him, and asked him whether he thought roses grew in snow. This grieved him very much, for his third daughter was his dearest child; and as he was journeying home, thinking what he should bring her, he came to a fine castle; and around the castle was a garden, in half of which it appeared to be summer time, and in the other half winter. On one side the finest flowers were in full bloom, and on the other everything looked desolate and buried in snow. “A lucky hit!” said he as he called to his servant, and told him to go to a beautiful bed of roses that was there, and bring him away one of the flowers. This done, they were riding away well pleased, when a fierce lion sprung up, and roared out, “Whoever dares to steal my roses shall be eaten up alive.” Then the man said, “I knew not that the garden belonged to you; can nothing save my life?” “No!” said the lion, “nothing, unless you promise to give me whatever meets you first on your return home; if you agree to this, I will give you your life, and the rose too for your daughter.” But the man was unwilling to do so, and said, “It may be my youngest daughter, who loves me most, and always runs to meet me when I go home.” Then the servant was greatly frightened, and said, “It may perhaps be only a cat or a dog.” And at last the man yielded with a heavy heart, and took the rose; and promised the lion whatever should meet him first on his return.

And as he came near home, it was his youngest and dearest daughter that met him; she came running and kissed him, and welcomed him home; and when she saw that he had brought her the rose, she rejoiced still more. But her father began to be very melancholy, and to weep, saying, “Alas! my dearest child! I have bought this flower dear, for I have promised to give you to a wild lion, and when he has you, he will tear you in pieces, and eat you.” And he told her all that had happened; and said she should not go, let what would happen.

But she comforted him, and said, “Dear father, what you have promised must be fulfilled; I will go to the lion, and soothe him, that he may let me return again safe home.”

The next morning she asked the way she was to go, and took leave of her father, and went forth with a bold heart into the wood. But the lion was an enchanted prince, and by day he and all his court were lions, but in the evening they took their proper forms again. And when the lady came to the castle, he welcomed her so courteously that she consented to marry him. The wedding-feast was held, and they lived happily together a long time. The prince was only to be seen as soon as evening came, and then he held his court; but every morning he left his bride, and went away by himself, she knew not whither, till night came again.

After some time he said to her, “To-morrow there will be a great feast in your father’s house, for your eldest sister is to be married; and, if you wish to go to visit her, my lions shall lead you thither.” Then she rejoiced much at the thoughts of seeing her father once more, and set out with the lions; and every one was overjoyed to see her, for they had thought her dead long since. But she told them how happy she was; and stayed till the feast was over, and then went back to the wood.

Her second sister was soon after married; and when she was invited to the wedding, she said to the prince, “I will not go alone this time; you must go with me.” But he would not, and said that would be a very hazardous thing, for if the least ray of the torch-light should fall upon him, his enchantment would become still worse, for he should be changed into a dove, and be obliged to wander about the world for seven long years. However, she gave him no rest, and said she would take care no light should fall upon him. So at last they set out together, and took with them their little child too; and she chose a large hall with thick walls, for him to sit in while the wedding torches were lighted; but unluckily no one observed that there was a crack in the door. Then the wedding was held with great pomp; but as the train came from the church, and passed with the torches before the hall, a very small ray of light fell upon the prince. In a moment he disappeared; and when his wife came in, and sought him, she found only a white dove. Then he said to her, “Seven years must I fly up and down over the face of the earth; but every now and then I will let fall a white feather, that shall show you the way I am going; follow it, and at last you may overtake and set me free.”

This said, he flew out at the door, and she followed; and every now and then a white feather fell, and showed her the way she was to journey. Thus she went roving on through the wide world, and looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor took any rest for seven years. Then she began to rejoice, and thought to herself that the time was fast coming when all her troubles should cease; yet repose was still far off: for one day as she was travelling on, she missed the white feather, and when she lifted up her eyes she could nowhere see the dove. “Now,” thought she to herself, “no human aid can be of use to me;” so she went to the sun, and said, “Thou shinest everywhere, on the mountain’s top, and the valley’s depth: hast thou anywhere seen a white dove?” “No,” said the sun, “I have not seen it; but I will give thee a casket — open it when thy hour of need comes.” So she thanked the sun, and went on her way till eventide; and when the moon arose, she cried unto it, and said, “Thou shinest through all the night, over field and grove: hast thou nowhere seen a white dove?” “No,” said the moon, “I cannot help thee; but I will give thee an egg — break it when need comes.” Then she thanked the moon, and went on till the night-wind blew; and she raised up her voice to it, and said, “Thou blowest through every tree and under every leaf: hast thou not seen the white dove?” “No,” said the night-wind; “but I will ask three other winds; perhaps they have seen it.” Then the east wind and the west wind came, and said they too had not seen it; but the south wind said, “I have seen the white dove; he has fled to the Red Sea, and is changed once more into a lion, for the seven years are passed away; and there he is fighting with a dragon, and the dragon is an enchanted princess, who seeks to separate him from you.” Then the night-wind said, “I will give thee counsel: go to the Red Sea; on the right shore stand many rods; number them, and when thou comest to the eleventh, break it off and smite the dragon with it; and so the lion will have the victory, and both of them will appear to you in their human forms. Then instantly set out with thy beloved prince, and journey home over sea and land.”

So our poor wanderer went forth, and found all as the night-wind had said; and she plucked the eleventh rod, and smote the dragon, and immediately the lion became a prince and the dragon a princess again. But she forgot the counsel which the night-wind had given; and the false princess watched her opportunity, and took the prince by the arm, and carried him away.

Thus the unfortunate traveller was again forsaken and forlorn; but she took courage and said, “As far as the wind blows, and so long as the cock crows, I will journey on till I find him once again.” She went on for a long long way, till at length she came to the castle whither the princess had carried the prince; and there was a feast prepared, and she heard that the wedding was about to be held. “Heaven aid me now!” said she; and she took the casket that the sun had given her, and found that within it lay a dress as dazzling as the sun itself. So she put it on, and went into the palace; and all the people gazed upon her; and the dress pleased the bride so much that she asked whether it was to be sold: “Not for gold and silver,” answered she; “but for flesh and blood.” The princess asked what she meant; and she said, “Let me speak with the bridegroom this night in his chamber, and I will give thee the dress.” At last the princess agreed; but she told her chamberlain to give the prince a sleeping-draught, that he might not hear or see her. When evening came, and the prince had fallen asleep, she was led into his chamber, and she sat herself down at his feet and said, “I have followed thee seven years; I have been to the sun, the moon, and the night-wind, to seek thee; and at last I have helped thee to overcome the dragon. Wilt thou then forget me quite?” But the prince slept so soundly that her voice only passed over him, and seemed like the murmuring of the wind among the fir-trees.

Then she was led away, and forced to give up the golden dress; and when she saw that there was no help for her, she went out into a meadow and sat herself down and wept. But as she sat she bethought herself of the egg that the moon had given her; and when she broke it, there ran out a hen and twelve chickens of pure gold, that played about, and then nestled under the old one’s wings, so as to form the most beautiful sight in the world. And she rose up, and drove them before her till the bride saw them from her window, and was so pleased that she came forth, and asked her if she would sell the brood. “Not for gold or silver; but for flesh and blood: let me again this evening speak with the bridegroom in his chamber.”

Then the princess thought to betray her as before, and agreed to what she asked; but when the prince went to his chamber, he asked the chamberlain why the wind had murmured so in the night. And the chamberlain told him all; how he had given him a sleeping-draught, and a poor maiden had come and spoken to him in his chamber, and was to come again that night. Then the prince took care to throw away the sleeping-draught; and when she came and began again to tell him what woes had befallen her, and how faithful and true to him she had been, he knew his beloved wife’s voice, and sprung up, and said, “You have awakened me as from a dream; for the strange princess had thrown a spell around me, so that I had altogether forgotten you: but heaven hath sent you to me in a lucky hour.”

And they stole away out of the palace by night secretly, (for they feared the princess,) and journeyed home; and there they found their child, now grown comely and fair, and lived happily together to the end of their days.

The Jew in the Bush

A farmer had a faithful and diligent servant, who had worked hard for him three years, without having been paid any wages. At last it came into the man's head that he would not go on thus without pay any longer; so he went to his master, and said, "I have worked hard for you a long time, I will trust to you to give me what I deserve to have for my trouble." The farmer was a sad miser, and knew that his man was very simple-hearted; so he took out threepence, and gave him for every year's service a penny. The poor fellow thought it was a great deal of money to have, and said to himself, "Why should I work hard, and live here on bad fare any longer? I can now travel into the wide world, and make myself merry." With that he put his money into his purse, and set out, roaming over hill and valley.

As he jogged along over the fields, singing and dancing, a little dwarf met him, and asked him what made him so merry. "Why, what should make me down-hearted?" said he; "I am sound in health and rich in purse, what should I care for? I have saved up my three years' earnings, and have it all safe in my pocket." "How much may it come to?" said the little man. "Full threepence," replied the countryman. "I wish you would give them to me," said the other; "I am very poor." Then the man pitied him, and gave him all he had; and the little dwarf said in return, "As you have such a kind honest heart, I will grant you three wishes — one for each penny; so choose whatever you like." Then the countryman rejoiced at his good luck, and said, "I like many things better than money: first, I will have a bow that will bring down everything I shoot at; secondly, a fiddle that will set every one dancing that hears me play upon it; and thirdly, I should like that every one should grant what I ask." The dwarf said he should have his three wishes; so he gave him the bow and fiddle, and went his way.

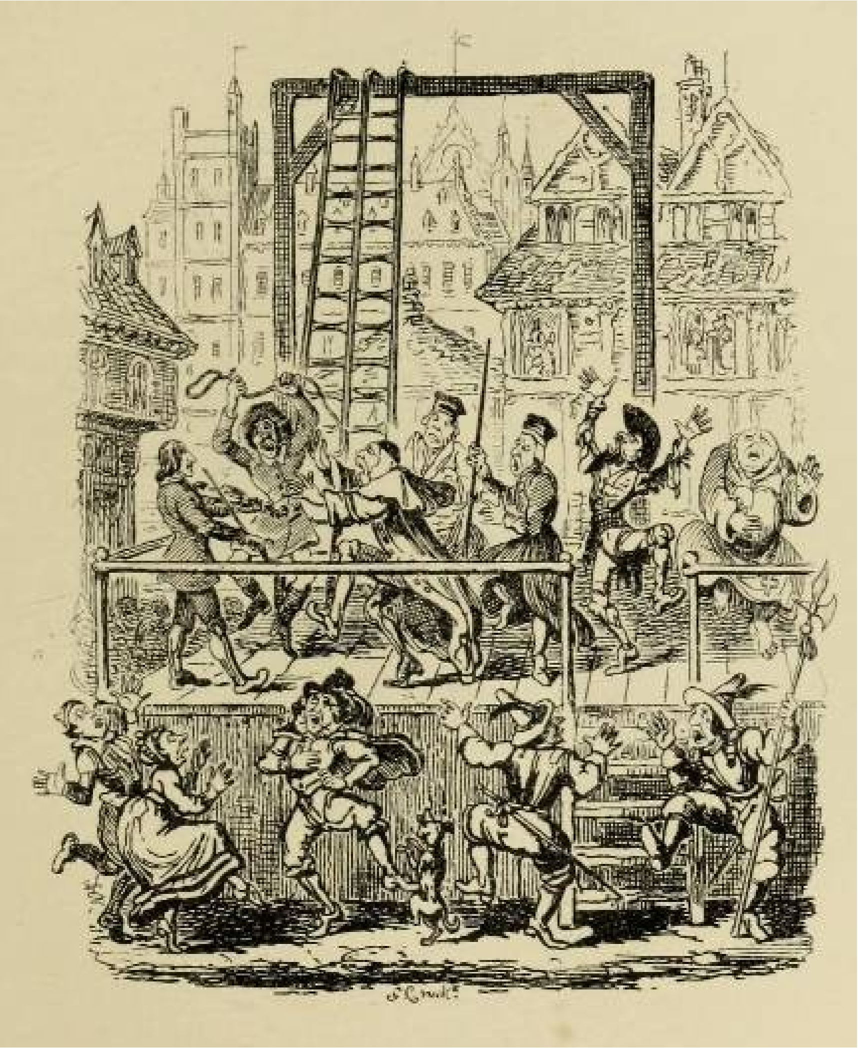
Our honest friend journeyed on his way too; and if he was merry before, he was now ten times more so. He had not gone far before he met an old Jew: close by them stood a tree, and on the topmost twig sat a thrush singing away most joyfully. "Oh, what a pretty bird!" said the Jew; "I would give a great deal of money to have such a one." "If that's all," said the countryman, "I will soon bring it down." Then he took up his bow, and down fell the thrush into the bushes at the foot of the tree. The Jew crept into the bush to find it; but directly he had got into the middle, his companion took up his fiddle and played away, and the Jew began to dance and spring about, capering higher and higher in the air. The thorn soon began to tear his clothes till they all hung in rags about him, and he himself was all scratched and wounded, so that the blood ran down. "Oh, for heaven's sake!" cried the Jew, "master! master! pray let the fiddle alone. What have I done to deserve this?" "Thou hast shaved many a poor soul close enough," said the other; "thou art only meeting thy reward:" so he played up another tune. Then the Jew began to beg and promise, and offered money for his liberty: but he did not come up to the musician's price for some time, and he danced him along brisker and brisker, and the Jew bid higher and higher, till at last he offered a round hundred of florins that he had in his purse, and had just gained by cheating some poor fellow. When the countryman saw so much money, he said, “I will agree to your proposal.” So he took the purse, put up his fiddle, and travelled on very well pleased with his bargain.

Meanwhile the Jew crept out of the bush half-naked and a piteous plight, and began to ponder how he should take his revenge, and serve his late companion some trick. At last he went to the judge, and complained that a rascal had robbed him of his money, and beaten him into the bargain; and that the fellow who did it carried a bow at his back and a fiddle hung round his neck. Then the judge sent out his officers to bring up the accused wherever they should find him; and he was soon caught and brought up to be tried.

The Jew began to tell his tale, and said he had been robbed of his money. “No, you gave it me for playing a tune to you,” said the countryman; but the judge told him that was not likely, and cut the matter short by ordering him off to the gallows.

So away he was taken; but as he stood on the steps he said, “My Lord Judge, grant me one last request.” “Anything but thy life,” replied the other. “No,” said he, “I do not ask my life; only let me play upon my fiddle for the last time.” The Jew cried out, “Oh, no! no! for heaven’s sake don’t listen to him! don’t listen to him!” But the judge said, “It is only for this once, he will soon have done.” The fact was, he could not refuse the request, on account of the dwarf’s third gift.

Then the Jew said, “Bind me fast, bind me fast, for pity’s sake.” But the countryman seized his fiddle, and struck up a tune, and at the first note judge, clerks, and jailer, were in motion; all began capering, and no one could hold the Jew. At the second note the hangman let his prisoner go, and danced also, and by the time he had played the first bar of the tune, all were dancing together — judge, court, and Jew, and all the people who had followed to look on. At first the thing was merry and pleasant enough; but when it had gone on a while, and there seemed to be no end of playing or dancing, they began to cry out and beg him to leave off; but he stopt not a whit the more for their entreaties, till the judge not only gave him his life, but promised to return him the hundred florins.



Then he called to the Jew, and said, “Tell us now, you vagabond, where you got that gold, or I shall play on for your amusement only.” “I stole it,” said the Jew in the presence of all the people; “I acknowledge that I stole it, and that you earned it fairly.” Then the countryman stopt his fiddle, and left the Jew to take his place at the gallows.

The King of the Golden Mountain

A certain merchant had two children, a son and daughter, both very young, and scarcely able to run alone. He had two richly laden ships then making a voyage upon the seas, in which he had embarked all his property, in the hope of making great gains, when the news came that they were lost. Thus from being a rich man he became very poor, so that nothing was left him but one small plot of land; and, to relieve his mind a little of his trouble, he often went out to walk there.

One day, as he was roving along, a little rough-looking dwarf stood before him, and asked him why he was so sorrowful, and what it was that he took so deeply to heart. But the merchant replied, “If you could do me any good, I would tell you.” “Who knows but I may?” said the little man; “tell me what is the matter, and perhaps I can be of some service.” Then the merchant told him how all his wealth was gone to the bottom of the sea, and how he had nothing left except that little plot of land. “Oh! trouble not yourself about that,” said the dwarf; “only promise to bring me here, twelve years hence, whatever meets you first on your return home, and I will give you as much gold as you please.” The merchant thought this was no great request; that it would most likely be his dog, or something of that sort, but forgot his little child: so he agreed to the bargain, and signed and sealed the engagement to do what was required.

But as he drew near home, his little boy was so pleased to see him, that he crept behind him and laid fast hold of his legs. Then the father started with fear, and saw what it was that he had bound himself to do; but as no gold was come, he consoled himself by thinking that it was only a joke that the dwarf was playing him.

About a month afterwards he went upstairs into an old lumber room to look for some old iron, that he might sell it and raise a little money; and there he saw a large pile of gold lying on the floor. At the sight of this he was greatly delighted, went into trade again, and became a greater merchant than before.

Meantime his son grew up, and as the end of the twelve years drew near, the merchant became very anxious and thoughtful; so that care and sorrow were written upon his face. The son one day asked what was the matter: but his father refused to tell for some time; at last however he said that he had, without knowing it, sold him to a little ugly-looking dwarf for a great quantity of gold; and that the twelve years were coming round when he must perform his agreement. Then the son said, “Father, give yourself very little trouble about that; depend upon it I shall be too much for the little man.”

When the time came, they went out together to the appointed place; and the son drew a circle on the ground, and set himself and his father in the middle. The little dwarf soon came, and said to the merchant, “Have you brought me what you promised?” The old man was silent, but his son answered, “What do you want here?” The dwarf said, “I come to talk with your father, not with you.” “You have deceived and betrayed my father,” said the son; “give him up his bond.” “No,” replied the other, “I will not yield up my rights.” Upon this a long dispute arose; and at last it was agreed that the son should be put into an open boat, that lay on the side of a piece of water hard by, and that the father should push him off with his own hand; so that he should be turned adrift. Then he took leave of his father, and set himself in the boat; and as it was pushed off it heaved, and fell on one side into the water: so the merchant thought that his son was lost, and went home very sorrowful.

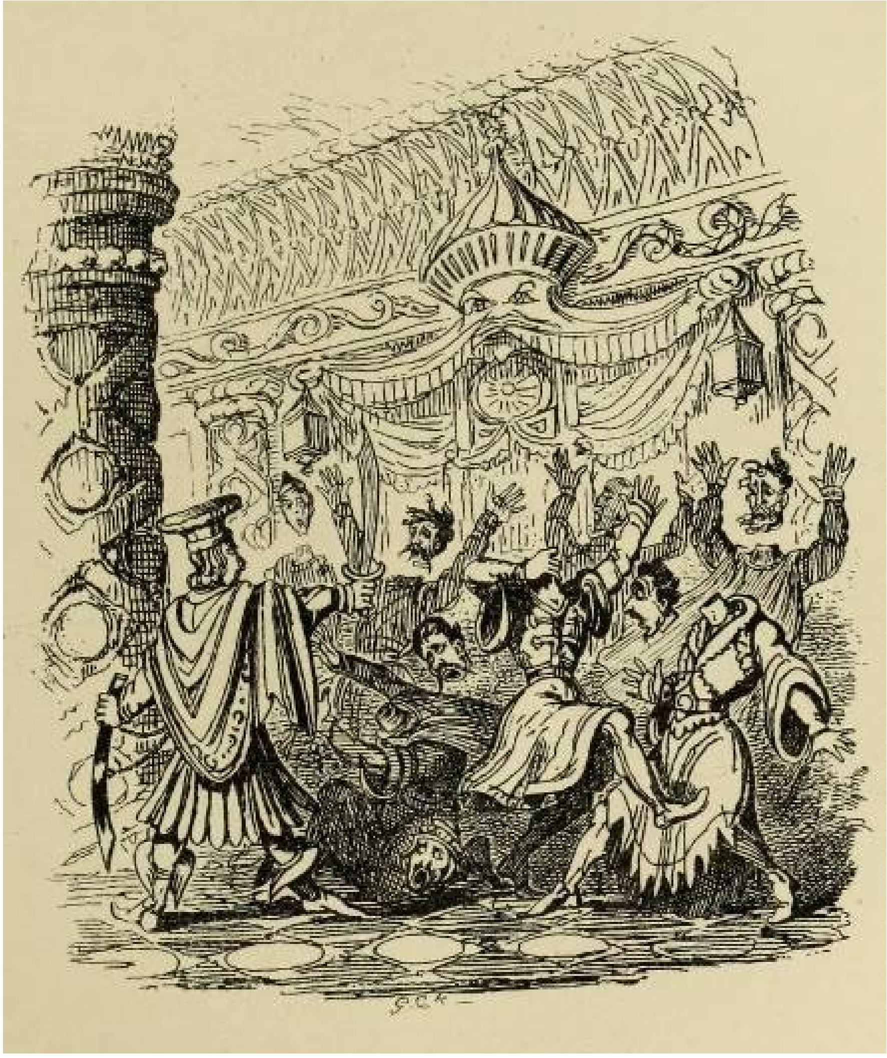
But the boat went safely on, and did not sink; and the young man sat securely within, till at length it ran ashore upon an unknown land. As he jumped upon the shore, he saw before him a beautiful castle, but empty and desolate within, for it was enchanted. At last, however, he found a white snake in one of the chambers.

Now the white snake was an enchanted princess; and she rejoiced greatly to see him, and said, “Art thou at last come to be my deliverer? Twelve long years have I waited for thee, for thou alone canst save me. This night twelve men will come: their faces will be black, and they will be hung round with chains. They will ask what thou dost here; but be silent, give no answer, and let them do what they will — beat and torment thee. Suffer all, only speak not a word, and at twelve o’clock they must depart. The second night twelve others will come; and the third night twenty-four, who will even cut off thy head; but at the twelfth hour of that night their power is gone, and I shall be free, and will come and bring thee the water of life, and will wash thee with it, and restore thee to life and health.” And all came to pass as she had said; the merchant’s son spoke not a word, and the third night the princess appeared, and fell on his neck and kissed him; joy and gladness burst forth throughout the castle; the wedding was celebrated, and he was king of the Golden Mountain.

They lived together very happily, and the queen had a son. Eight years had passed over their heads when the king thought of his father: and his heart was moved, and he longed to see him once again. But the queen opposed his going, and said, “I know well that misfortunes will come.” However, he gave her no rest till she consented. At his departure she presented him with a wishing-ring, and said, “Take this ring, and put it on your finger; whatever you wish it will bring you: only promise that you will not make use of it to bring me hence to your father’s.” Then he promised what she asked, and put the ring on his finger, and wished himself near the town where his father lived. He found himself at the gates in a moment; but the guards would not let him enter, because he was so strangely clad. So he went up to a neighbouring mountain where a shepherd dwelt, and borrowed his old frock, and thus passed unobserved into the town. When he came to his father’s house, he said he was his son; but the merchant would not believe him, and said he had had but one son, who he knew was long since dead: and as he was only dressed like a poor shepherd, he would not even offer him anything to eat. The king however persisted that he was his son, and said, “Is there no mark by which you would know if I am really your son?” “Yes,” observed his mother, “our son has a mark like a raspberry under the right arm.” Then he showed them the mark, and they were satisfied that what he had said was true. He next told them how he was king of the Golden Mountain, and was married to a princess, and had a son seven years old. But the merchant said, “That can never be true; he must be a fine king truly who travels about in a shepherd’s frock.” At this the son was very angry; and, forgetting his promise, turned his ring, and wished for his queen and son. In an instant they stood before him; but the queen wept, and said he had broken his word, and misfortune would follow. He did all he could to soothe her, and she at last appeared to be appeased; but she was not so in reality, and only meditated how she should take her revenge.

One day he took her to walk with him out of the town, and showed her the spot where the boat was turned adrift upon the wide waters. Then he sat himself down, and said, “I am very much tired; sit by me, I will rest my head in your lap, and sleep a while.” As soon as he had fallen asleep, however, she drew the ring from his finger, and crept softly away, and wished herself and her son at home in their kingdom. And when the king awoke, he found himself alone, and saw that the ring was gone from his finger. “I can never return to my father’s house,” said he; “they would say I am a sorcerer: I will journey forth into the world till I come again to my kingdom.”

So saying, he set out and travelled till he came to a mountain, where three giants were sharing their inheritance; and as they saw him pass, they cried out and said, “Little men have sharp wits; he shall divide the inheritance between us.” Now it consisted of a sword that cut off an enemy’s head whenever the wearer gave the words “Heads off!” — a cloak that made the owner invisible, or gave him any form he pleased; and a pair of boots that transported the person who put them on wherever he wished. The king said they must first let him try these wonderful things, that he might know how to set a value upon them. Then they gave him the cloak, and he wished himself a fly, and in a moment he was a fly. “The cloak is very well,” said he; “now give me the sword.” “No,” said they, “not unless you promise not to say ‘Heads off!’ for if you do, we are all dead men.” So they gave it him on condition that he tried its virtue only on a tree. He next asked for the boots also; and the moment he had all three in his possession he wished himself at the Golden Mountain; and there he was in an instant. So the giants were left behind with no inheritance to divide or quarrel about.



As he came near to the castle he heard the sound of merry music; and the people around told him that his queen was about to celebrate her marriage with another prince. Then he threw his cloak around him, and passed through the castle, and placed himself by the side of his queen, where no one saw him. But when anything to eat was put upon her plate, he took it away and ate it himself; and when a glass of wine was handed to her, he took and drank it: and thus, though they kept on serving her with meat and drink, her plate continued always empty.

Upon this, fear and remorse came over her, and she went into her chamber and wept; and he followed her there. “Alas!” said she to herself, “did not my deliverer come? why then doth enchantment still surround me?”

“Thou traitress!” said he, “thy deliverer indeed came, and now is near thee: has he deserved this of thee?” And he went out and dismissed the company, and said the wedding was at an end, for that he was returned to his kingdom: but the princes and nobles and counsellors mocked at him. However, he would enter into no parley with them, but only demanded whether they would depart in peace, or not. Then they turned and tried to seize him; but he drew his sword, and, with a word, the traitors’ heads fell before him; and he was once more king of the Golden Mountain.

The Golden Goose

There was a man who had three sons. The youngest was called Dummling, and was on all occasions despised and ill-treated by the whole family. It happened that the eldest took it into his head one day to go into the wood to cut fuel; and his mother gave him a delicious pasty and a bottle of wine to take with him, that he might refresh himself at his work. As he went into the wood, a little old man bid him good day, and said, “Give me a little piece of meat from your plate, and a little wine out of your bottle; I am very hungry and thirsty.” But this clever young man said, “Give you my meat and wine! No, I thank you; I should not have enough left for myself;” and away he went. He soon began to cut down a tree; but he had not worked long before he missed his stroke, and cut himself, and was obliged to go home to have the wound dressed. Now it was the little old man that caused him this mischief.

Next went out the second son to work; and his mother gave him too a pasty and a bottle of wine. And the same little old man met him also, and asked him for something to eat and drink. But he too thought himself vastly clever, and said, “Whatever you get, I shall lose; so go your way!” The little man took care that he should have his reward; and the second stroke that he aimed against a tree, hit him on the leg; so that he too was forced to go home.

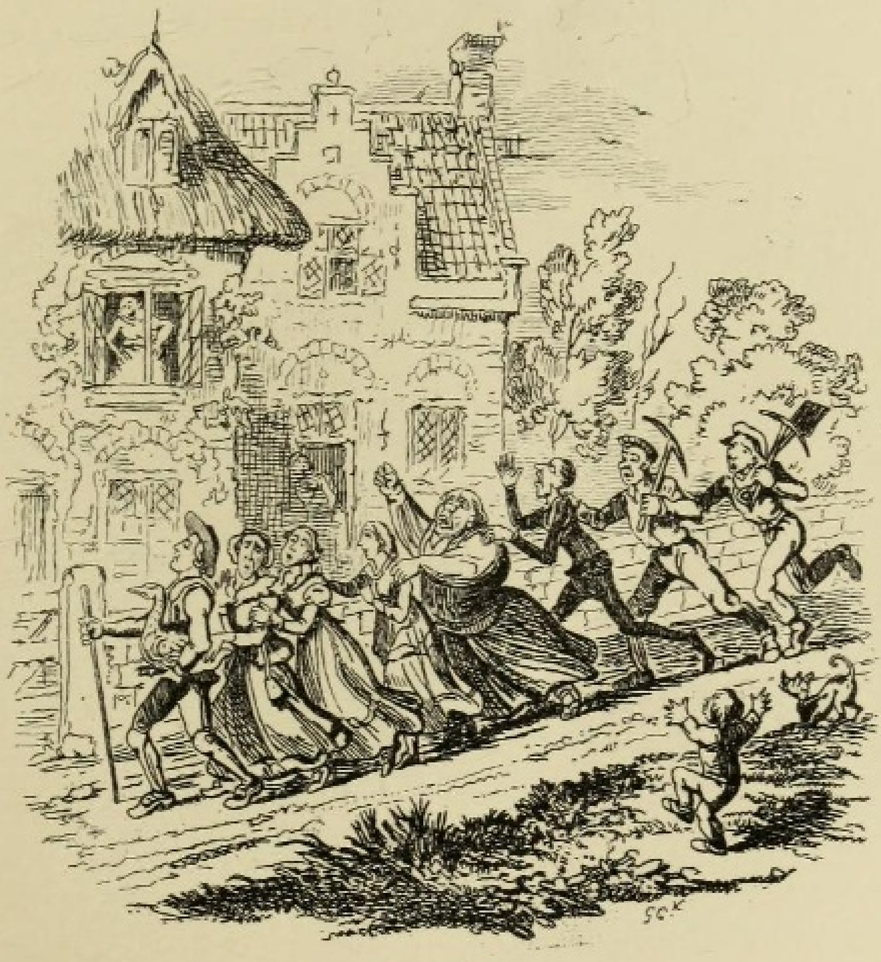
Then Dummling said, “Father, I should like to go and cut wood too.” But his father answered, “Your brothers have both lamed themselves; you had better stay at home, for you know nothing of the business.” But Dummling was very pressing; and at last his father said, “Go your way; you will be wiser when you have suffered for your folly.” And his mother gave him only some dry bread, and a bottle of sour beer; but when he went into the wood, he met the little old man, who said, “Give me some meat and drink, for I am very hungry and thirsty.” Dummling said, “I have only dry bread and sour beer; if that will suit you, we will sit down and eat it together.” So they sat down; and when the lad pulled out his bread, behold it was turned into a capital pasty, and his sour beer became delightful wine. They ate and drank heartily; and when they had done, the little man said, “As you have a kind heart, and have been willing to share everything with me, I will send a blessing upon you. There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something at the root.” Then he took his leave, and went his way.

Dummling set to work, and cut down the tree; and when it fell, he found in a hollow under the roots a goose with feathers of pure gold. He took it up, and went on to an inn, where he proposed to sleep for the night. The landlord had three daughters; and when they saw the goose, they were very curious to examine what this wonderful bird could be, and wished very much to pluck one of the feathers out of its tail. At last the eldest said, “I must and will have a feather.” So she waited till his back was turned, and then seized the goose by the wing; but to her great surprise there she stuck, for neither hand nor finger could she get away again. Presently in came the second sister, and thought to have a feather too; but the moment she touched her sister, there she too hung fast. At last came the third, and wanted a feather; but the other two cried out, “Keep away! for heaven’s sake, keep away!” However, she did not understand what they meant. “If they are there,” thought she, “I may as well be there too.” So she went up to them; but the moment she touched her sisters she stuck fast, and hung to the goose as they did. And so they kept company with the goose all night.

The next morning Dummling carried off the goose under his arm; and took no notice of the three girls, but went out with them sticking fast behind; and wherever he travelled, they too were obliged to follow, whether they would or no, as fast as their legs could carry them.

In the middle of a field the parson met them; and when he saw the train, he said, “Are you not ashamed of yourselves, you bold girls, to run after the young man in that way over the fields? is that proper behaviour?” Then he took the youngest by the hand to lead her away; but the moment he touched her he too hung fast, and followed in the train. Presently up came the clerk; and when he saw his master the parson running after the three girls, he wondered greatly, and said, “Hollo! hollo! your reverence! whither so fast? there is a christening to-day.” Then he ran up, and took him by the gown, and in a moment he was fast too. As the five were thus trudging along, one behind another, they met two labourers with their mattocks coming from work; and the parson cried out to them to set him free. But scarcely had they touched him, when they too fell into the ranks, and so made seven, all running after Dummling and his goose.

At last they arrived at a city, where reigned a king who had an only daughter. The princess was of so thoughtful and serious a turn of mind that no one could make her laugh; and the king had proclaimed to all the world, that whoever could make her laugh should have her for his wife. When the young man heard this, he went to her with his goose and all its train; and as soon as she saw the seven all hanging together, and running about, treading on each other’s heels, she could not help bursting into a long and loud laugh. Then Dummling claimed her for his wife; the wedding was celebrated, and he was heir to the kingdom, and lived long and happily with his wife.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Mrs. Fox

There was once a sly old fox with nine tails, who was very curious to know whether his wife was true to him: so he stretched himself out under a bench, and pretended to be as dead as a mouse.

Then Mrs. Fox went up into her own room and locked the door: but her maid, the cat, sat at the kitchen fire cooking; and soon after it became known that the old fox was dead, some one knocked at the door, saying,

"Miss Pussy! Miss Pussy! how fare you to-day?
Are you sleeping or watching the time away?"

Then the cat went and opened the door, and there stood a young fox; so she said to him,

"No, no, Master Fox, I don't sleep in the day,
I'm making some capital white wine whey.
Will your honour be pleased to dinner to stay?"

"No, I thank you," said the fox; "but how is poor Mrs. Fox?" Then the cat answered,

"She sits all alone in her chamber upstairs,
And bewails her misfortune with floods of tears:
She weeps till her beautiful eyes are red;
For, alas! alas! Mr. Fox is dead."

"Go to her," said the other, "and say that there is a young fox come, who wishes to marry her."

Then up went the cat, — trippety trap,
And knocked at the door, — tippety tap;
"Is good Mrs. Fox within?" said she.
"Alas! my dear, what want you with me?"
"There waits a suitor below at the gate."

Then said Mrs. Fox,

"How looks he, my dear? is he tall and straight?
Has he nine good tails? There must be nine,
Or he never shall be a suitor of mine."

"Ah!" said the cat, "he has but one." "Then I will never have him," answered Mrs. Fox.

So the cat went down, and sent this suitor about his business. Soon after, some one else knocked at the door; it was another fox that had two tails, but he was not better welcomed than the first. After this came several others, till at last one came that had really nine tails just like the old fox.

When the widow heard this, she jumped up and said,

"Now, Pussy, my dear, open windows and doors,
And bid all our friends at our wedding to meet;
And as for that nasty old master of ours,
Throw him out of the window, Puss, into the street."

But when the wedding feast was all ready, up sprung the old gentleman on a sudden, and taking a club drove the whole company, together with Mrs.

Fox, out of doors.

After some time, however, the old fox really died; and soon afterwards a wolf came to pay his respects, and knocked at the door.

Wolf. Good day, Mrs. Cat, with your whiskers so trim;
How comes it you're sitting alone so prim?
What's that you are cooking so nicely, I pray?
Cat. Oh, that's bread and milk for my dinner to-day.
Will your worship be pleased to stay and dine,
Or shall I fetch you a glass of wine?
"No, I thank you: Mrs. Fox is not at home, I suppose?"
Cat. She sits all alone,
Her griefs to bemoan;
For, alas! alas! Mr. Fox is gone.
Wolf. Ah! dear Mrs. Puss! that's a loss indeed:
D'ye think she'd take *me* for a husband instead?
Cat. Indeed, Mr. Wolf, I don't know but she may,
If you'll sit down a moment, I'll step up and see.

So she gave him a chair, and shaking her ears,
She very obligingly tripped it upstairs.
She knocked at the door with the rings on her toes,
And said, "Mrs. Fox, you're within, I suppose?"
"Oh yes," said the widow, "pray come in, my dear,
And tell me whose voice in the kitchen I hear."
"It's a wolf," said the cat, "with a nice smooth skin,
Who was passing this way, and just stepped in
To see (as old Mr. Fox is dead)
If you like to take him for a husband instead."

"But," said Mrs. Fox, "has he red feet and a sharp snout?" "No," said the cat. "Then he won't do for me." Soon after the wolf was sent about his business, there came a dog, then a goat, and after that a bear, a lion, and all the beasts, one after another. But they all wanted something that old Mr. Fox had, and the cat was ordered to send them all away. At last came a young fox, and Mrs. Fox said, "Has he four red feet and a sharp snout?" "Yes," said the cat.

"Then, Puss, make the parlour look clean and neat,
And throw the old gentleman into the street;
A stupid old rascal! I'm glad that he's dead,
Now I've got such a charming young fox instead."
So the wedding was held, and the merry bells rung,
And the friends and relations they danced and they sung,
And feasted and drank, I can't tell how long.

Hansel and Grettel

Hansel one day took his sister Grettel by the hand, and said, “Since our poor mother died we have had no happy days; for our new mother beats us all day long, and when we go near her, she pushes us away. We have nothing but hard crusts to eat; and the little dog that lies by the fire is better off than we; for he sometimes has a nice piece of meat thrown to him. Heaven have mercy upon us! Oh, if our poor mother knew how we are used! Come, we will go and travel over the wide world.” They went the whole day walking over the fields, till in the evening they came to a great wood; and then they were so tired and hungry that they sat down in a hollow tree and went to sleep.

In the morning when they awoke, the sun had risen high above the trees, and shone warm upon the hollow tree. Then Hansel said, “Sister, I am very thirsty; if I could find a brook, I would go and drink, and fetch you some water too. Listen, I think I hear the sound of one.” Then Hansel rose up and took Grettel by the hand and went in search of the brook. But their cruel step-mother was a fairy, and had followed them into the wood to work them mischief: and when they had found a brook that ran sparkling over the pebbles, Hansel wanted to drink; but Grettel thought she heard the brook, as it babbled along, say, “Whoever drinks here will be turned into a tiger.” Then she cried out, “Ah, brother! do not drink, or you will be turned into a wild beast and tear me to pieces.” Then Hansel yielded, although he was parched with thirst. “I will wait,” said he, “for the next brook.” But when they came to the next, Grettel listened again, and thought she heard “Whoever drinks here will become a wolf.” Then she cried out, “Brother, brother, do not drink, or you will become a wolf and eat me.” So he did not drink, but said, “I will wait for the next brook; there I must drink, say what you will, I am so thirsty.”

As they came to the third brook, Grettel listened, and heard “Whoever drinks here will become a fawn.” “Ah, brother!” said she, “do not drink, or you will be turned into a fawn and run away from me.” But Hansel had already stooped down upon his knees, and the moment he put his lips into the water he was turned into a fawn.

Grettel wept bitterly over the poor creature, and the tears too rolled down his eyes as he laid himself beside her. Then she said, “Rest in peace, dear fawn, I will never never leave thee.” So she took off her golden necklace and put it round his neck, and plucked some rushes and plaited them into a soft string to fasten to it; and led the poor little thing by her side further into the wood.

After they had travelled a long way, they came at last to a little cottage; and Grettel, having looked in and seen that it was quite empty, thought to herself, “We can stay and live here.” Then she went and gathered leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the fawn: and every morning she went out and plucked nuts, roots, and berries for herself, and sweet shrubs and tender grass for her companion; and it ate out of her hand, and was pleased, and played and frisked about her. In the evening, when Grettel was tired, and had said her prayers, she laid her head upon the fawn for her pillow, and slept: and if poor Hansel could but have his right form again, they thought they should lead a very happy life.

They lived thus a long while in the wood by themselves, till it chanced that the king of that country came to hold a great hunt there. And when the fawn heard all around the echoing of the horns, and the baying of dogs, and the merry shouts of the huntsmen, he wished very much to go and see what was going on. “Ah, sister! sister!” said he, “let me go out into the wood, I can stay no longer.” And he begged so long, that she at last agreed to let him go. “But,” said she, “be sure to come to me in the evening: I shall shut up the door to keep out those wild huntsmen; and if you tap at it, and say ‘Sister, let me in,’ I shall know you; but if you don’t speak, I shall keep the door fast.” Then away sprang the fawn, and frisked and bounded along in the open air. The king and his huntsmen saw the beautiful creature, and followed but could not overtake him; for when they thought they were sure of their prize, he sprung over the bushes and was out of sight in a moment.

As it grew dark he came running home to the hut, and tapped, and said, “Sister, sister, let me in.” Then she opened the little door, and in he jumped and slept soundly all night on his soft bed.

Next morning the hunt began again; and when he heard the huntsmen’s horns, he said, “Sister, open the door for me, I must go again.” Then she let him out, and said, “Come back in the evening, and remember what you are to say.” When the king and the huntsmen saw the fawn with the golden collar again, they gave him chase; but he was too quick for them. The chase lasted the whole day; but at last the huntsmen nearly surrounded him, and one of them wounded him in the foot, so that he became sadly lame and could hardly crawl home. The man who had wounded him followed close behind, and hid himself, and heard the little fawn say, “Sister, sister, let me in:” upon which the door opened and soon shut again. The huntsman marked all well, and went to the king and told him what he had seen and heard; then the king said, “To-morrow we will have another chase.”

Grettel was very much frightened when she saw that her dear little fawn was wounded; but she washed the blood away and put some healing herbs on it, and said, “Now go to bed, dear fawn, and you will soon be well again.” The wound was so small, that in the morning there was nothing to be seen of it; and when the horn blew, the little creature said, “I can’t stay here, I must go and look on; I will take care that none of them shall catch me.” But Grettel said, “I am sure they will kill you this time, I will not let you go.” “I shall die of vexation,” answered he, “if you keep me here; when I hear the horns, I feel as if I could fly.” Then Grettel was forced to let him go; so she opened the door with a heavy heart, and he bounded out gaily into the wood.

When the king saw him, he said to his huntsman, “Now chase him all day long till you catch him; but let none of you do him any harm.” The sun set, however, without their being able to overtake him, and the king called away the huntsmen, and said to the one who had watched, “Now come and show me the little hut.” So they went to the door and tapped, and said, “Sister, sister, let me in.” Then the door opened and the king went in, and there stood a maiden more lovely than any he had ever seen. Grettel was frightened to see that it was not her fawn, but a king with a golden crown, that was come into her hut: however, he spoke kindly to her, and took her hand, and said, “Will you come with me to my castle and be my wife?” “Yes,” said the maiden; “but my fawn must go with me, I cannot part with that.” “Well,” said the king, “he shall come and live with you all your life, and want for nothing.” Just at that moment in sprung the little fawn; and his sister tied the string to his neck, and they left the hut in the wood together.

Then the king took Grettel to his palace, and celebrated the marriage in great state. And she told the king all her story; and he sent for the fairy and punished her: and the fawn was changed into Hansel again, and he and his sister loved one another, and lived happily together all their days.

The Giant with the Three Golden Hairs

There was once a poor man who had an only son born to him. The child was born under a lucky star; and those who told his fortune said that in his fourteenth year he would marry the king’s daughter. It so happened that the king of that land soon after the child’s birth passed through the village in disguise, and asked whether there was any news. “Yes,” said the people, “a child has just been born, that they say is to be a lucky one, and when he is fourteen years old, he is fated to marry the king’s daughter.” This did not please the king; so he went to the poor child’s parents and asked them whether they would sell him their son? “No,” said they; but the stranger begged very hard and offered a great deal of money, and they had scarcely bread to eat, so at last they consented, thinking to themselves, he is a luck’s child, he can come to no harm.

The king took the child, put it into a box, and rode away; but when he came to a deep stream, he threw it into the current, and said to himself, “That young gentleman will never be my daughter’s husband.” The box however floated down the stream; some kind spirit watched over it so that no water reached the child, and at last about two miles from the king’s capital it stopt at the dam of a mill. The miller soon saw it, and took a long pole, and drew it towards the shore, and finding it heavy, thought there was gold inside; but when he opened it, he found a pretty little boy, that smiled upon him merrily. Now the miller and his wife had no children, and therefore rejoiced to see their prize, saying, “Heaven has sent it to us;” so they treated it very kindly, and brought it up with such care that every one admired and loved it.

About thirteen years passed over their heads, when the king came by accident to the mill, and asked the miller if that was his son. “No,” said he, “I found him when a babe in a box in the mill-dam.” “How long ago?” asked the king. “Some thirteen years,” replied the miller. “He is a fine fellow,” said the king, “can you spare him to carry a letter to the queen? it will please me very much, and I will give him two pieces of gold for his trouble.” “As your majesty pleases,” answered the miller.

Now the king had soon guessed that this was the child whom he had tried to drown; and he wrote a letter by him to the queen, saying, “As soon as the bearer of this arrives, let him be killed and immediately buried, so that all may be over before I return.”

The young man set out with this letter, but missed his way, and came in the evening to a dark wood. Through the gloom he perceived a light at a distance, towards which he directed his course, and found that it proceeded from a little cottage. There was no one within except an old woman, who was frightened at seeing him, and said, “Why do you come hither, and whither are you going?” “I am going to the queen, to whom I was to have delivered a letter; but I have lost my way, and shall be glad if you will give me a night’s rest.” “You are very unlucky,” said she, “for this is a robbers’ hut, and if the band returns while you are here it may be worse for you." "I am so tired, however," replied he, "that I must take my chance, for I can go no further;" so he laid the letter on the table, stretched himself out upon a bench, and fell asleep.

When the robbers came home and saw him, they asked the old woman who the strange lad was. "I have given him shelter for charity," said she; "he had a letter to carry to the queen, and lost his way." The robbers took up the letter, broke it open and read the directions which it contained to murder the bearer. Then their leader tore it, and wrote a fresh one desiring the queen, as soon as the young man arrived, to marry him to the king's daughter. Meantime they let him sleep on till morning broke, and then showed him the right way to the queen's palace; where, as soon as she had read the letter, she had all possible preparations made for the wedding; and as the young man was very beautiful, the princess took him willingly for her husband.

After a while the king returned; and when he saw the prediction fulfilled, and that this child of fortune was, notwithstanding all his cunning, married to his daughter, he inquired eagerly how this had happened, and what were the orders which he had given. "Dear husband," said the queen, "here is your letter, read it for yourself." The king took it, and seeing that an exchange had been made, asked his son-in-law what he had done with the letter which he had given him to carry. "I know nothing of it," answered he; "it must have been taken away in the night while I slept." Then the king was very wroth, and said, "No man shall have my daughter who does not descend into the wonderful cave and bring me three golden hairs from the head of the giant king who reigns there; do this and you shall have my consent." "I will soon manage that," said the youth; — so he took leave of his wife and set out on his journey.

At the first city that he came to, the guard of the gate stopt him, and asked what trade he followed and what he knew. "I know everything," said he. "If that be so," replied they, "you are just the man we want; be so good as to tell us why our fountain in the market-place is dry and will give no water; find out the cause of that, and we will give you two asses loaded with gold." "With all my heart," said he, "when I come back."

Then he journeyed on and came to another city, and there the guard also asked him what trade he followed, and what he understood. "I know everything," answered he. "Then pray do us a piece of service," said they, "tell us why a tree which used to bear us golden apples, now does not even produce a leaf." "Most willingly," answered he, "as I come back."

At last his way led him to the side of a great lake of water over which he must pass. The ferryman soon began to ask, as the others had done, what was his trade, and what he knew. "Everything," said he. "Then," said the other, "pray inform me why I am bound for ever to ferry over this water, and have never been able to get my liberty; I will reward you handsomely." "I will tell you all about it," said the young man, "as I come home."

When he had passed the water, he came to the wonderful cave, which looked terribly black and gloomy. But the wizard king was not at home, and his grandmother sat at the door in her easy chair. “What do you seek?” said she. “Three golden hairs from the giant’s head,” answered he. “You run a great risk,” said she, “when he returns home; yet I will try what I can do for you.” Then she changed him into an ant, and told him to hide himself in the folds of her cloak. “Very well,” said he: “but I want also to know why the city fountain is dry, why the tree that bore golden apples is now leafless, and what it is that binds the ferryman to his post.” “Those are three puzzling questions,” said the old dame; “but lie quiet and listen to what the giant says when I pull the golden hairs.”

Presently night set in and the old gentleman returned home. As soon as he entered he began to snuff up the air, and cried, “All is not right here: I smell man’s flesh.” Then he searched all round in vain, and the old dame scolded, and said, “Why should you turn every thing topsy-turvy? I have just set all in order.” Upon this he laid his head in her lap and soon fell asleep. As soon as he began to snore, she seized one of the golden hairs and pulled it out. “Mercy!” cried he, starting up, “what are you about?” “I had a dream that disturbed me,” said she, “and in my trouble I seized your hair: I dreamt that the fountain in the market-place of the city was become dry and would give no water; what can be the cause?” “Ah! if they could find that out, they would be glad,” said the giant: “under a stone in the fountain sits a toad; when they kill him, it will flow again.”

This said, he fell asleep, and the old lady pulled out another hair. “What would you be at?” cried he in a rage. “Don’t be angry,” said she, “I did it in my sleep; I dreamt that in a great kingdom there was a beautiful tree that used to bear golden apples, and now has not even a leaf upon it; what is the reason of that?” “Aha!” said the giant, “they would like very well to know that secret: at the root of the tree a mouse is gnawing; if they were to kill him, the tree would bear golden apples again; if not, it will soon die. Now let me sleep in peace; if you wake me again, you shall rue it.”

Then he fell once more asleep; and when she heard him snore she pulled out the third golden hair, and the giant jumped up and threatened her sorely; but she soothed him, and said, “It was a strange dream: methought I saw a ferryman who was fated to ply backwards and forwards over a lake, and could never be set at liberty; what is the charm that binds him?” “A silly fool!” said the giant; “if he were to give the rudder into the hand of any passenger, he would find himself at liberty, and the other would be obliged to take his place. Now let me sleep.”

In the morning the giant arose and went out; and the old woman gave the young man the three golden hairs, reminded him of the answers to his three questions, and sent, him on his way.

He soon came to the ferryman, who knew him again, and asked for the answer which he had promised him. “Ferry me over first,” said he, “and then I will tell you.” When the boat arrived on the other side, he told him to give the rudder to any of his passengers, and then he might run away as soon as he pleased. The next place he came to was the city where the barren tree stood: “Kill the mouse,” said he, “that gnaws the root, and you will have golden apples again.” They gave him a rich present, and he journeyed on to the city where the fountain had dried up, and the guard demanded his answer to their question. So he told them how to cure the mischief, and they thanked him and gave him the two asses laden with gold.

And now at last this child of fortune reached home, and his wife rejoiced greatly to see him, and to hear how well everything had gone with him. He gave the three golden hairs to the king, who could no longer raise any objection to him, and when he saw all the treasure, cried out in a transport of joy, “Dear son, where did you find all this gold?” “By the side of a lake,” said the youth, “where there is plenty more to be had.” “Pray, tell me,” said the king, “that I may go and get some too.” “As much as you please,” replied the other; “you will see the ferryman on the lake, let him carry you across, and there you will see gold as plentiful as sand upon the shore.”

Away went the greedy king; and when he came to the lake, he beckoned to the ferryman, who took him into his boat, and as soon as he was there gave the rudder into his hand, and sprung ashore, leaving the old king to ferry away as a reward for his sins.

“And is his majesty plying there to this day?” You may be sure of that, for nobody will trouble himself to take the rudder out of his hands.

The Frog-Prince

One fine evening a young princess went into a wood, and sat down by the side of a cool spring of water. She had a golden ball in her hand, which was her favourite play-thing, and she amused herself with tossing it into the air and catching it again as it fell. After a time she threw it up so high that when she stretched out her hand to catch it, the ball bounded away and rolled along upon the ground, till at last it fell into the spring. The princess looked into the spring after her ball; but it was very deep, so deep that she could not see the bottom of it. Then she began to lament her loss, and said, “Alas! if I could only get my ball again, I would give all my fine clothes and jewels, and everything that I have in the world.” Whilst she was speaking a frog put its head out of the water, and said, “Princess, why do you weep so bitterly?” “Alas!” said she, “what can you do for me, you nasty frog? My golden ball has fallen into the spring.” The frog said, “I want not your pearls and jewels and fine clothes; but if you will love me and let me live with you, and eat from your little golden plate, and sleep upon your little bed, I will bring you your ball again.” “What nonsense,” thought the princess, “this silly frog is talking! He can never get out of the well: however, he may be able to get my ball for me; and therefore I will promise him what he asks.” So she said to the frog, “Well, if you will bring me my ball, I promise to do all you require.” Then the frog put his head down, and dived deep under the water; and after a little while he came up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the ground. As soon as the young princess saw her ball, she ran to pick it up, and was so overjoyed to have it in her hand again, that she never thought of the frog, but ran home with it as fast as she could. The frog called after her, “Stay, princess, and take me with you as you promised;” but she did not stop to hear a word.

The next day, just as the princess had sat down to dinner, she heard a strange noise, tap-tap, as if somebody was coming up the marble-staircase; and soon afterwards something knocked gently at the door, and said,

“Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool in the greenwood shade.”

Then the princess ran to the door and opened it, and there she saw the frog, whom she had quite forgotten; she was terribly frightened, and shutting the door as fast as she could, came back to her seat. The king her father asked her what had frightened her. “There is a nasty frog,” said she, “at the door, who lifted my ball out of the spring this morning: I promised him that he should live with me here, thinking that he could never get out of the spring; but there he is at the door and wants to come in!” While she was speaking the frog knocked again at the door, and said,

“Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!

And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool in the greenwood shade."

The king said to the young princess, "As you have made did so, and the frog hopped into the room, and came up close to the table. "Pray lift me upon a chair," said he to the princess, "and let me sit next to you." As soon as she had done this, the frog said, "Put your plate closer to me that I may eat out of it." This she did, and when he had eaten as much as he could, he said, "Now I am tired; carry me upstairs and put me into your little bed." And the princess took him up in her hand and put him upon the pillow of her own little bed, where he slept all night long. As soon as it was light he jumped up, hopped downstairs, and went out of the house. "Now," thought the princess, "he is gone, and I shall be troubled with him no more."

But she was mistaken; for when night came again, she heard the same tapping at the door, and when she opened it, the frog came in and slept upon her pillow as before till the morning broke: and the third night he did the same; but when the princess awoke on the following morning, she was astonished to see, instead of the frog, a handsome prince gazing on her with the most beautiful eyes that ever were seen, and standing at the head of her bed.

He told her that he had been enchanted by a malicious fairy, who had changed him into the form of a frog, in which he was fated to remain till some princess should take him out of the spring and let him sleep upon her bed for three nights. "You," said the prince, "have broken this cruel charm, and now I have nothing to wish for but that you should go with me into my father's kingdom, where I will marry you, and love you as long as you live."

The young princess, you may be sure, was not long in giving her consent; and as they spoke a splendid carriage drove up with eight beautiful horses decked with plumes of feathers and golden harness, and behind rode the prince's servant, the faithful Henry, who had bewailed the misfortune of his dear master so long and bitterly that his heart had well nigh burst. Then all set out full of joy for the prince's kingdom; where they arrived safely, and lived happily a great many years.

The Fox and the Horse

A farmer had a horse that had been an excellent faithful servant to him: but he was now grown too old to work; so the farmer would give him nothing more to eat, and said, “I want you no longer, so take yourself off out of my stable; I shall not take you back again until you are stronger than a lion.” Then he opened the door and turned him adrift.

The poor horse was very melancholy, and wandered up and down in the wood, seeking some little shelter from the cold wind and rain. Presently a fox met him: “What’s the matter, my friend?” said he, “why do you hang down your head and look so lonely and woe-begone?” “Ah!” replied the horse, “justice and avarice never dwell in one house; my master has forgotten all that I have done for him so many years, and because I can no longer work he has turned me adrift, and says unless I become stronger than a lion he will not take me back again; what chance can I have of that? he knows I have none, or he would not talk so.”

However, the fox bid him be of good cheer, and said, “I will help you; lie down there, stretch yourself out quite stiff, and pretend to be dead.” The horse did as he was told, and the fox went straight to the lion who lived in a cave close by, and said to him, “A little way off lies a dead horse; come with me and you may make an excellent meal of his carcase.” The lion was greatly pleased, and set off immediately; and when they came to the horse, the fox said, “You will not be able to eat him comfortably here; I’ll tell you what — I will tie you fast to his tail, and then you can draw him to your den, and eat him at your leisure.”

This advice pleased the lion, so he laid himself down quietly for the fox to make him fast to the horse. But the fox managed to tie his legs together and bound all so hard and fast that with all his strength he could not set himself free. When the work was done, the fox clapped the horse on the shoulder, and said, “Jip! Dobbin! Jip!” Then up he sprang, and moved off, dragging the lion behind him. The beast began to roar and bellow, till all the birds of the wood flew away for fright; but the horse let him sing on, and made his way quietly over the fields to his master’s house.

“Here he is, master,” said he, “I have got the better of him:” and when the farmer saw his old servant, his heart relented, and he said, “Thou shalt stay in thy stable and be well taken care of.” And so the poor old horse had plenty to eat, and lived — till he died.

Rumpel-Stilts-Kin

In a certain kingdom once lived a poor miller who had a very beautiful daughter. She was moreover exceedingly shrewd and clever; and the miller was so vain and proud of her, that he one day told the king of the land that his daughter could spin gold out of straw. Now this king was very fond of money; and when he heard the miller's boast, his avarice was excited, and he ordered the girl to be brought before him. Then he led her to a chamber where there was a great quantity of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, “All this must be spun into gold before morning, as you value your life.” It was in vain that the poor maiden declared that she could do no such thing, the chamber was locked and she remained alone.

She sat down in one corner of the room and began to lament over her hard fate, when on a sudden the door opened, and a droll-looking little man hobbled in, and said, “Good morrow to you, my good lass, what are you weeping for?” “Alas!” answered she, “I must spin this straw into gold, and I know not how.” “What will you give me,” said the little man, “to do it for you?” “My necklace,” replied the maiden. He took her at her word, and sat himself down to the wheel; round about it went merrily, and presently the work was done and the gold all spun.

When the king came and saw this, he was greatly astonished and pleased; but his heart grew still more greedy of gain, and he shut up the poor miller's daughter again with a fresh task. Then she knew not what to do, and sat down once more to weep; but the little man presently opened the door, and said, “What will you give me to do your task?” “The ring on my finger,” replied she. So her little friend took the ring, and began to work at the wheel, till by the morning all was finished again.

The king was vastly delighted to see all this glittering treasure; but still he was not satisfied, and took the miller's daughter into a yet larger room, and said, “All this must be spun to-night; and if you succeed, you shall be my queen.” As soon as she was alone the dwarf came in, and said, “What will you give me to spin gold for you this third time?” “I have nothing left,” said she. “Then promise me,” said the little man, “your first little child when you are queen.” “That may never be,” thought the miller's daughter; and as she knew no other way to get her task done, she promised him what he asked, and he spun once more the whole heap of gold. The king came in the morning, and finding all he wanted, married her, and so the miller's daughter really became queen.

At the birth of her first little child the queen rejoiced very much, and forgot the little man and her promise; but one day he came into her chamber and reminded her of it. Then she grieved sorely at her misfortune, and offered him all the treasures of the kingdom in exchange; but in vain, till at last her tears softened him, and he said, “I will give you three days' grace, and if during that time you tell me my name, you shall keep your child.”

Now the queen lay awake all night, thinking of all the odd names that she had ever heard, and dispatched messengers all over the land to inquire after new ones. The next day the little man came, and she began with Timothy, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and all the names she could remember; but to all of them he said, “That’s not my name.”

The second day she began with all the comical names she could hear of, Bandy-legs, Hunch-back, Crook-shanks, and so on, but the little gentleman still said to every one of them, “That’s not my name.”

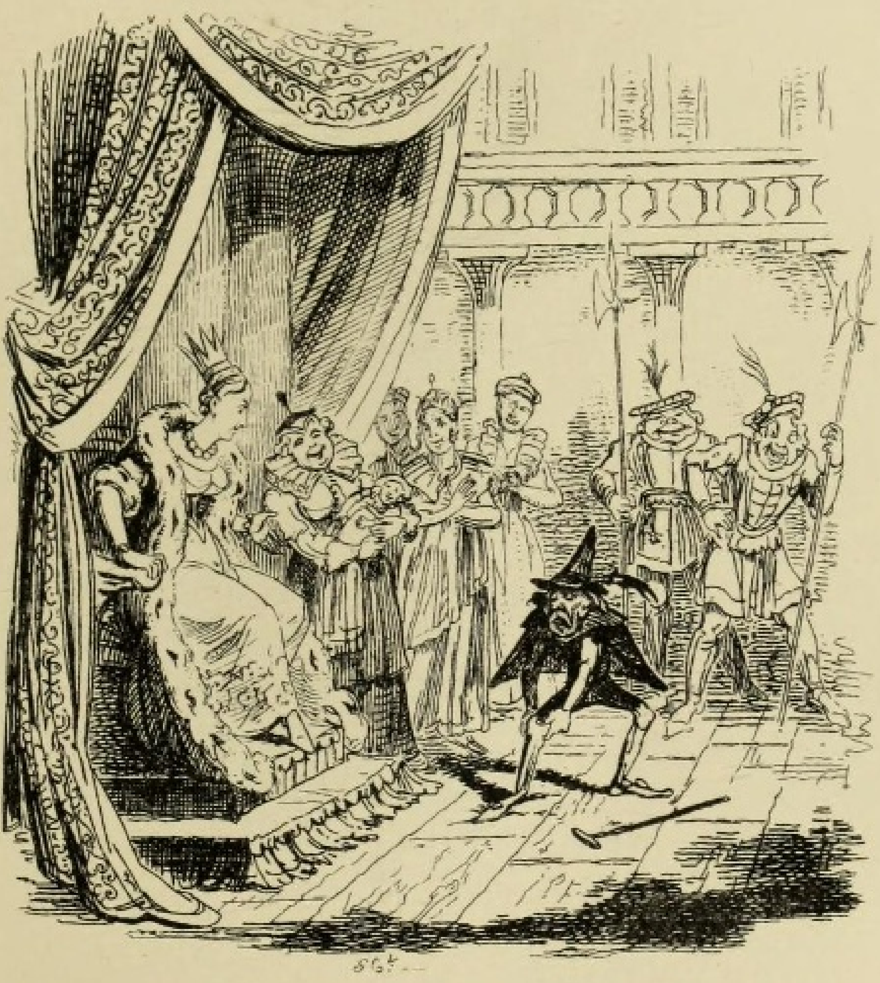
The third day came back one of the messengers, and said, “I can hear of no one other name; but yesterday, as I was climbing a high hill among the trees of the forest where the fox and the hare bid each other good night, I saw a little hut, and before the hut burnt a fire, and round about the fire danced a funny little man upon one leg, and sung —

“Merrily the feast I’ll make, To-day I’ll brew, to-morrow bake; Merrily I’ll dance and sing, For next day will a stranger bring: Little does my lady dream Rumpel-Stilts-Kin is my name!”

When the queen heard this, she jumped for joy, and as soon as her little visitor came, and said “Now, lady, what is my name?” “Is it John?” asked she. “No!” “Is it Tom?” “No!”

“Can your name be Rumpel-stilts-kin?”

“Some witch told you that! Some witch told you that!” cried the little man, and dashed his right foot in a rage so deep into the floor, that he was forced to lay hold of it with both hands to pull it out. Then he made the best of his way off, while everybody laughed at him for having had all his trouble for nothing.



The Goose-Girl

An old queen, whose husband had been dead some years, had a beautiful daughter. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen her mother packed up a great many costly things; jewels, and gold, and silver; trinkets, fine dresses, and in short everything that became a royal bride; for she loved her child very dearly: and she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her, and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess's horse was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the old queen went into her bed-chamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to her daughter, and said, "Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road." Then they took a sorrowful leave of each other, and the princess put the lock of her mother's hair into her bosom, got upon her horse, and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom. One day, as they were riding along by the side of a brook, the princess began to feel very thirsty, and said to her maid, "Pray get down and fetch me some water in my golden cup out of yonder brook, for I want to drink." "Nay," said the maid, "if you are thirsty, get down yourself, and lie down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer." Then she was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the little brook, and drank, for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and then she wept, and said, "Alas! what will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her, and said,

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it, Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

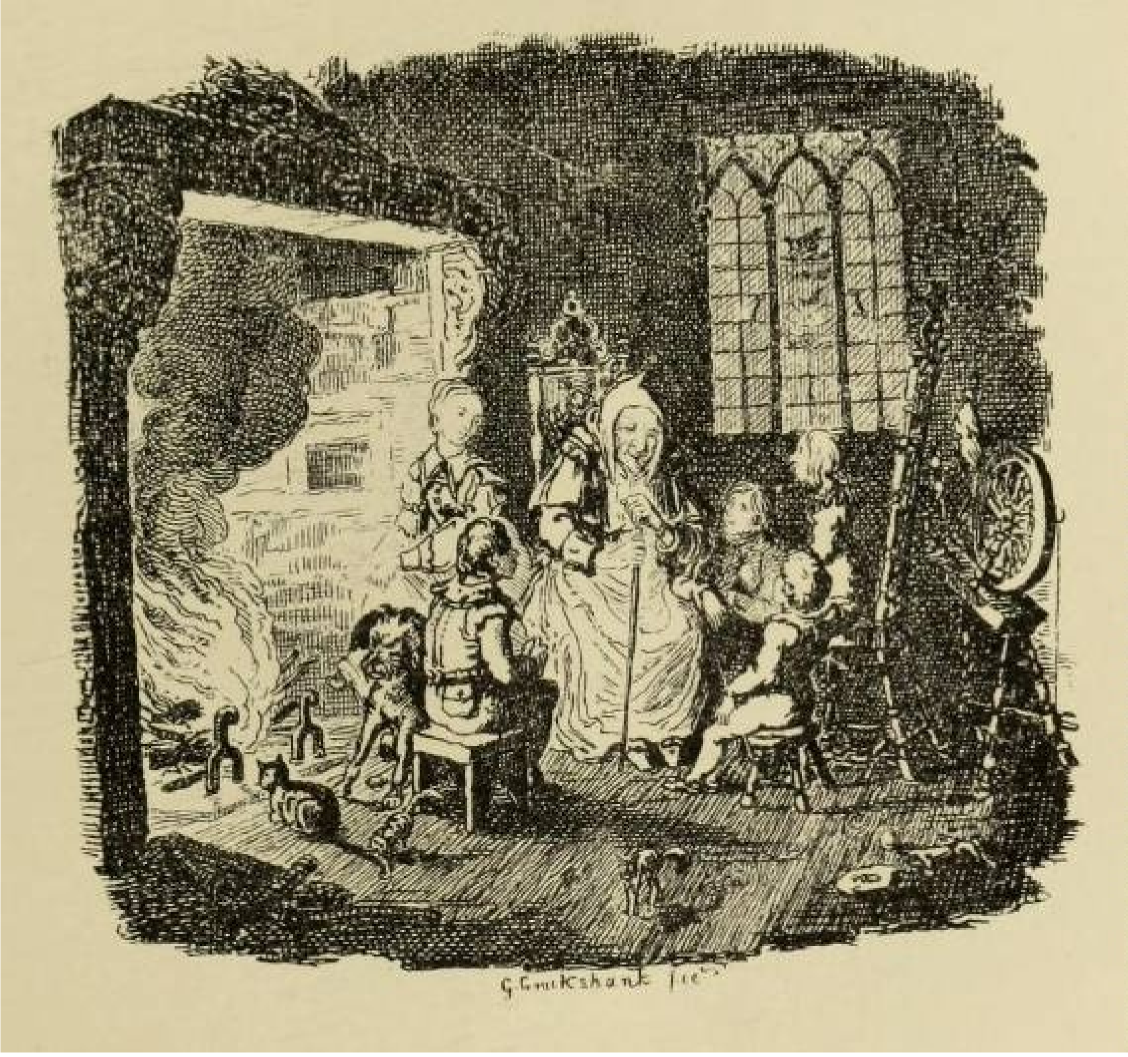
But the princess was very humble and meek, so she said nothing to her maid's ill behaviour, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode further on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last when they came to a river she forgot her maid's rude speech, and said, "Pray get down and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup." But the maid answered her, and even spoke more haughtily than before, "Drink if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid." Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse, and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried, and said, "What will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her again,

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it, Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

And as she leaned down to drink, the lock of hair fell from her bosom, and floated away with the water, without her seeing it, she was so frightened. But her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew the charm, and saw that the poor bride would be in her power, now that she had lost the hair. So when the bride had done, and would have got upon Falada again, the maid said, "I shall ride upon Falada, and you may have my horse instead:"

so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes, and put on her maid's shabby ones.



At last, as they drew near the end of their journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told any one what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well. Then the waiting-maid got upon Falada, and the real bride was set upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, and the prince flew to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber, but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.

But the old king happened to be looking out of the window, and saw her in the yard below; and as she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went into the royal chamber to ask the bride who it was she had brought with her, that was thus left standing in the court below. "I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road," said she; "pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle." The old king could not for some time think of any work for her to do; but at last he said, "I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him." Now the name of this lad, that the real bride was to help in watching the king's geese, was Curdken.

Soon after, the false bride said to the prince, “Dear husband, pray do me one piece of kindness.” “That I will,” said the prince. “Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road;” but the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She carried her point, and the faithful Falada was killed: but when the true princess heard of it, she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada’s head against a large dark gate of the city, through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished; and cut off the head, and nailed it fast under the dark gate.

Early the next morning, as she and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully,

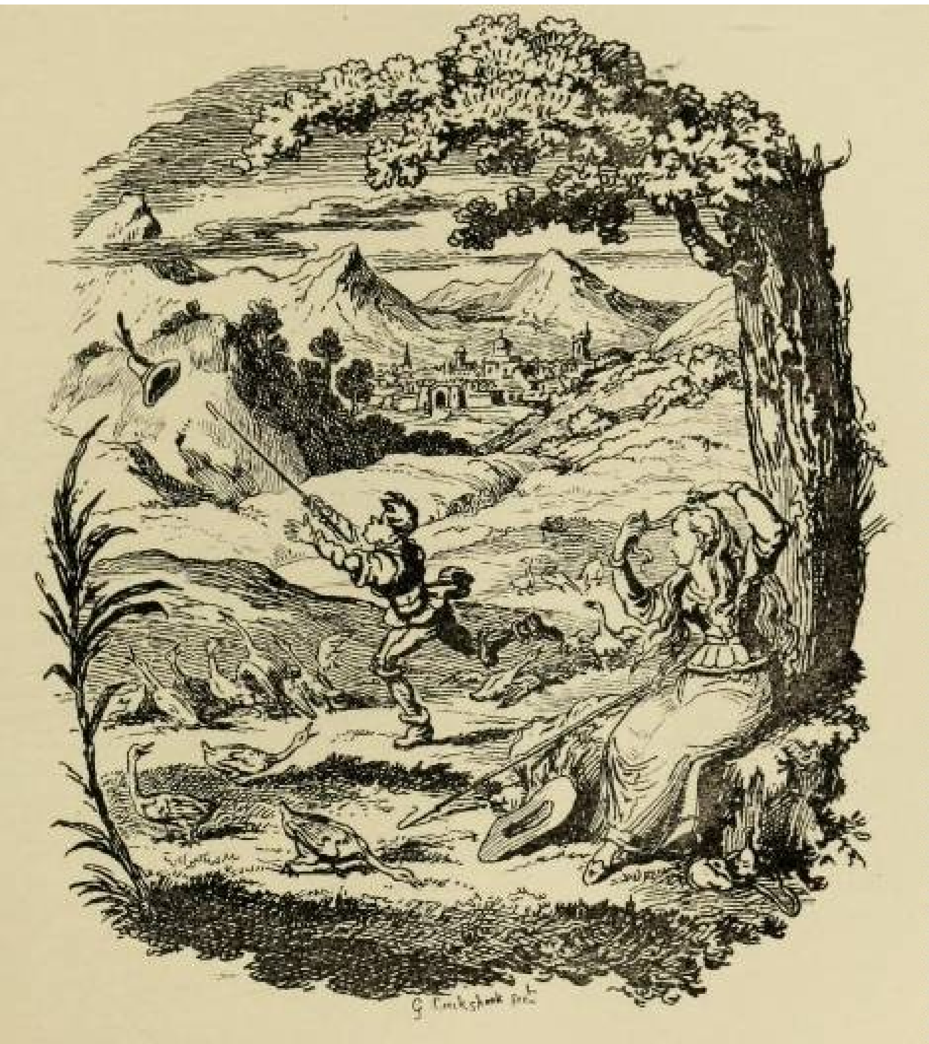
“Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!”

and the head answered,

“Bride, bride, there thou art ganging! Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it, Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it.”

Then they went out of the city, and drove the geese on. And when she came to the meadow, she sat down upon a bank there, and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure silver; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out; but she cried,

“Blow, breezes, blow! Let Curdken’s hat go! Blow, breezes, blow! Let him after it go! O’er hills, dales, and rocks, Away be it whirl’d, Till the silvery locks Are all comb’d and curl’d!”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Then there came a wind, so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat; and away it flew over the hills, and he after it; till, by the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and put it up again safe. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.

The next morning, as they were going through the dark gate, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried,

"Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!"

and it answered,

"Bride, bride, there thou art ganging! Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it, Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

Then she drove on the geese, and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before; and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take hold of it; but she cried out quickly,

"Blow, breezes, blow! Let Curdken's hat go! Blow, breezes, blow! Let him after it go! O'er hills, dales, and rocks, Away be it whirl'd, Till the silvery locks Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

Then the wind came and blew his hat, and off it flew a great way, over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it; and when he came back, she had done up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, “I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer.” “Why?” said the king. “Because she does nothing but tease me all day long.” Then the king made him tell him all that had passed. And Curdken said, “When we go in the morning through the dark gate with our flock of geese, she weeps, and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says,

‘Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!’

and the head answers,

‘Bride, bride, there thou art ganging! Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it, Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it.’”

And Curdken went on telling the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed; and how his hat was blown away, and he was forced to run after it, and leave his flock. But the old king told him to go out again as usual the next day: and when morning came, he placed himself behind the dark gate, and heard how she spoke to Falada, and how Falada answered; and then he went into the field, and hid himself in a bush by the meadow’s side, and soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese, and how, after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun; and then he heard her say,

“Blow, breezes, blow! Let Curdken’s hat go! Blow, breezes, blow! Let him after it go! O’er hills, dales, and rocks, Away be it whirl’d, Till the silvery locks Are all comb’d and curl’d!”

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken’s hat, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair. All this the old king saw: so he went home without being seen; and when the little goose-girl came back in the evening, he called her aside, and asked her why she did so: but she burst into tears, and said, “That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life.”

But the old king begged so hard, that she had no peace till she had told him all, word for word: and it was very lucky for her that she did so, for the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and gazed on her with wonder, she was so beautiful. Then he called his son, and told him, that he had only the false bride, for that she was merely a waiting-maid, while the true one stood by. And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and, without saying anything, ordered a great feast to be got ready for all his court. The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody knew her, for she was quite dazzling to their eyes, and was not at all like the little goose-girl, now that she had her brilliant dress.

When they had eaten and drank, and were very merry, the old king told all the story, as one that he had once heard of, and asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to any one who would behave thus. “Nothing better,” said this false bride, “than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck round with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she is dead.” “Thou art she!” said the old king, “and since thou hast judged thyself, it shall be so done to thee.” And the young king was married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives.

Faithful John

An old king fell sick; and when he found his end drawing near, he said, “Let Faithful John come to me.” Now Faithful John was the servant that he was fondest of, and was so called because he had been true to his master all his life long. Then when he came to the bed-side, the king said, “My faithful John, I feel that my end draws nigh, and I have now no cares save for my son, who is still young, and stands in need of good counsel. I have no friend to leave him but you; if you do not pledge yourself to teach him all he should know, and to be a father to him, I shall not shut my eyes in peace.” Then John said, “I will never leave him, but will serve him faithfully, even though it should cost me my life.” And the king said, “I shall now die in peace: after my death, show him the whole palace; all the rooms and vaults, and all the treasures and stores which lie there: but take care how you show him one room, — I mean the one where hangs the picture of the daughter of the king of the golden roof. If he sees it, he will fall deeply in love with her, and will then be plunged into great dangers on her account: guard him in this peril.” And when Faithful John had once more pledged his word to the old king, he laid his head on his pillow, and died in peace.

Now when the old king had been carried to his grave, Faithful John told the young king what had passed upon his death-bed, and said, “I will keep my word truly, and be faithful to you as I was always to your father, though it should cost me my life.” And the young king wept, and said, “Neither will I ever forget your faithfulness.”

The days of mourning passed away, and then Faithful John said to his master, “It is now time that you should see your heritage; I will show you your father’s palace.” Then he led him about every where, up and down, and let him see all the riches and all the costly rooms; only one room, where the picture stood, he did not open. Now the picture was so placed, that the moment the door opened, you could see it; and it was so beautifully done, that one would think it breathed and had life, and that there was nothing more lovely in the whole world. When the young king saw that Faithful John always went by this door, he said, “Why do you not open that room?” “There is something inside,” he answered, “which would frighten you.” But the king said, “I have seen the whole palace, and I must also know what is in there;” and he went and began to force open the door: but Faithful John held him back, and said, “I gave my word to your father before his death, that I would take heed how I showed you what stands in that room, lest it should lead you and me into great trouble.” “The greatest trouble to me,” said the young king, “will be not to go in and see the room; I shall have no peace by day or by night until I do; so I shall not go hence until you open it.”

Then Faithful John saw that with all he could do or say the young king would have his way; so, with a heavy heart and many foreboding sighs, he sought for the key out of his great bunch; and he opened the door of the room, and entered in first, so as to stand between the king and the picture, hoping he might not see it: but he raised himself upon tiptoes, and looked over John's shoulders; and as soon as he saw the likeness of the lady, so beautiful and shining with gold, he fell down upon the floor senseless. Then Faithful John lifted him up in his arms, and carried him to his bed, and was full of care, and thought to himself, "This trouble has come upon us; O Heaven! what will come of it?"

At last the king came to himself again; but the first thing that he said was, "Whose is that beautiful picture?" "It is the picture of the daughter of the king of the golden roof," said Faithful John. But the king went on, saying, "My love towards her is so great, that if all the leaves on the trees were tongues, they could not speak it; I care not to risk my life to win her; you are my faithful friend, you must aid me."

Then John thought for a long time what was now to be done; and at length said to the king, "All that she has about her is of gold: the tables, stools, cups, dishes, and all the things in her house are of gold; and she is always seeking new treasures. Now in your stores there is much gold; let it be worked up into every kind of vessel, and into all sorts of birds, wild beasts, and wonderful animals; then we will take it, and try our fortune." So the king ordered all the goldsmiths to be sought for; and they worked day and night, until at last the most beautiful things were made: and Faithful John had a ship loaded with them, and put on a merchant's dress, and the king did the same, that they might not be known.

When all was ready, they put out to sea, and sailed till they came to the coast of the land where the king of the golden roof reigned. Faithful John told the king to stay in the ship, and wait for him; "for perhaps," said he, "I may be able to bring away the king's daughter with me: therefore take care that everything be in order; let the golden vessels and ornaments be brought forth, and the whole ship be decked out with them." And he chose out something of each of the golden things to put into his basket, and got ashore, and went towards the king's palace. And when he came to the castle yard, there stood by the well side a beautiful maiden, who had two golden pails in her hand, drawing water. And as she drew up the water, which was glittering with gold, she turned herself round, and saw the stranger, and asked him who he was. Then he drew near, and said, "I am a merchant," and opened his basket, and let her look into it; and she cried out, "Oh! what beautiful things!" and set down her pails, and looked at one after the other. Then she said, "The king's daughter must see all these; she is so fond of such things, that she will buy all of you." So she took him by the hand, and led him in; for she was one of the waiting-maids of the daughter of the king.

When the princess saw the wares, she was greatly pleased, and said, "They are so beautiful that I will buy them all." But Faithful John said, "I am only the servant of a rich merchant; what I have here is nothing to what he has lying in yonder ship: there he has the finest and most costly things that ever were made in gold." The princess wanted to have them all brought ashore; but he said, "That would take up many days, there are such a number; and more rooms would be wanted to place them in than there are in the greatest house.” But her wish to see them grew still greater, and at last she said, “Take me to the ship, I will go myself, and look at your master’s wares.”

Then Faithful John led her joyfully to the ship, and the king, when he saw her, thought that his heart would leap out of his breast; and it was with the greatest trouble that he kept himself still. So she got into the ship, and the king led her down; but Faithful John staid behind with the steersman, and ordered the ship to put off: “Spread all your sail,” cried he, “that she may fly over the waves like a bird through the air.”

And the king showed the princess the golden wares, each one singly; the dishes, cups, basins, and the wild and wonderful beasts; so that many hours flew away, and she looked at everything with delight, and was not aware that the ship was sailing away. And after she had looked at the last, she thanked the merchant, and said she would go home; but when she came upon the deck, she saw that the ship was sailing far away from land upon the deep sea, and that it flew along at full sail. “Alas!” she cried out in her fright, “I am betrayed; I am carried off, and have fallen into the power of a roving trader; I would sooner have died.” But then the king took her by the hand, and said, “I am not a merchant, I am a king, and of as noble birth as you. I have taken you away by stealth, but I did so because of the very great love I have for you; for the first time that I saw your face, I fell on the ground in a swoon.” When the daughter of the king of the golden roof heard all, she was comforted, and her heart soon turned towards him, and she was willing to become his wife.

But it so happened, that whilst they were sailing on the deep sea, Faithful John, as he sat on the prow of the ship playing on his flute, saw three ravens flying in the air towards him. Then he left off playing, and listened to what they said to each other, for he understood their tongue. The first said, “There he goes! he is bearing away the daughter of the king of the golden roof; let him go!” “Nay,” said the second, “there he goes, but he has not got her yet.” And the third said, “There he goes; he surely has her, for she is sitting by his side in the ship.” Then the first began again, and cried out, “What boots it to him? See you not that when they come to land, a horse of a foxy-red colour will spring towards him; and then he will try to get upon it, and if he does, it will spring away with him into the air, so that he will never see his love again.” “True! true!” said the second, “but is there no help?” “Oh! yes, yes!” said the first; “if he who sits upon the horse takes the dagger which is stuck in the saddle and strikes him dead, the young king is saved: but who knows that? and who will tell him, that he who thus saves the king’s life will turn to stone from the toes of his feet to his knee?” Then the second said, “True! true! but I know more still; though the horse be dead, the king loses his bride: when they go together into the palace, there lies the bridal dress on the couch, and looks as if it were woven of gold and silver, but it is all brimstone and pitch; and if he puts it on, it will burn him, marrow and bones.” “Alas! alas! is there no help?” said the third. “Oh! yes, yes!” said the second, “if some one draws near and throws it into the fire, the young king will be saved. But what boots that? who knows and will tell him, that, if he does, his body from the knee to the heart will be turned to stone?” “More! more! I know more,” said the third: “were the dress burnt, still the king loses his bride. After the wedding, when the dance begins, and the young queen dances on, she will turn pale, and fall as though she were dead; and if some one does not draw near and lift her up, and take from her right breast three drops of blood, she will surely die. But if any one knew this, he would tell him, that if he does do so, his body will turn to stone, from the crown of his head to the tip of his toe.”

Then the ravens flapped their wings, and flew on; but Faithful John, who had understood it all, from that time was sorrowful, and did not tell his master what he had heard; for he saw that if he told him, he must himself lay down his life to save him: at last he said to himself, “I will be faithful to my word, and save my master, if it costs me my life.”

Now when they came to land, it happened just as the ravens had foretold; for there sprung out a fine foxy-red horse. “See,” said the king, “he shall bear me to my palace:” and he tried to mount, but Faithful John leaped before him, and swung himself quickly upon it, drew the dagger, and smote the horse dead. Then the other servants of the king, who were jealous of Faithful John, cried out, “What a shame to kill the fine beast that was to take the king to his palace!” But the king said, “Let him alone, it is my Faithful John; who knows but he did it for some good end?”

Then they went on to the castle, and there stood a couch in one room, and a fine dress lay upon it, that shone with gold and silver; and the young king went up to it to take hold of it, but Faithful John cast it in the fire, and burnt it. And the other servants began again to grumble, and said, “See, now he is burning the wedding dress.” But the king said, “Who knows what he does it for? let him alone! he is my faithful servant John.”

Then the wedding feast was held, and the dance began, and the bride also came in; but Faithful John took good heed, and looked in her face; and on a sudden she turned pale, and fell as though she were dead upon the ground. But he sprung towards her quickly, lifted her up, and took her and laid her upon a couch, and drew three drops of blood from her right breast. And she breathed again, and came to herself. But the young king had seen all, and did not know why Faithful John had done it; so he was angry at his boldness, and said, “Throw him into prison.”

The next morning Faithful John was led forth, and stood upon the gallows, and said, “May I speak out before I die?” and when the king answered “It shall be granted thee,” he said, “I am wrongly judged, for I have always been faithful and true:” and then he told what he had heard the ravens say upon the sea, and how he meant to save his master, and had therefore done all these things.

When he had told all, the king called out, “O my most faithful John! pardon! pardon! take him down!” But Faithful John had fallen down lifeless at the last word he spoke, and lay as a stone: and the king and the queen mourned over him; and the king said, “Oh, how ill have I rewarded thy truth!” And he ordered the stone figure to be taken up, and placed in his own room near to his bed; and as often as he looked at it he wept, and said, “Oh that I could bring thee back to life again, my Faithful John!”

After a time, the queen had two little sons, who grew up, and were her great joy. One day, when she was at church, the two children staid with their father; and as they played about, he looked at the stone figure, and sighed, and cried out, “Oh that I could bring thee back to life, my Faithful John!” Then the stone began to speak, and said, “O king! thou canst bring me back to life if thou wilt give up for my sake what is dearest to thee.” But the king said, “All that I have in the world would I give up for thee.” “Then,” said the stone, “cut off the heads of thy children, sprinkle their blood over me, and I shall live again.” Then the king was greatly shocked: but he thought how Faithful John had died for his sake, and because of his great truth towards him; and rose up and drew his sword to cut off his children’s heads and sprinkle the stone with their blood; but the moment he drew his sword Faithful John was alive again, and stood before his face, and said, “Your truth is rewarded.” And the children sprang about and played as if nothing had happened.

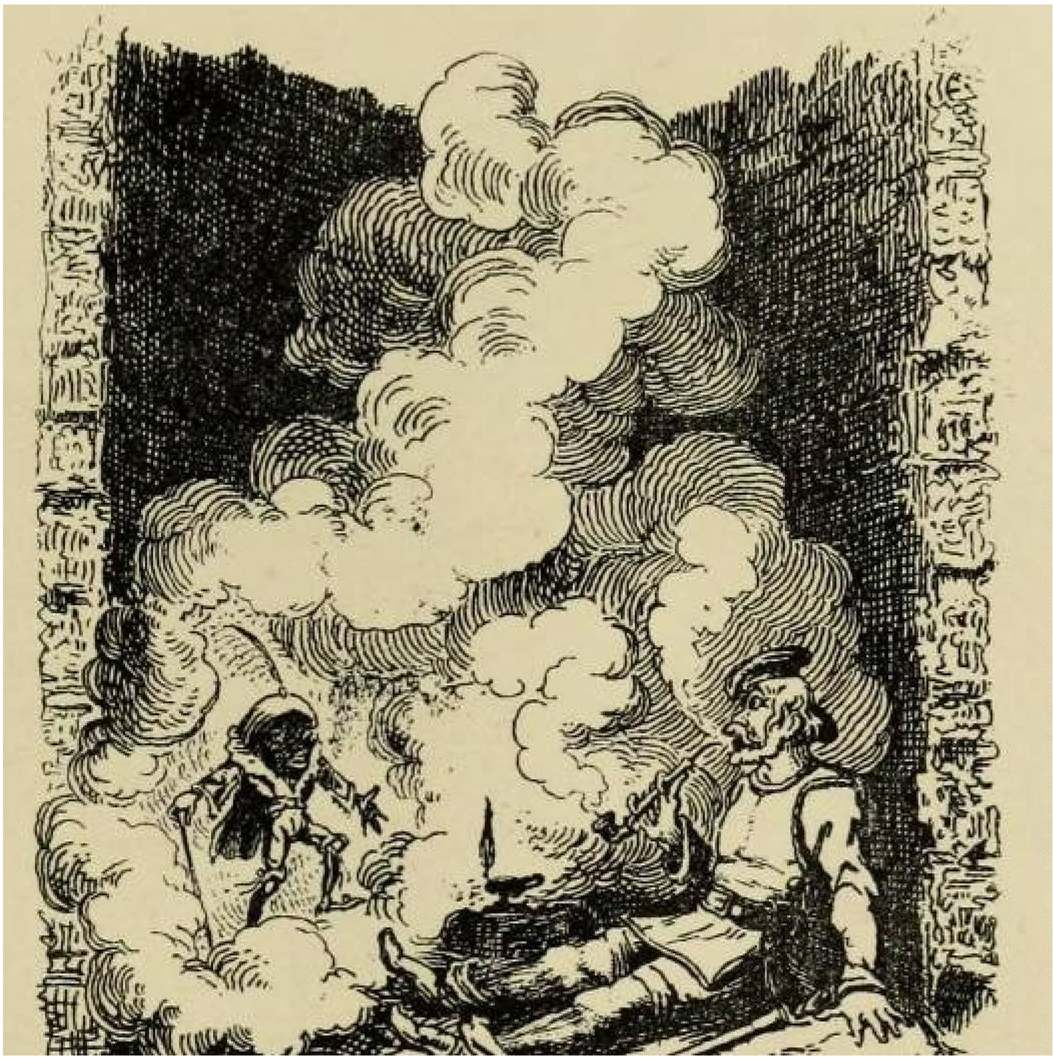
Then the king was full of joy: and when he saw the queen coming, to try her, he put Faithful John and the two children in a large closet; and when she came in he said to her, “Have you been at church?” “Yes,” said she, “but I could not help thinking of Faithful John, who was so true to us.” “Dear wife,” said the king, “we can bring him back to life again, but it will cost us both our little sons, and we must give them up for his sake.” When the queen heard this, she turned pale and was frightened in her heart; but she said, “Let it be so; we owe him all, for his great faith and truth.” Then he rejoiced because she thought as he had thought, and went in and opened the closet, and brought out the children and Faithful John, and said, “Heaven be praised! he is ours again, and we have our sons safe too.” So he told her the whole story; and all lived happily together the rest of their lives.

The Blue Light

A soldier had served a king his master many years, till at last he was turned off without pay or reward. How he should get his living he did not know: so he set out and journeyed homeward all day in a very downcast mood, until in the evening he came to the edge of a deep wood. The road leading that way, he pushed forward, but had not gone far before he saw a light glimmering through the trees, towards which he bent his weary steps; and soon came to a hut where no one lived but an old witch. The poor fellow begged for a night's lodging and something to eat and drink; but she would listen to nothing: however, he was not easily got rid of; and at last she said, "I think I will take pity on you this once; but if I do, you must dig over all my garden for me in the morning." The soldier agreed very willingly to anything she asked, and he became her guest.

The next day he kept his word and dug the garden very neatly. The job lasted all day; and in the evening, when his mistress would have sent him away, he said, "I am so tired with my work that I must beg you to let me stay over the night." The old lady vowed at first she would not do any such thing; but after a great deal of talk he carried his point, agreeing to chop up a whole cart-load of wood for her the next day.

This task too was duly ended; but not till towards night; and then he found himself so tired, that he begged a third night's rest: and this too was given, but only on his pledging his word that he next day would fetch the witch the blue light that burnt at the bottom of the well.



When morning came she led him to the well’s mouth, tied him to a long rope, and let him down. At the bottom sure enough he found the blue light as the witch had said, and at once made the signal for her to draw him up again. But when she had pulled him up so near to the top that she could reach him with her hands, she said, “Give me the light, I will take care of it,” — meaning to play him a trick, by taking it for herself and letting him fall again to the bottom of the well. But the soldier saw through her wicked thoughts, and said, “No, I shall not give you the light till I find myself safe and sound out of the well.” At this she became very angry, and dashed him, with the light she had longed for many a year, down to the bottom. And there lay the poor soldier for a while in despair, on the damp mud below, and feared that his end was nigh. But his pipe happened to be in his pocket still half full, and he thought to himself, “I may as well make an end of smoking you out; it is the last pleasure I shall have in this world.” So he lit it at the blue light, and began to smoke.

Up rose a cloud of smoke, and on a sudden a little black dwarf was seen making his way through the midst of it, “What do you want with me, soldier?” said he. “I have no business with you,” answered he. But the dwarf said, “I am bound to serve you in everything, as lord and master of the blue light.” “Then first of all be so good as to help me out of this well.” No sooner said than done: the dwarf took him by the hand and drew him up, and the blue light of course with him. “Now do me another piece of kindness,” said the soldier; “pray let that old lady take my place in the well.” When the dwarf had done this, and lodged the witch safely at the bottom, they began to ransack her treasures; and the soldier made bold to carry off as much of her gold and silver as he well could. Then the dwarf said, “if you should chance at any time to want me, you have nothing to do but to light your pipe at the blue light, and I will soon be with you.”

The soldier was not a little pleased at his good luck, and went to the best inn in the first town he came to, and ordered some fine clothes to be made, and a handsome room to be got ready for him. When all was ready, he called his little man to him, and said, “The king sent me away penniless, and left me to hunger and want: I have a mind to show him that it is my turn to be master now; so bring me his daughter here this evening, that she may wait upon me, and do what I bid her.” “That is rather a dangerous task,” said the dwarf. But away he went, took the princess out of her bed, fast asleep as she was, and brought her to the soldier.

Very early in the morning he carried her back: and as soon as she saw her father, she said, “I had a strange dream last night: I thought I was carried away through the air to a soldier’s house, and there I waited upon him as his servant.” Then the king wondered greatly at such a story; but told her to make a hole in her pocket and fill it with peas, so that if it were really as she said, and the whole was not a dream, the peas might fall out in the streets as she passed through, and leave a clue to tell whither she had been taken. She did so; but the dwarf had heard the king’s plot; and when evening came, and the soldier said he must bring him the princess again, he strewed peas over several of the streets, so that the few that fell from her pocket were not known from the others; and the people amused themselves all the next day picking up peas, and wondering where so many came from.

When the princess told her father what had happened to her the second time, he said, “Take one of your shoes with you, and hide it in the room you are taken to.” The dwarf heard this also; and when the soldier told him to bring the king’s daughter again, he said, “I cannot save you this time; it will be an unlucky thing for you if you are found out — as I think you will.” But the soldier would have his own way. “Then you must take care and make the best of your way out of the city gate very early in the morning,” said the dwarf. The princess kept one shoe on as her father bid her, and hid it in the soldier’s room: and when she got back to her father, he ordered it to be sought for all over the town; and at last it was found where she had hid it. The soldier had run away, it is true; but he had been too slow, and was soon caught and thrown into a strong prison, and loaded with chains: — what was worse, in the hurry of his flight, he had left behind him his great treasure the blue light and all his gold, and had nothing left in his pocket but one poor ducat.

As he was standing very sorrowful at the prison grating, he saw one of his comrades, and calling out to him said, “If you will bring me a little bundle I left in the inn, I will give you a ducat.” His comrade thought this very good pay for such a job: so he went away, and soon came back bringing the blue light and the gold. Then the prisoner soon lit his pipe: up rose the smoke, and with it came his old friend the little dwarf. “Do not fear, master,” said he: “keep up your heart at your trial, and leave everything to take its course; — only mind to take the blue light with you.” The trial soon came on; the matter was sifted to the bottom; the prisoner found guilty, and his doom passed: — he was ordered to be hung forthwith on the gallows-tree.

But as he was led out, he said he had one favour to beg of the king. “What is it?” said his majesty. “That you will deign to let me smoke one pipe on the road.” “Two, if you like,” said the king. Then he lit his pipe at the blue light, and the black dwarf was before him in a moment. “Be so good as to kill, slay, or put to flight all these people,” said the soldier: “and as for the king, you may cut him into three pieces.” Then the dwarf began to lay about him, and soon got rid of the crowd around: but the king begged hard for mercy; and, to save his life, agreed to let the soldier have the princess for his wife, and to leave the kingdom to him when he died.

Ashputtel

The wife of a rich man fell sick: and when she felt that her end drew nigh, she called her only daughter to her bed-side, and said, “Always be a good girl, and I will look down from heaven and watch over you.” Soon afterwards she shut her eyes and died, and was buried in the garden; and the little girl went every day to her grave and wept, and was always good and kind to all about her. And the snow spread a beautiful white covering over the grave; but by the time the sun had melted it away again, her father had married another wife. This new wife had two daughters of her own, that she brought home with her: they were fair in face, but foul at heart, and it was now a sorry time for the poor little girl. “What does the good-for-nothing thing want in the parlour?” said they; “they who would eat bread should first earn it; away with the kitchen maid!” Then they took away her fine clothes, and gave her an old gray frock to put on, and laughed at her and turned her into the kitchen.

There she was forced to do hard work; to rise early before day-light, to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and to wash. Besides that, the sisters plagued her in all sorts of ways and laughed at her. In the evening when she was tired she had no bed to lie down on, but was made to lie by the hearth among the ashes; and then, as she was of course always dusty and dirty, they called her Ashputtel.

It happened once that the father was going to the fair, and asked his wife’s daughters what he should bring them. “Fine clothes,” said the first: “Pearls and diamonds,” cried the second. “Now, child,” said he to his own daughter, “what will you have?” “The first sprig, dear father, that rubs against your hat on your way home,” said she. Then he bought for the two first the fine clothes and pearls and diamonds they had asked for: and on his way home as he rode through a green copse, a sprig of hazel brushed against him, and almost pushed off his hat: so he broke it off and brought it away; and when he got home he gave it to his daughter. Then she took it and went to her mother’s grave and planted it there, and cried so much that it was watered with her tears; and there it grew and became a fine tree. Three times every day she went to it and wept; and soon a little bird came and built its nest upon the tree, and talked with her, and watched over her, and brought her whatever she wished for.

Now it happened that the king of the land held a feast which was to last three days, and out of those who came to it his son was to choose a bride for himself: and Ashputtel’s two sisters were asked to come. So they called her up, and said, “Now, comb our hair, brush our shoes, and tie our sashes for us, for we are going to dance at the king’s feast.” Then she did as she was told, but when all was done she could not help crying, for she thought to herself, she should have liked to go to the dance too; and at last she begged her mother very hard to let her go. “You! Ashputtel?” said she; “you who have nothing to wear, no clothes at all, and who cannot even dance — you want to go to the ball?” And when she kept on begging, — to get rid of her, she said at last, “I will throw this basinful of peas into the ash heap, and if you have picked them all out in two hours’ time you shall go to the feast too.” Then she threw the peas into the ashes: but the little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out —

“Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye, — pick, pick, pick!”

Then first came two white doves flying in at the kitchen window; and next came two turtle-doves; and after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and fluttering in, and flew down into the ashes: and the little doves stooped their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick; and picked out all the good grain and put it in a dish, and left the ashes. At the end of one hour the work was done, and all flew out again at the windows. Then she brought the dish to her mother, overjoyed at the thought that now she should go to the wedding. But she said, “No, no! you slut, you have no clothes and cannot dance, you shall not go.” And when Ashputtel begged very hard to go, she said, “If you can in one hour’s time pick two of those dishes of peas out of the ashes, you shall go too.” And thus she thought she should at last get rid of her. So she shook two dishes of peas into the ashes; but the little maiden went out into the garden at the back of the house, and cried out as before —

“Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye, — pick, pick, pick!”

Then first came two white doves in at the kitchen window; and next came the turtle-doves; and after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and hopping about, and flew down about the ashes: and the little doves put their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began pick, pick, pick; and they put all the good grain into the dishes, and left all the ashes. Before half an hour’s time all was done, and out they flew again. And then Ashputtel took the dishes to her mother, rejoicing to think that she should now go to the ball. But her mother said, “It is all of no use, you cannot go; you have no clothes, and cannot dance, and you would only put us to shame:” and off she went with her two daughters to the feast.

Now when all were gone, and nobody left at home, Ashputtel went sorrowfully and sat down under the hazel-tree, and cried out —

“Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!”

Then her friend the bird flew out of the tree and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk: and she put them on, and followed her sisters to the feast. But they did not know her, and thought it must be some strange princess, she looked so fine and beautiful in her rich clothes: and they never once thought of Ashputtel, but took for granted that she was safe at home in the dirt.

The king’s son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her and no one else: and he never left her hand; but when any one else came to ask her to dance, he said, “This lady is dancing with me.” Thus they danced till a late hour of the night; and then she wanted to go home: and the king’s son said, “I shall go and take care of you to your home;” for he wanted to see where the beautiful maid lived. But she slipped away from him unawares, and ran off towards home, and the prince followed her; but she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. Then he waited till her father came home, and told him that the unknown maiden who had been at the feast had hid herself in the pigeon-house. But when they had broken open the door they found no one within; and as they came back into the house, Ashputtel lay, as she always did, in her dirty frock by the ashes, and her dim little lamp burnt in the chimney: for she had run as quickly as she could through the pigeon-house and on to the hazel-tree, and had there taken off her beautiful clothes, and laid them beneath the tree, that the bird might carry them away, and had seated herself amid the ashes again in her little gray frock.

The next day when the feast was again held, and her father, mother, and sisters were gone, Ashputtel went to the hazel-tree, and said —

“Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!”

And the bird came and brought a still finer dress than the one she had worn the day before. And when she came in it to the ball, every one wondered at her beauty: but the king’s son, who was waiting for her, took her by the hand, and danced with her; and when any one asked her to dance, he said as before, “This lady is dancing with me.” When night came she wanted to go home; and the king’s son followed her as before, that he might see into what house she went: but she sprung away from him all at once into the garden behind her father’s house. In this garden stood a fine large pear-tree full of ripe fruit; and Ashputtel not knowing where to hide herself jumped up into it without being seen. Then the king’s son could not find out where she was gone, but waited till her father came home, and said to him, “The unknown lady who danced with me has slipt away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear-tree.” The father thought to himself, “Can it be Ashputtel?” So he ordered an axe to be brought; and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. And when they came back into the kitchen, there lay Ashputtel in the ashes as usual; for she had slipped down on the other side of the tree, and carried her beautiful clothes back to the bird at the hazel-tree, and then put on her little gray frock.

The third day, when her father and mother and sisters were gone, she went again into the garden, and said —

“Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!”

Then her kind friend the bird brought a dress still finer than the former one, and slippers which were all of gold: so that when she came to the feast no one knew what to say for wonder at her beauty: and the king’s son danced with her alone; and when any one else asked her to dance, he said, “This lady is my partner.” Now when night came she wanted to go home; and the king’s son would go with her, and said to himself, “I will not lose her this time;” but however she managed to slip away from him, though in such a hurry that she dropped her left golden slipper upon the stairs.

So the prince took the shoe, and went the next day to the king his father, and said, “I will take for my wife the lady that this golden slipper fits.” Then both the sisters were overjoyed to hear this; for they had beautiful feet, and had no doubt that they could wear the golden slipper. The eldest went first into the room where the slipper was and wanted to try it on, and the mother stood by. But her great toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. Then the mother gave her a knife, and said, “Never mind, cut it off; when you are queen you will not care about toes, you will not want to go on foot.” So the silly girl cut her great toe off, and squeezed the shoe on, and went to the king’s son. Then he took her for his bride, and set her beside him on his horse and rode away with her.

But in their way home they had to pass by the hazel-tree that Ashputtel had planted, and there sat a little dove on the branch singing —

“Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she’s not the true one that sits by thy side.”

Then the prince got down and looked at her foot, and saw by the blood that streamed from it what a trick she had played him. So he turned his horse round and brought the false bride back to her home, and said, “This is not the right bride; let the other sister try and put on the slipper.” Then she went into the room and got her foot into the shoe, all but the heel, which was too large. But her mother squeezed it in till the blood came, and took her to the king’s son; and he set her as his bride by his side on his horse, and rode away with her.

But when they came to the hazel-tree the little dove sate there still, and sang —

“Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she’s not the true one that sits by thy side.”

Then he looked down and saw that the blood streamed so from the shoe that her white stockings were quite red. So he turned his horse and brought her back again also. “This is not the true bride,” said he to the father; “have you no other daughters?” “No,” said he; “there is only a little dirty Ashputtel here, the child of my first wife; I am sure she cannot be the bride.” However, the prince told him to send her. But the mother said, “No, no, she is much too dirty, she will not dare to show herself:” however, the prince would have her come. And she first washed her face and hands, and then went in and curtsied to him, and he reached her the golden slipper. Then she took her clumsy shoe off her left foot, and put on the golden slipper; and it fitted her as if it had been made for her. And when he drew near and looked at her face he knew her, and said, “This is the right bride.” But the mother and both the sisters were frightened and turned pale with anger as he took Ashputtel on his horse, and rode away with her. And when they came to the hazel-tree, the white dove sang —

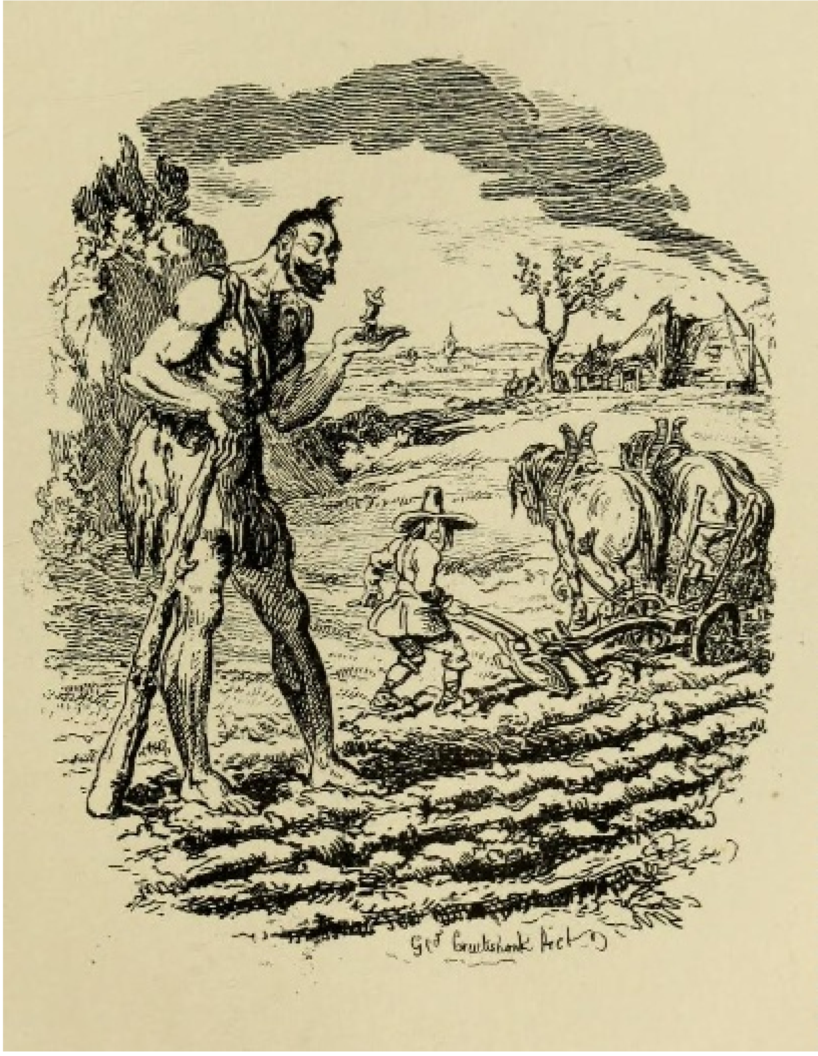
“Home! home! look at the shoe!
Princess! the shoe was made for you!
Prince! prince! take home thy bride,
For she is the true one that sits by thy side!”

And when the dove had done its song, it came flying and perched upon her right shoulder, and so went home with her.

The Young Giant and the Tailor

A husbandman had once a son, who was born no bigger than my thumb, and for many years did not grow a hair's breadth taller. One day as the father was going to plough in the field, the little fellow said, "Father, let me go too." "No," said his father; "stay where you are, you can do no good out of doors, and if you go perhaps I may lose you." Then little Thumbling fell a-crying: and his father, to quiet him, at last said he might go. So he put him in his pocket, and when he was in the field pulled him out and set him upon a newly made furrow, that he might look about. While he was sitting there, a great giant came striding over the hill. "Do you see that tall steeple-man?" said the father: "he will run away with you." (Now he only said this to frighten the little boy if he should be naughty.) But the giant had long legs, and with two or three strides he really came close to the furrow, and picked up little Thumbling to look at him; and taking a liking to the little chap went off with him. The father stood by all the time, but could not say a word for fright; for he thought his child was really lost, and that he should never see him again.

But the giant took care of him at his house in the woods, and laid him in his bosom and fed him with the same food that he lived on himself. So Thumbling, instead of being a little dwarf, became like the giant — tall and stout and strong: so that at the end of two years when the old giant took him into the wood to try him, and said, "Pull up that birch-tree for yourself to walk with;" the lad was so strong that he tore it up by the root. The giant thought he should make him a still stronger man than this: so after taking care of him two years more, he took him into the wood to try his strength again. This time he took hold of one of the thickest oaks, and pulled it up as if it were mere sport to him. Then the old giant said, "Well done, my man, you will do now." So he carried him back to the field where he first found him.



His father happened to be just then ploughing as the young giant went up to him, saying, “Look here, father, see who I am; — don’t you see I am your son?” But the husbandman was frightened, and cried out, “No, no, you are not my son; begone about your business.” “Indeed, I am your son; let me plough a little, I can plough as well as you.” “No, go your ways,” said the father, but as he was afraid of the tall man, he at last let go the plough and sat down on the ground beside it. Then the youth laid hold of the ploughshare, and though he only pushed with one hand, he drove it deep into the earth. The ploughman cried out, “If you must plough, pray do not push so hard; you are doing more harm than good;” but he took off the horses, and said, “Father, go home and tell my mother to get ready a good dinner; I’ll go round the field meanwhile.” So he went on driving the plough without any horses, till he had done two mornings’ work by himself; then he harrowed it, and when all was over, took up plough, harrow, horses and all, and carried them home like a bundle of straw.

When he reached the house he sat himself down on the bench, saying, “Now, mother, is dinner ready?” “Yes,” said she, for she dared not deny him; so she brought two large dishes full, enough to have lasted herself and her husband eight days; however, he soon ate it all up, and said that was but a taste. “I see very well, father, that I shan’t get enough to eat at your house;

so if you will give me an iron walking-stick, so strong that I cannot break it against my knees, I will go away again.” The husbandman very gladly put his two horses to the cart and drove them to the forge, and brought back a bar of iron as long and as thick as his two horses could draw; but the lad laid it against his knee; and snap! it went like a broken beanstalk. “I see, father,” said he, “you can get no stick that will do for me, so I’ll go and try my luck by myself.”

Then away he went, and turned blacksmith, and travelled till he came to a village where lived a miserly smith, who earned a good deal of money, but kept all he got to himself, and gave nothing away to anybody. The first thing he did was to step into the smithy, and ask if the smith did not want a journeyman. “Aye,” said the cunning fellow, (as he looked at him and thought what a stout chap he was, and how lustily he would work and earn his bread,) “what wages do you ask?” “I want no pay,” said he; “but every fortnight when the other workmen are paid, you shall let me give you two strokes over the shoulders to amuse myself.” The old smith thought to himself he could bear this very well, and reckoned on saving a great deal of money; so the bargain was soon struck.

The next morning the new workman was about to begin to work; but at the first stroke that he hit, when his master brought him the iron red hot, he shivered it in pieces, and the anvil sunk so deep into the earth, that he could not get it out again. This made the old fellow very angry; “Halloo!” cried he, “I can’t have you for a workman, you are too clumsy; we must put an end to our bargain.” “Very well,” said the other, “but you must pay for what I have done, so let me give you only one little stroke, and then the bargain is all over.” So saying, he gave him a thump that tossed him over a load of hay that stood near. Then he took the thickest bar of iron on the forge for a walking-stick, and went on his way.

When he had journeyed some way, he came to a farm-house, and asked the farmer if he wanted a foreman. The farmer said, “Yes,” and the same wages were agreed for as before with the blacksmith. The next morning the workmen were all to go into the wood; but the giant was found to be fast asleep in his bed when the rest were all up and ready to start. “Come, get up,” said one of them to him, “it is high time to be stirring; you must go with us.” “Go your way,” muttered he sulkily, “I shall have done my work and get home long before you.” So he lay in bed two hours longer, and at last got up and cooked and ate his breakfast, and then at his leisure harnessed his horses to go to the wood. Just before the wood was a hollow, through which all must pass; so he drove the cart on first, and built up behind him such a mound of faggots and briars that no horse could pass. This done, he drove on, and as he was going into the wood met the others coming out on their road home; “Drive away,” said he, “I shall be home before you still.” However, he only went a very little way into the wood and tore up one of the largest timber trees, put it into his cart, and turned about homewards. When he came to the pile of faggots, he found all the others standing there, not being able to pass by. “So,” said he, “you see if you had staid with me, you would have been home just as soon, and might have slept an hour or two longer.” Then he took his tree on one shoulder, and his cart on the other, and pushed through as easily as though he were laden with feathers, and when he reached the yard showed the tree to the farmer, and asked if it was not a famous walking-stick. “Wife,” said the farmer, “this man is worth something; if he sleeps longer, still he works better than the rest.”

Time rolled on, and he had served the farmer his whole year; so when his fellow-labourers were paid, he said he also had a right to take his wages. But great dread came upon the farmer, at the thought of the blows he was to have, so he begged him to give up the old bargain, and take his whole farm and stock instead. “Not I,” said he, “I will be no farmer; I am foreman, and so I mean to keep, and be paid as we agreed.” Finding he could do nothing with him, the farmer only begged one fortnight’s respite, and called together all his friends, to ask their advice in the matter. They bethought themselves for a long time, and at last agreed that the shortest way was to kill this troublesome foreman. The next thing was to settle how it was to be done; and it was agreed that he should be ordered to carry into the yard some great mill-stones, and to put them on the edge of a well; that then he should be sent down to clean it out, and when he was at the bottom, the mill-stones should be pushed down upon his head. Everything went right, and when the foreman was safe in the well, the stones were rolled in. As they struck the bottom, the water splashed to the very top. Of course they thought his head must be crashed to pieces; but he only cried out, “Drive away the chickens from the well; they are pecking about in the sand above me, and throwing it into my eyes, so that I cannot see.” When his job was done, up he sprung from the well, saying, “Look here! see what a fine neck-cloth I have!” as he pointed to one of the mill-stones, that had fallen over his head, and hung about his neck.

The farmer was again overcome with fear, and begged another fortnight to think of it. So his friends were called together again, and at last gave this advice; that the foreman should be sent and made to grind corn by night at the haunted mill, whence no man had ever yet come out in the morning alive. That very evening he was told to carry eight bushels of corn to the mill, and grind them in the night. Away he went to the loft, put two bushels in his right pocket, two in his left, and four in a long sack slung over his shoulders, and then set off to the mill. The miller told him he might grind there in the day-time, but not by night, for the mill was bewitched, and whoever went in at night had been found dead in the morning: “Never mind, miller, I shall come out safe,” said he; “only make haste and get out of the way, and look out for me in the morning.”

So he went into the mill and put the corn into the hopper, and about twelve o’clock sat himself down on the bench in the miller’s room. After a little time the door all at once opened of itself, and in came a large table. On the table stood wine and meat, and many good things besides: all seemed placed there by themselves; at any rate there was no one to be seen. The chairs next moved themselves round it, but still neither guests nor servants came; till all at once he saw fingers handling the knives and forks and putting food on the plates, but still nothing else was to be seen. Now our friend felt somewhat hungry as he looked at the dishes, so he sat himself down at the table and ate whatever he liked best; and when he had had enough, and the plates were empty, on a sudden he heard something blow out the lights. When it was pitch dark he felt a tremendous blow upon his head; "If I get such another box on the ear," said he, "I shall just give it back again;" and this he really did, when the next blow came. Thus the game went on all night; and he never let fear get the better of him, but kept dealing his blows round, till at day-break all was still. "Well, miller," said he in the morning, "I have had some little slaps on the face, but I've given as good, I'll warrant you; and meantime I have eaten as much as I liked." The miller was glad to find the charm was broken, and would have given him a great deal of money; "I want no money, I have quite enough," said he, as he took the meal on his back, and went home to his master to claim his wages.

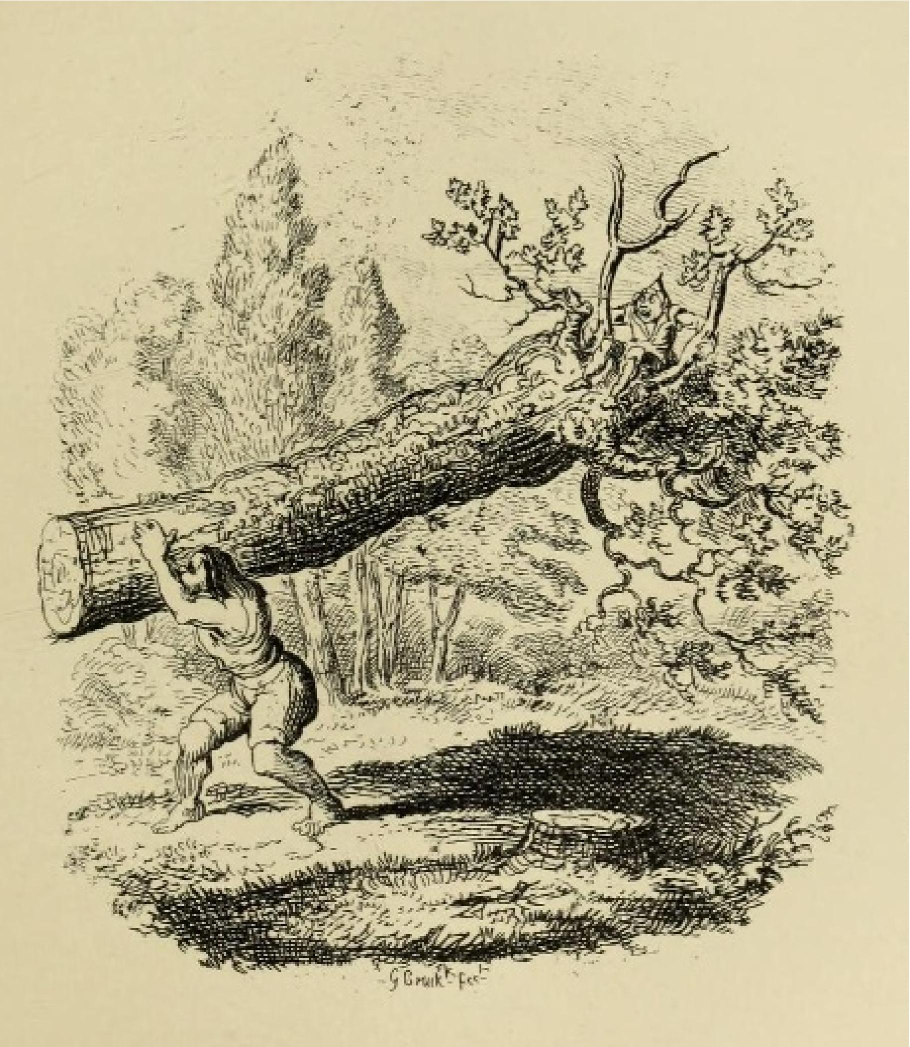
But the farmer was in a rage, knowing there was no help for him, and paced the room up and down till the drops of sweat ran down his forehead. Then he opened the window for a little fresh air, and before he was aware, his foreman gave him the first blow, and kicked him out of the window over the hills and far away, and next sent his wife after him; and there, for aught I know, they may be flying in the air still: but the young giant took up his iron walking-stick and walked off.

Perhaps this was the same giant that the Bold Little Tailor met, when he set out on his travels, as I will tell you next.

It was a fine summer morning when this little man bound his girdle round his body, and looked about his house to see if there was any thing good to take with him on his journey into the wide world. He could only find an old cheese; but that was better than nothing; so he took it up; and, as he was going out, the old hen met him at the door, and he packed her too into his wallet with the cheese. Then off he set, and when he had climbed a high hill, he found the giant sitting on the top. "Good day, comrade," said he; "there you sit at your ease, and look the wide world over: I have a mind to go and try my luck in that same world; what do you say to going with me?" Then the giant looked at him, and said, "You are a poor trumpery little knave." "That may be," said the tailor; "but we shall see who is the best man of the two." The giant, finding the little man so bold, began to be a little more respectful, and said they would soon try who was master. So he took a large stone in his hand and squeezed it till water dropped from it; "Do that," said he, "if you have a mind to be thought a strong man." "Is that all?" said the tailor; "I will soon do as much;" so he put his hand in his wallet, pulled out the cheese (which was quite new), and squeezed it till the whey ran out. "What do you say now, Mr. Giant? my squeeze was a better one than yours." Then the giant, not seeing that it was only a cheese, did not know what to say for himself, though he could hardly believe his eyes; at last he took up a stone, and threw it up so high that it went almost out of sight; “Now then, little pygmy, do that if you can.” “Very good,” said the other; “your throw was not a bad one, but after all your stone fell to the ground; I will throw something that shall not fall at all.” “That you can’t do,” said the giant: but the tailor took his old hen out of the wallet, and threw her up in the air, and she, pleased enough to be set free, flew away out of sight. “Now, comrade,” said he, “what do you say to that?” “I say you are a clever hand,” said the giant, “but we will now try how you can work.”

Then he led him into the wood, where a fine oak tree lay felled. “Now let us drag it out of the wood together.” “Very well; do you take the thick end, and I will carry all the top and branches, which are much the largest and heaviest.” So the giant took the trunk and laid it on his shoulder; but the cunning little rogue, instead of carrying anything, sat himself at his ease among the branches, and let the giant carry stem, branches, and tailor into the bargain. All the way they went he made merry, and whistled and sang his song as if carrying the tree were mere sport; while the giant after he had borne it a good way could carry it no longer, and said, “I must let it fall.” Then the tailor sprung down and held the tree as if he were carrying it, saying, “What a shame that such a big lout as you cannot carry a tree like this!” Then on they went together till they came to a tall cherry tree; and the giant took hold of the top stem and bent it down to pluck the ripest fruit, and when he had done, gave it over to his friend that he too might eat; but the little man was so weak that he could not hold the tree down, and up he went with it swinging in the air. “Halloo!” said the giant, “what now? can’t you hold that twig?” “To be sure I could,” said the other; “but don’t you see there’s a huntsman, who is going to shoot into the bush where we stood? so I took a jump over the tree to be out of his way; do you do the same.” The giant tried to follow, but the tree was far too high to jump over, and he only stuck fast in the branches, for the tailor to laugh at him. “Well! you are a fine fellow after all,” said the giant; “so come home and sleep with me and a friend of mine in the mountains to-night.”

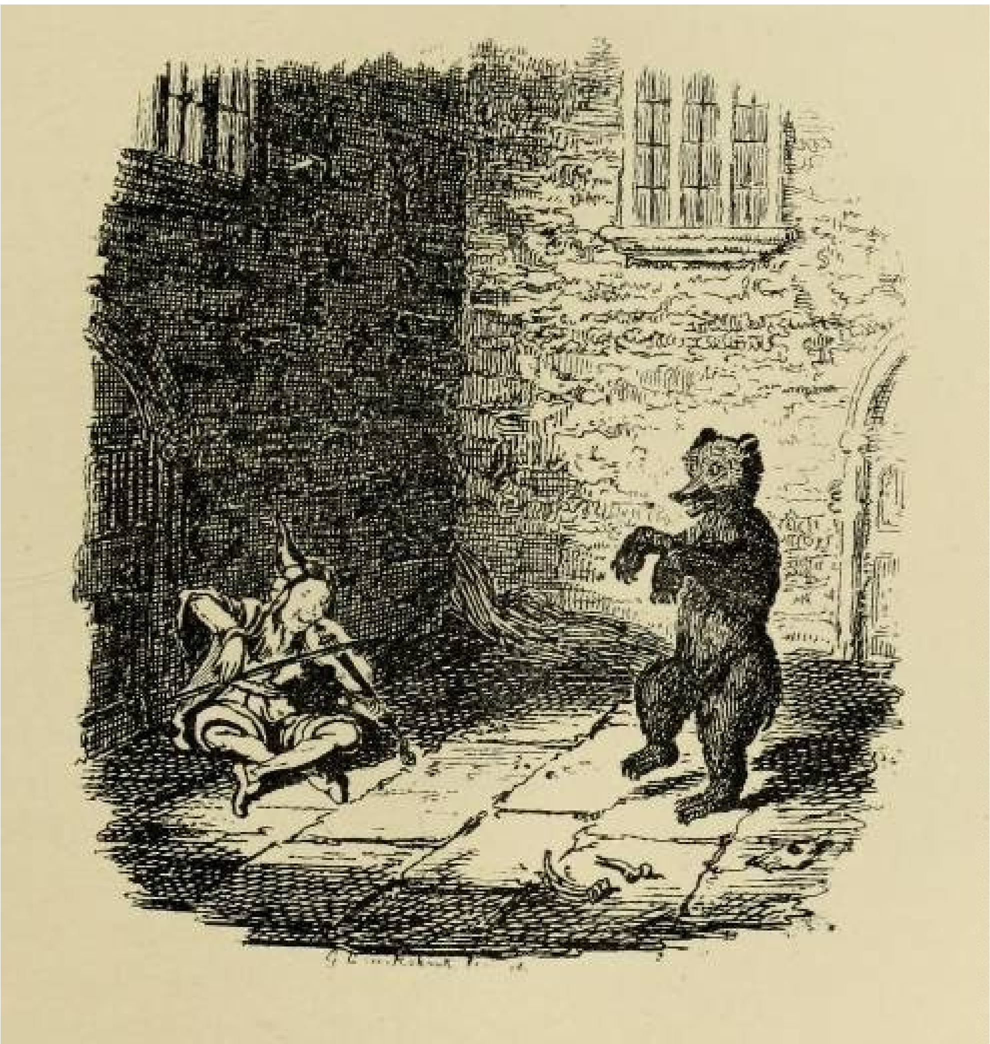
The tailor had no business upon his hands, so he did as he was bid, and the giant gave him a good supper, and a bed to sleep upon; but the tailor was too cunning to lie down upon it, and crept slily into a corner, and slept there soundly. When midnight came, the giant came softly in with his iron walking-stick, and gave such a stroke upon the bed where he thought his guest was lying, that he said to himself, “It’s all up now with that grasshopper; I shall have no more of his tricks.” In the morning the giants went off into the woods, and quite forgot him, till all on a sudden they met him trudging along, whistling a merry tune; and so frightened were they at the sight, that they both ran away as fast as they could.



Then on went the little tailor following his spuddy nose, till at last he reached the king’s court, and began to brag very loud of his mighty deeds, saying he was come to serve the king. To try him, they told him that the two giants who lived in a part of the kingdom a long way off, were become the dread of the whole land; for they had begun to rob, plunder and ravage all about them, and that if he was so great a man as he said, he should have a hundred soldiers and should set out to fight these giants, and if he beat them he should have half the kingdom. “With all my heart!” said he; “but as for your hundred soldiers, I believe I shall do as well without them.” However, they set off together till they came to a wood: “Wait here, my friends,” said he to the soldiers, “I will soon give a good account of these giants:” and on he went casting his sharp little eye here, there, and everywhere around him. After a while he spied them both lying under a tree, and snoring away till the very boughs whistled with the breeze. “The game’s won, for a penny,” said the little man, as he filled his wallet with stones, and climbed the tree under which they lay.

As soon as he was safely up, he threw one stone after another at the nearest giant, till at last he woke up in a rage, and shook his companion, crying out, “What did you strike me for?” “Nonsense! you are dreaming,” said the other, “I did not strike you.” Then both lay down to sleep again, and the tailor threw stones at the second giant, till he sprung up and cried, “What are you about? you struck me.” “I did not,” said the other; and on they wrangled for a while, till as both were tired they made up the matter, and fell asleep again. But then the tailor began his game once more, and flung the largest stone he had in his wallet with all his force and hit the first giant on the nose. “That is too bad,” cried he, as if he was mad, “I will not bear it.” So he struck the other a mighty blow; he of course was not pleased at this, and gave him just such another box on the ear; and at last a bloody battle began; up flew the trees by the roots, the rocks and stones went bang at one another’s heads, and in the end both lay dead upon the spot. “It is a good thing,” said the tailor, “that they let my tree stand, or I must have made a fine jump.” Then down he ran, and took his sword and gave each of them a very fine wound or two on the breast and set off to look for the soldiers. “There lie the giants,” said he; “I have killed them, but it has been no small job, for they even tore trees up in their struggle.” “Have you any wounds?” asked they. “That is a likely matter, truly,” said he; “they have not touched a hair of my head.” But the soldiers would not believe him till they rode into the wood and found the giants weltering in their blood, and the trees lying around torn up by the roots.

The king, after he had got rid of his enemies, was not much pleased at the thoughts of giving up half his kingdom to a tailor; so he said, “You have not yet done; in the palace court lies a bear with whom you must pass the night, and if when I rise in the morning I find you still living, you shall then have your reward.” Now he thought he had got rid of him, for the bear had never yet let any one go away alive who had come within reach of his claws. “Very well,” said the tailor, “I am willing.”



So when evening came our little tailor was led out and shut up in the court with the bear, who rose at once to give him a friendly welcome with his paw. “Softly, softly, my friend,” said he; “I know a way to please you;” then at his ease and as if he cared nothing about the matter, he pulled out of his pocket some fine walnuts, cracked them, and ate the kernels. When the bear saw this, he took a great fancy to having some nuts too; so the tailor felt in his pocket and gave him a handful, not of walnuts, but nice round pebbles. The bear snapt them up, but could not crack one of them, do what he would. “What a clumsy thick head thou art!” thought the beast to itself; “thou canst not crack a nut to-day.” Then said he to the tailor, “Friend, pry crack me the nuts.” “Why, what a lout you are,” said the tailor, “to have such a jaw as that, and not to be able to crack a little nut! Well! engage to be friends with me and I’ll help you.” So he took the stones, and slily changed them for nuts, put them in his mouth, and crack! they went. “I must try for myself, however,” said the bear; “now I see how you do it, I am sure I can do it myself.” Then the tailor gave him the cobble stones again, and the bear lay down and worked away as hard as he could, and bit and bit with all his force till he broke all his teeth, and lay down quite tired.

But the tailor began to think this would not last long, and that the bear might find him out and break the bargain; so he pulled a fiddle out from under his coat and played him a tune. As soon as the bear heard it, he could not help jumping up and beginning to dance; and when he had jigged away for a while, the thing pleased him so much that he said, “Hark ye, friend! is the fiddle hard to play upon?” “No! not at all!” said the other; “look ye, I lay my left hand here, and then I take the bow with my right hand thus, and scrape it over the strings there, and away it goes merrily, hop, sa, sa! fal, lal, la!” “Will you teach me to fiddle,” said the bear, “so that I may have music whenever I want to dance?” “With all my heart; but let me look at your claws, they are so very long that I must first clip your nails a little bit.” Then the bear lifted up his paws one after another, and the tailor screwed them down tight, and said, “Now wait till I come with my scissors.” So he left the bear to growl as loud as he liked, and laid himself down on a heap of straw in the corner and slept soundly. In the morning when the king came, he found the tailor sitting merrily eating his breakfast, and could no longer help keeping his word; and thus the little man became a great one.

The Crows and the Soldier

A worthy soldier had saved a good deal of money out of his pay; for he worked hard, and did not spend all he earned in eating and drinking, as many others do. Now he had two comrades who were great rogues, and wanted to rob him of his money, but behaved outwardly towards him in a friendly way. “Comrade,” said they to him one day, “why should we stay here shut up in this town like prisoners, when you at any rate have earned enough to live upon for the rest of your days in peace and plenty at home by your own fireside?” They talked so often to him in this manner, that he at last said he would go and try his luck with them; but they all the time thought of nothing but how they should manage to steal his money from him.

When they had gone a little way, the two rogues said, “We must go by the right-hand road, for that will take us quickest into another country where we shall be safe.” Now they knew all the while that what they were saying was untrue; and as soon as the soldier said, “No, that will take us straight back into the town we came from; we must keep on the left hand;” they picked a quarrel with him, and said, “What do you give yourself airs for? you know nothing about it;” and then they fell upon him and knocked him down, and beat him over the head till he was blind. Then they took all the money out of his pockets and dragged him to a gallows-tree that stood hard by, bound him fast down at the foot of it, and went back into the town with the money; but the poor blind man did not know where he was; and he felt all around him, and finding that he was bound to a large beam of wood, thought it was a cross, and said, “After all, they have done kindly in leaving me under a cross; now Heaven will guard me;” so he raised himself up and began to pray.

When night came on, he heard something fluttering over his head. It turned out to be three crows, who flew round and round, and at last perched upon the tree. By and by they began to talk together, and he heard one of them say, “Sister, what is the best news with you to-day?” “Oh, if men knew what we know!” said the other; “the princess is ill, and the king has vowed to marry her to any one who will cure her; but this none can do, for she will not be well until yonder flower is burnt to ashes and swallowed by her.” “Oh, indeed,” said the other crow, “if men did but know what we know! to-night will fall from heaven a dew of such healing power, that even the blind man who washes his eyes with it will see again;” and the third spoke, and said, “Oh, if men knew what we know! the flower is wanted but for one, the dew is wanted but for few; but there is a great dearth of water in the town; all the wells are dried up; and no one knows that they must take away the large square stone out of the market-place, and dig underneath it, and that then the finest water will spring up.”

When the three crows had done talking, he heard them fluttering round again, and at last away they flew. Greatly wondering at what he had heard, and overjoyed at the thoughts of getting his sight, he tried with all his strength to break loose from his bonds; at last he found himself free, and plucked some of the grass that grew beneath him and washed his eyes with the dew that had fallen upon it. At once his eyesight came to him again, and he saw by the light of the moon and the stars that he was beneath the gallows-tree, and not the cross, as he had thought. Then he gathered together in a bottle as much of the dew as he could to take away with him, and looked around till he saw the flower that grew close by; and when he had burned it he gathered up the ashes, and set out on his way towards the king's court.

When he reached the palace, he told the king he was come to cure the princess; and when she had taken of the ashes and been made well, he claimed her for his wife, as the reward that was to be given; but the king looking upon him and seeing that his clothes were so shabby, would not keep his word, and thought to get rid of him by saying, "Whoever wants to have the princess for his wife, must find enough water for the use of the town, where there is this summer a great dearth." Then the soldier went out and told the people to take up the square stone in the market-place and dig for water underneath; and when they had done so there came up a fine spring, that gave enough water for the whole town. So the king could no longer get off giving him his daughter, and they were married and lived happily together.

Some time after, as he was walking one day through a field, he met his two wicked comrades who had treated him so basely. Though they did not know him, he knew them at once, and went up to them and said, "Look upon me, I am your old comrade whom you beat and robbed and left blind; Heaven has defeated your wicked wishes, and turned all the mischief which you brought upon me into good luck." When they heard this they fell at his feet and begged for pardon, and he had a kind and good heart, so he forgave them, and took them to his palace and gave them food and clothes. And he told them all that had happened to him, and how he had reached these honours. After they had heard the whole story they said to themselves, "Why should not we go and sit some night under the gallows? we may hear something that will bring us good luck too."

Next night they stole away; and, when they had sat under the tree a little while, they heard a fluttering noise over their heads; and the three crows came and perched upon it. "Sisters," said one of them, "some one must have overheard us, for all the world is talking of the wonderful things that have happened: the princess is well; the flower has been plucked and burnt; a blind man's sight has been given him again, and they have dug a fresh well that gives water to the whole town: let us look about, perhaps we may find some one near; if we do he shall rue the day." Then they began to flutter about, and soon found out the two men below, and flew at them in a rage, beating and pecking them in the face with their wings and beaks till they were quite blind, and lay nearly dead upon the ground under the gallows. The next day passed over and they did not return to the palace; and their old comrade began to wonder where they had been, and went out the following morning in search of them, and at last found them where they lay, dreadfully repaid for all their folly and baseness.

Pee-Wit

A poor countryman whose name was Pee-wit lived with his wife in a very quiet way in the parish where he was born. One day, as he was ploughing with his two oxen in the field, he heard all on a sudden some one calling out his name. Turning round, he saw nothing but a bird that kept crying Pee-wit! Pee-wit! Now this poor bird is called a Pee-wit, and like the cuckoo always keeps crying out its own name. But the countryman thought it was mocking him, so he took up a huge stone and threw at it; the bird flew off safe and sound, but the stone fell upon the head of one of the oxen, and killed him on the spot. “What is to be done with the odd one?” thought Pee-wit to himself as he looked at the ox that was left; so without more ado he killed him too, skinned them both, and set out for the neighbouring town, to sell the hides to the tanner for as much as he could get. He soon found out where the tanner lived, and knocked at the door. Before, however, the door was opened, he saw through the window that the mistress of the house was hiding in an old chest a friend of hers, whom she seemed to wish no one should see. By and by the door was opened, “What do you want?” said the woman. Then he told her that he wanted to sell his hides; and it came out that the tanner was not at home, and that no one there ever made bargains but himself. The countryman said he would sell cheap, and did not mind giving his hides for the old chest in the corner; meaning the one he had seen the good woman’s friend get into. Of course the wife would not agree to this; and they went on talking the matter over so long, that at last in came the tanner and asked what it was all about. Pee-wit told him the whole story, and asked him whether he would give the old chest for the hides. “To be sure I will,” said he; and scolded his wife for saying nay to such a bargain, which she ought to have been glad to make if the countryman was willing. Then up he took the chest on his shoulders, and all the good woman could say mattered nothing; away it went into the countryman’s cart, and off he drove. But when they had gone some way, the young man within began to make himself heard, and to beg and pray to be let out. Pee-wit, however, was not to be bought over; till at last after a long parley a thousand dollars were bid and taken; the money was paid, and at that price the poor fellow was set free, and went about his business.

Then Pee-wit went home very happy, and built a new house and seemed so rich that his neighbours wondered, and said, “Pee-wit must have been where the golden snow falls.” So they took him before the next justice of the peace, to give an account of himself, and show that he came honestly by his wealth; and then he told them that he had sold his hides for one thousand dollars. When they heard it they all killed their oxen and would sell the hides to the same tanner; but the justice said, “My maid shall have the first chance;” so off she went, and when she came to the tanner, he laughed at them all, and said he had given their neighbour nothing but an old chest.

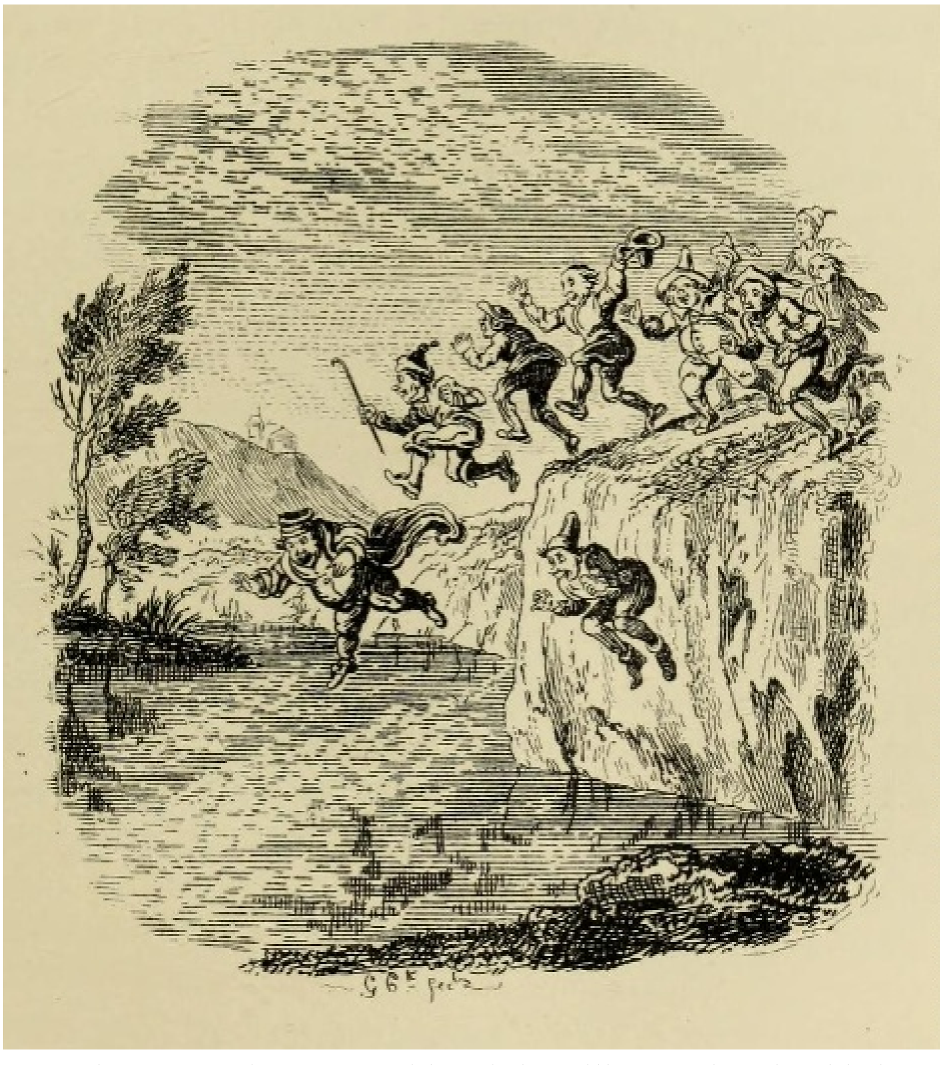
At this they were all very angry, and laid their heads together to work him some mischief, which they thought they could do while he was digging in his garden. All this, however, came to the ears of the countryman, who was plagued with a sad scold for his wife; and he thought to himself, “If any one is to come into trouble, I don’t see why it should not be my wife, rather than me;” so he said to her that he wished she would humour him in a whim he had taken into his head, and would put on his clothes, and dig the garden in his stead. The wife did what was asked, and next morning began digging; but soon came some of the neighbours, and, thinking it was Pee-wit, threw a stone at her, (harder perhaps than they meant,) and killed her at once. Poor Pee-wit was rather sorry at this, but still thought that he had had a lucky escape for himself, and that perhaps he might after all turn the death of his wife to some account: so he dressed her in her own clothes, put a basket with fine fruit (which was now scarce, it being winter) into her hand, and set her by the road side on a broad bench.

After a while came by a fine coach with six horses, servants, and outriders, and within sat a noble lord who lived not far off. When his lordship saw the beautiful fruit, he sent one of the servants to the woman to ask what was the price of her goods. The man went and asked “What is the price of this fruit?” No answer. He asked again. No answer: and when this had happened three times, he became angry; and, thinking she was asleep, gave her a blow, and down she fell backwards into the pond that was behind the seat. Then up ran Pee-wit, and cried and sorrowed because they had drowned his poor wife, and threatened to have the lord and his servants tried for what they had done. His lordship begged him to be easy, and offered to give him the coach and horses, servants and all; so the countryman after a long time let himself be appeased a little, took what they gave, got into the coach and set off towards his own home again.

As he came near, the neighbours wondered much at the beautiful coach and horses, and still more when they stopped, and Pee-wit got out at his own door. Then he told them the whole story, which only vexed them still more; so they took him and fastened him up in a tub and were going to throw him into the lake that was hard by. Whilst they were rolling the tub on before them towards the water, they passed by an alehouse and stopped to refresh themselves a little before they put an end to Pee-wit; meantime they tied the tub to a tree and there left it while they were enjoying themselves within doors.

Pee-wit no sooner found himself alone than he began to turn over in his mind how he could get free. He listened, and soon heard Ba, ba! from a flock of sheep and lambs that were coming by. Then he lifted up his voice, and shouted out, “I will not be burgomaster, I say; I will not be made burgomaster.” The shepherd hearing this went up, and said, “What is all this noise about?” “Oh!” said Pee-wit, “my neighbours will make me burgomaster against my will; and when I told them I would not agree, they put me into the cask and are going to throw me into the lake.” “I should like very well to be burgomaster if I were you,” said the shepherd. “Open the cask then," said the other, "and let me out, and get in yourself, and they will make you burgomaster instead of me." No sooner said than done, the shepherd was in, Pee-wit was out; and as there was nobody to take care of the shepherd's flock, he drove it off merrily towards his own house.

When the neighbours came out of the alehouse, they rolled the cask on, and the shepherd began to cry out, "I *will* be burgomaster now; I *will* be burgomaster now." "I dare say you will, but you shall take a swim first," said a neighbour, as he gave the cask the last push over into the lake. This done, away they went home merrily, leaving the shepherd to get out as well as he could.



But as they came in at one side of the village, who should they meet coming in the other way but Pee-wit driving a fine flock of sheep and lambs before him. "How came you here?" cried all with one voice. "Oh! the lake is enchanted," said he; "when you threw me in, I sank deep and deep into the water, till at last I came to the bottom; there I knocked out the bottom of the cask and found myself in a beautiful meadow with fine flocks grazing upon it, so I chose a few for myself, and here I am." "Cannot we have some too?" said they. "Why not? there are hundreds and thousands left; you have nothing to do but jump in and fetch them out."

So all agreed they would dive for sheep; the justice first, then the clerk, then the constables, and then the rest of the parish, one after the other. When they came to the side of the lake, the blue sky was covered with little white clouds like flocks of sheep, and all were reflected in the clear water: so they called out, “There they are, there they are already;” and fearing lest the justice should get everything, they jumped in all at once; and Pee-wit jogged home, and made himself happy with what he had got, leaving them to find their flocks by themselves as well as they could.

Hans and His Wife Grettel

I. Showing who Grettel was.

There was once a little maid named Grettel: she wore shoes with red heels, and when she went abroad she turned out her toes, and was very merry, and thought to herself, “What a pretty girl I am!” And when she came home, to put herself in good spirits, she would tipple down a drop or two of wine; and as wine gives a relish for eating, she would take a taste of everything when she was cooking, saying, “A cook ought to know whether a thing tastes well.” It happened one day that her master said, “Grettel, this evening I have a friend coming to sup with me; get two fine fowls ready.” “Very well, sir,” said Grettel. Then she killed the fowls, plucked, and trussed them, put them on the spit, and when evening came put them to the fire to roast. The fowls turned round and round, and soon began to look nice and brown, but the guest did not come. Then Grettel cried out, “Master, if the guest does not come I must take up the fowls, but it will be a shame and a pity if they are not eaten while they are hot and good.” “Well,” said her master, “I’ll run and tell him to come.” As soon as he had turned his back, Grettel stopped the spit, and laid it with the fowls upon it on one side, and thought to herself, “Standing by the fire makes one very tired and thirsty; who knows how long they will be? meanwhile I will just step into the cellar and take a drop.” So off she ran, put down her pitcher, and said, “Your health, Grettel,” and took a good draught. “This wine is a good friend,” said she to herself, “it breaks one’s heart to leave it.” Then up she trotted, put the fowls down to the fire, spread some butter over them, and turned the spit merrily round again.

The fowls soon smelt so good, that she thought to herself, “They are very good, but they may want something still; I had better taste them and see.” So she licked her fingers, and said, “Oh! how good! what a shame and a pity that they are not eaten!” Away she ran to the window to see if her master and his friend were coming; but nobody was in sight: so she turned to the fowls again, and thought it would be better for her to eat a wing than that it should be burnt. So she cut one wing off, and ate it, and it tasted very well; and as the other was quite done enough, she thought it had better be cut off too, or else her master would see one was wanting. When the two wings were gone, she went again to look out for her master, but could not see him. “Ah!” thought she to herself, “who knows whether they will come at all? very likely they have turned into some tavern: Oh Grettel! Grettel! make yourself happy, take another draught, and eat the rest of the fowl; it looks so oddly as it is; when you have eaten all, you will be easy: why should such good things be wasted?” So she ran once more to the cellar, took another drink, and ate up the rest of the fowl with the greatest glee.

Still her master did not come, and she cast a lingering eye upon the other fowl, and said, “Where the other went, this had better go too; they belong to each other; they who have a right to one must have a right to the other; but if I were to take another draught first, it would not hurt me.” So she tippled down another drop of wine, and sent the second fowl to look after the first. While she was making an end of this famous meal, her master came home and called out, “Now quick, Grettel, my friend is just at hand!” “Yes, master, I will dish up this minute,” said she. In the meantime he looked to see if the cloth was laid, and took up the carving-knife to sharpen it. Whilst this was going on, the guest came and knocked softly and gently at the house door; then Grettel ran to see who was there, and when she saw him she put her finger upon her lips, and said, “Hush! hush! run away as fast as you can, for if my master catches you, it will be worse for you; he owes you a grudge, and asked you to supper only that he might cut off your ears; only listen how he is sharpening his knife.” The guest listened, and when he heard the knife, he made as much haste as he could down the steps and ran off. Grettel was not idle in the meantime, but ran screaming, “Master! master! what a fine guest you have asked to supper!” “Why, Grettel, what’s the matter?” “Oh!” said she, “he has taken both the fowls that I was going to bring up, and has run away with them.” “That is a rascally trick to play,” said the master, sorry to lose the fine chickens; “at least he might have left me one, that I might have had something to eat; call out to him to stay.” But the guest would not hear; so he ran after him with his knife in his hand, crying out, “Only one, only one, I want only one;” meaning that the guest should leave him one of the fowls, and not take both: but he thought that his host meant nothing less than that he would cut off at least one of his ears; so he ran away to save them both, as if he had hot coals under his feet.

II. Hans in Love.

Hans's mother says to him, "Whither so fast?" "To see Grettel," says Hans. "Behave well." "Very well: Good-bye, mother!" Hans comes to Grettel; "Good day, Grettel!" "Good day, Hans! do you bring me anything good?" "Nothing at all: have you anything for me?" Grettel gives Hans a needle. Hans says, "Good-bye, Grettel!" "Good-bye, Hans!" Hans takes the needle, sticks it in a truss of hay, and takes both off home. "Good evening, mother!" "Good evening, Hans! where have you been?" "To see Grettel." "What did you take her?" "Nothing at all." "What did she give you?" "She gave me a needle." "Where is it, Hans?" "Stuck in the truss." "How silly you are! you should have stuck it in your sleeve." "Let me alone! I'll do better next time."

"Where now, Hans?" "To see Grettel, mother." "Behave yourself well." "Very well: Good-bye, mother!" Hans comes to Grettel; "Good day, Grettel!" "Good day, Hans! what have you brought me?" "Nothing at all: have you anything for me?" Grettel gives Hans a knife. "Good-bye, Grettel!" "Good-bye, Hans!" Hans takes the knife, sticks it in his sleeve, and goes home. "Good evening, mother!" "Good evening, Hans! where have you been?" "To see Grettel." "What did you carry her?" "Nothing at all." "What has she given you?" "A knife." "Where is the knife, Hans?" "Stuck in my sleeve, mother." "You silly goose! you should have put it in your pocket." "Let me alone! I'll do better next time."

"Where now, Hans?" "To see Grettel." "Behave yourself well." "Very well: Good-bye, mother!" Hans comes to Grettel; "Good day, Grettel!" "Good day, Hans! have you anything good?" "No: have you anything for me?" Grettel gives Hans a kid. "Good-bye, Grettel!" "Good-bye, Hans!" Hans takes the kid, ties it up with a cord, stuffs it into his pocket, and chokes it to death. "Good evening, mother!" "Good evening, Hans! where have you been?" "To see Grettel, mother!" "What did you take her?" "Nothing at all." "What did she give you?" "She gave me a kid." "Where is the kid, Hans?" "Safe in my pocket." "You silly goose! you should have led it with a string." "Never mind, mother, I'll do better next time."

"Where now, Hans?" "To Grettel's, mother." "Behave well." "Quite well, mother; Good-bye!" Hans comes to Grettel; "Good day, Grettel!" "Good day, Hans! what have you brought me?" "Nothing at all: have you anything for me?" Grettel gives Hans a piece of bacon; Hans ties the bacon to a string and drags it behind him; the dog comes after and eats it all up as he walks home. "Good evening, mother!" "Good evening, Hans! where have you been?" "To Grettel's." "What did you take her?" "Nothing at all." "What did she give you?" "A piece of bacon." "Where is the bacon, Hans?" "Tied to the string, and dragged home, but somehow or other all gone." "What a silly trick, Hans! you should have brought it on your head." "Never mind, mother, I'll do better another time."

"Where now, Hans?" "Going to Grettel." "Take care of yourself." "Very well, mother: Good-bye." Hans comes to Grettel; "Good day, Grettel!"

“Good day, Hans! what have you brought me?” “Nothing: have you anything for me?” Grettel gives Hans a calf. Hans sets it upon his head, and it kicks him in the face. “Good evening, mother!” “Good evening, Hans! where have you been?” “To see Grettel.” “What did you take her?” “Nothing.” “What did she give you?” “She gave me a calf.” “Where is the calf, Hans?” “I put it on my head, and it scratched my face.” “You silly goose! you should have led it home and put it in the stall.” “Very well; I’ll do better another time.”

“Where now, Hans?” “To see Grettel.” “Mind and behave well.” “Good-bye, mother!” Hans comes to Grettel; “Good day, Grettel!” “Good day, Hans! what have you brought?” “Nothing at all: have you anything for me?” “I’ll go home with you.” Hans ties a string round her neck, leads her along, and ties her up in the stall. “Good evening, mother!” “Good evening, Hans! where have you been?” “At Grettel’s.” “What has she given you?” “She has come herself.” “Where have you put her?” “Fast in the stall with plenty of hay.” “How silly you are! you should have taken good care of her, and brought her home.” Then Hans went back to the stall; but Grettel was in a great rage, and had got loose and run away: yet, after all, she was Hans’ bride.

III. Hans Married.

Hans and Grettel lived in the village together, but Grettel did as she pleased, and was so lazy that she never would work; and when her husband gave her any yarn to spin she did it in a slovenly way; and when it was spun she did not wind it on the reel, but left it to lie all tangled about. Hans sometimes scolded, but she was always beforehand with her tongue, and said, “Why how should I wind it when I have no reel? go into the wood and make one.” “If that’s all,” said he, “I will go into the wood and cut reel-sticks.” Then Grettel was frightened lest when he had cut the sticks he should make a reel, and thus she would be forced to wind the yarn and spin again. So she pondered a while, till at last a bright thought came into her head, and she ran slyly after her husband into the wood. As soon as he had got into a tree and began to bend down a bough to cut it, she crept into the bush below, where he could not see her, and sang —

“Bend not the bough; He who bends it shall die! Reel not the reel; He who reels it shall die!”

Hans listened a while, laid down his axe, and thought to himself, “What can that be?” “What indeed can it be?” said he at last; “it is only a singing in your ears, Hans! pluck up your heart, man!” So he raised up his axe again, and took hold of the bough, but once more the voice sang —

“Bend not the bough; He who bends it shall die! Reel not the reel; He who reels it shall die!”

Once more he stopped his hand; fear came over him, and he began pondering what it could mean. After a while, however, he plucked up his courage again, and took up his axe and began for the third time to cut the wood; again the third time began the song —

“Bend not the bough; He who bends it shall die! Reel not the reel; He who reels it shall die!”

At this he could hold no longer, down he dropped from the tree and set off homewards as fast as he could. Away too ran Grettel by a shorter cut, so as to reach home first, and when he opened the door met him quite innocently, as if nothing had happened, and said, “Well! have you brought a good piece of wood for the reel?” “No,” said he, “I see plainly that no luck comes of that reel;” and then he told her all that had happened, and left her for that time in peace.

But soon afterwards Hans began again to reproach her with the untidiness of her house. “Wife,” said he; “is it not a sin and a shame that the spun yarn should lie all about in that way?” “It may be so,” said she; “but you know very well that we have no reel; if it must be done, lie down there and hold up your hands and legs, and so I’ll make a reel of you, and wind off the yarn into skeins.” “Very well,” said Hans (who did not much like the job, but saw no help for it if his wife was to be set to work); so he did as she said, and when all was wound, “The yarn is all in skeins,” said he; “now take care and get up early and heat the water and boil it well, so that it may be ready for sale.” Grettel disliked this part of the work very much, but said to him, “Very well, I’ll be sure to do it very early to-morrow morning.” But all the time she was thinking to herself what plan she should take for getting off such work for the future.

Betimes in the morning she got up, made the fire and put on the boiler; but instead of the yarn she laid a large ball of tow in it and let it boil. Then she went up to her husband, who was still in bed, and said to him, “I must go out, pray look meantime to the yarn in the boiler over the fire; but do it soon and take good care, for if the cock crows and you are not looking to it, they say it will turn to tow.” Hans soon after got up that he might run no risk, and went (but not perhaps as quickly as he might have done) into the kitchen, and when he lifted up the boiler lid and looked in, to his great terror nothing was there but a ball of tow. Then off he slunk as dumb as a mouse, for he thought to himself that he was to blame for his laziness; and left Grettel to get on with her yarn and her spinning as fast as she pleased and no faster.

One day, however, he said to her, “Wife, I must go a little way this morning; do you go into the field and cut the corn.” “Yes, to be sure, dear Hans!” said she; so when he was gone she cooked herself a fine mess and took it with her into the field. When she came into the field, she sat down for a while and said to herself, “What shall I do? shall I sleep first or eat first? Heigho! I’ll first eat a bit.” Then she ate her dinner heartily, and when she had had enough she said again to herself, “What shall I do? shall I reap first or sleep first? Heigho! I’ll first sleep a bit.” So she laid herself down among the corn and went fast asleep. By and by Hans came home, but no Grettel was to be seen, and he said to himself, “What a clever wife I have! she works so hard that she does not even come home to her dinner!” Evening came and still she did not come; then Hans set off to see how much of the corn was reaped, but there it all stood untouched, and Grettel lay fast asleep in the middle. So he ran home and got a string of little bells and tied them quietly round her waist, and went back and set himself down on his stool and locked the house door.

At last Grettel woke when it was quite dark, and as she rose up the bells jingled around her every step she took. At this she was greatly frightened, and puzzled to tell whether she was really Grettel or not. “Is it I, or is it not?” said she as she stood doubting what she ought to think. At last, after she had pondered a while, she thought to herself, “I will go home and ask if it is I or not; Hans will know.” So she ran to the house door, and when she found it locked she knocked at the window and cried out, “Hans! is Grettel within?” “She is where she ought to be, to be sure,” said Hans; “O dear then!” said she frightened, “this is not I.” Then away she went and knocked at the neighbours’ doors; but when they heard her bells rattling no one would let her in, and so at last off she ran back to the field again.

Cherry, or the Frog-Bride

There was once a king who had three sons. Not A far from his kingdom lived an old woman who had an only daughter called Cherry. The king sent his sons out to see the world, that they might learn the ways of foreign lands, and get wisdom and skill in ruling the kingdom that they were one day to have for their own. But the old woman lived at peace at home with her daughter, who was called Cherry, because she liked cherries better than any other kind of food, and would eat scarcely anything else. Now her poor old mother had no garden and no money to buy cherries every day for her daughter; and at last there was no other plan left but to go to a neighbouring nunnery-garden and beg the finest she could get of the nuns; for she dared not let her daughter go out by herself, as she was very pretty, and she feared some mischance might befall her. Cherry's taste was, however, very well known; and as it happened that the abbess was as fond of cherries as she was, it was soon found out where all the best fruit went; and the holy mother was not a little angry at missing some of her stock and finding whither it had gone.

The princes while wandering on came one day to the town where Cherry and her mother lived; and as they passed along the street saw the fair maiden standing at the window, combing her long and beautiful locks of hair. Then each of the three fell deeply in love with her, and began to say how much he longed to have her for his wife! Scarcely had the wish been spoken, when all drew their swords, and a dreadful battle began; the fight lasted long, and their rage grew hotter and hotter, when at last the abbess hearing the uproar came to the gate. Finding that her neighbour was the cause, her old spite against her broke forth at once, and in her rage she wished Cherry turned into an ugly frog, and sitting in the water under the bridge at the world's end. No sooner said than done; and poor Cherry became a frog, and vanished out of their sight. The princes had now nothing to fight for; so sheathing their swords again, they shook hands as brothers, and went on towards their father's home.

The old king meanwhile found that he grew weak and ill fitted for the business of reigning: so he thought of giving up his kingdom; but to whom should it be? This was a point that his fatherly heart could not settle; for he loved all his sons alike. "My dear children," said he, "I grow old and weak, and should like to give up my kingdom; but I cannot make up my mind which of you to choose for my heir, for I love you all three; and besides, I should wish to give my people the cleverest and best of you for their king. However, I will give you three trials, and the one who wins the prize shall have the kingdom. The first is to seek me out one hundred ells of cloth, so fine that I can draw it through my golden ring." The sons said they would do their best, and set out on the search.

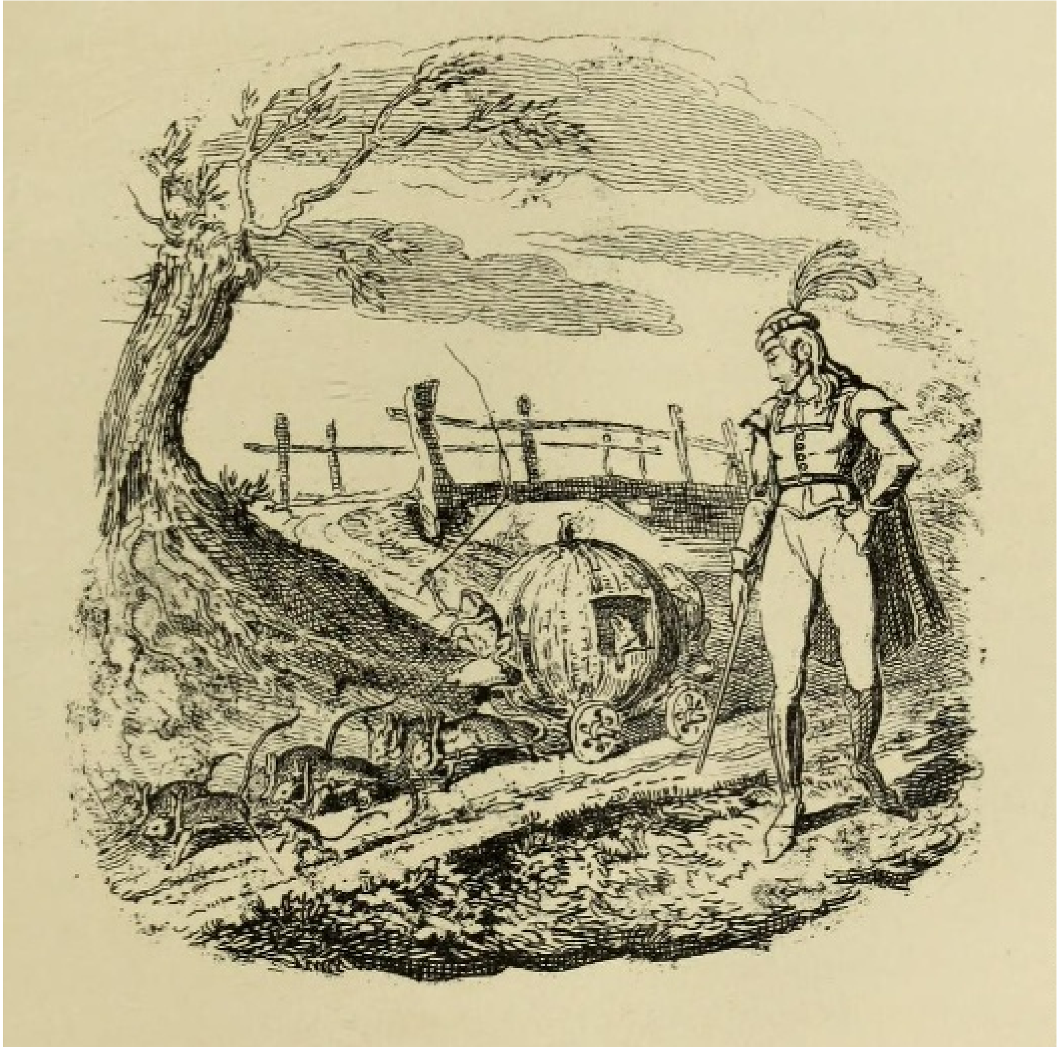
The two eldest brothers took with them many followers, and coaches and horses of all sorts, to bring home all the beautiful cloths which they should find; but the youngest went alone by himself. They soon came to where the roads branched off into several ways; two ran through smiling meadows, with smooth paths and shady groves, but the third looked dreary and dirty, and went over barren wastes. The two eldest chose the pleasant ways; and the youngest took his leave and whistled along over the dreary road. Whenever fine linen was to be seen, the two elder brothers bought it, and bought so much that their coaches and horses bent under their burthen. The youngest, on the other hand, journeyed on many a weary day, and found not a place where he could buy even one piece of cloth that was at all fine and good. His heart sank beneath him, and every mile he grew more and more heavy and sorrowful. At last he came to a bridge over a stream, and there he sat himself down to rest and sigh over his bad luck, when an ugly-looking frog popped its head out of the water, and asked, with a voice that had not at all a harsh sound to his ears, what was the matter. The prince said in a pet, "Silly frog! thou canst not help me." "Who told you so?" said the frog; "tell me what ails you." After a while the prince opened the whole story, and told why his father had sent him out. "I will help you," said the frog; so it jumped back into the stream and soon came back dragging a small piece of linen not bigger than one's hand, and by no means the cleanest in the world in its look. However, there it was, and the prince was told to take it away with him. He had no great liking for such a dirty rag; but still there was something in the frog's speech that pleased him much, and he thought to himself, "It can do no harm, it is better than nothing;" so he picked it up, put it in his pocket, and thanked the frog, who dived down again, panting and quite tired, as it seemed, with its work. The further he went the heavier he found to his great joy the pocket grow, and so he turned himself homewards, trusting greatly in his good luck.

He reached home nearly about the same time that his brothers came up, with their horses and coaches all heavily laden. Then the old king was very glad to see his children again, and pulled the ring off his finger to try who had done the best; but in all the stock which the two eldest had brought there was not one piece a tenth part of which would go through the ring. At this they were greatly abashed; for they had made a laugh of their brother, who came home, as they thought, empty-handed. But how great was their anger, when they saw him pull from his pocket a piece that for softness, beauty, and whiteness, was a thousand times better than anything that was ever before seen! It was so fine that it passed with ease through the ring; indeed, two such pieces would readily have gone in together. The father embraced the lucky youth, told his servants to throw the coarse linen into the sea, and said to his children, "Now you must set about the second task which I am to set you; — bring me home a little dog, so small that it will lie in a nut-shell."

His sons were not a little frightened at such a task; but they all longed for the crown, and made up their minds to go and try their hands, and so after a few days they set out once more on their travels. At the cross-ways they parted as before, and the youngest chose his old dreary rugged road with all the bright hopes that his former good luck gave him. Scarcely had he sat himself down again at the bridge foot, when his old friend the frog jumped out, set itself beside him, and as before opened its big wide mouth, and croaked out, “What is the matter?” The prince had this time no doubt of the frog’s power, and therefore told what he wanted. “It shall be done for you,” said the frog; and springing into the stream it soon brought up a hazel-nut, laid it at his feet, and told him to take it home to his father, and crack it gently, and then see what would happen. The prince went his way very well pleased, and the frog, tired with its task, jumped back into the water.

His brothers had reached home first, and brought with them a great many very pretty little dogs. The old king, willing to help them all he could, sent for a large walnut-shell and tried it with every one of the little dogs; but one stuck fast with the hind-foot out, and another with the head, and a third with the forefoot, and a fourth with its tail, — in short, some one way and some another; but none were at all likely to sit easily in this new kind of kennel. When all had been tried, the youngest made his father a dutiful bow, and gave him the hazel-nut, begging him to crack it very carefully; the moment this was done out ran a beautiful little white dog upon the king’s hand, wagged its tail, fondled his new master, and soon turned about and barked at the other little beasts in the most graceful manner, to the delight of the whole court. The joy of every one was great; the old king again embraced his lucky son, told his people to drown all the other dogs in the sea, and said to his children, “Dear sons! your weightiest tasks are now over; listen to my last wish; whoever brings home the fairest lady shall be at once the heir to my crown.”

The prize was so tempting and the chance so fair for all, that none made any doubts about setting to work, each in his own way, to try and be the winner. The youngest was not in such good spirits as he was the last time; he thought to himself, “The old frog has been able to do a great deal for me; but all its power must be nothing to me now, for where should it find me a fair maiden, still less a fairer maiden than was ever seen at my father’s court? The swamps where it lives have no living things in them, but toads, snakes, and such vermin.” Meantime he went on, and sighed as he sat down again with a heavy heart by the bridge. “Ah frog!” said he, “this time thou canst do me no good.” “Never mind,” croaked the frog; “only tell me what is the matter now.” Then the prince told his old friend what trouble had now come upon him. “Go thy ways home,” said the frog; “the fair maiden will follow hard after; but take care and do not laugh at whatever may happen!” This said, it sprang as before into the water and was soon out of sight. The prince still sighed on, for he trusted very little this time to the frog’s word; but he had not set many steps towards home before he heard a noise behind him, and looking round saw six large water rats dragging along a large pumpkin like a coach, full trot. On the box sat an old fat toad as coachman, and behind stood two little frogs as footmen, and two fine mice with stately whiskers ran before as outriders; within sat his old friend the frog, rather misshapen and unseemly to be sure, but still with somewhat of a graceful air as it bowed to him in passing. Much too deeply wrapt in thought as to his chance of finding the fair lady whom he was seeking, to take any heed of the strange scene before him, the prince scarcely looked at it, and had still less mind to laugh. The coach passed on a little way, and soon turned a corner that hid it from his sight; but how astonished was he, on turning the corner himself, to find a handsome coach and six black horses standing there, with a coachman in gay livery, and within, the most beautiful lady he had ever seen, whom he soon knew to be the fair Cherry, for whom his heart had so long ago panted! As he came up, the servants opened the coach door, and he was allowed to seat himself by the beautiful lady.



They soon came to his father's city, where his brothers also came, with trains of fair ladies; but as soon as Cherry was seen, all the court gave her with one voice the crown of beauty. The delighted father embraced his son, and named him the heir to his crown, and ordered all the other ladies to be thrown like the little dogs into the sea and drowned. Then the prince married Cherry, and lived long and happily with her, and indeed lives with her still — if he be not dead.

Mother Holle

A widow had two daughters; one of them was very pretty and thrifty, but the other was ugly and idle.

Odd as you may think it, she loved the ugly and idle one much the best, and the other was made to do all the work, and was in short quite the drudge of the whole house. Every day she had to sit on a bench by a well on the side of the high-road before the house, and spin so much that her fingers were quite sore, and at length the blood would come. Now it happened that once when her fingers had bled and the spindle was all bloody, she dipt it into the well, and meant to wash it, but unluckily it fell from her hand and dropt in. Then she ran crying to her mother, and told her what had happened; but she scolded her sharply, and said, "If you have been so silly as to let the spindle fall in, you must get it out again as well as you can." So the poor little girl went back to the well, and knew not how to begin, but in her sorrow threw herself into the water, and sank down to the bottom senseless. In a short time she seemed to awake as from a trance, and came to herself again; and when she opened her eyes and looked around, she saw she was in a beautiful meadow, where the sun shone brightly, the birds sang sweetly on the boughs, and thousands of flowers sprang beneath her feet.

Then she rose up, and walked along this delightful meadow, and came to a pretty cottage by the side of a wood; and when she went in she saw an oven full of new bread baking, and the bread said, "Pull me out! pull me out! or I shall be burnt, for I am quite done enough." So she stepped up quickly and took it all out. Then she went on further, and came to a tree that was full of fine rosy-cheeked apples, and it said to her, "Shake me! shake me! we are all quite ripe!" So she shook the tree, and the apples fell down like a shower, until there were no more upon the tree. Then she went on again, and at length came to a small cottage where an old woman was sitting at the door: the little girl would have run away, but the old woman called out after her, "Don't be frightened, my dear child! stay with me, I should like to have you for my little maid, and if you do all the work in the house neatly you shall fare well; but take care to make my bed nicely, and shake it every morning out at the door, so that the feathers may fly, for then the good people below say it snows. — I am Mother Holle."

As the old woman spoke so kindly to her, the girl was willing to do as she said; so she went into her employ, and took care to do everything to please her, and always shook the bed well, so that she led a very quiet life with her, and every day had good meat both boiled and roast to eat for her dinner.

But when she had been some time with the old lady, she became sorrowful, and although she was much better off here than at home, still she had a longing towards it, and at length said to her mistress, "I used to grieve at my troubles at home, but if they were all to come again, and I were sure of faring ever so well here, I could not stay any longer." "You are right," said her mistress; "you shall do as you like; and as you have worked for me so faithfully, I will myself show you the way back again." Then she took her by the hand and led her behind her cottage, and opened a door, and as the girl stood underneath there fell a heavy shower of gold, so that she held out her apron and caught a great deal of it. And the fairy put a shining golden dress over her, and said, "All this you shall have because you have behaved so well;" and she gave her back the spindle too which had fallen into the well, and led her out by another door. When it shut behind her, she found herself not far from her mother's house; and as she went into the court-yard the cock sat upon the well-head and clapt his wings and cried out,

"Cock a-doodle-doo!
Our golden lady's come home again."

Then she went into the house, and as she was so rich she was welcomed home. When her mother heard how she got these riches, she wanted to have the same luck for her ugly and idle daughter, so she too was told to sit by the well and spin. That her spindle might be bloody, she pricked her fingers with it, and when that would not do she thrust her hand into a thorn-bush. Then she threw it into the well and sprang in herself after it. Like her sister, she came to a beautiful meadow, and followed the same path. When she came to the oven in the cottage, the bread called out as before, "Take me out! take me out! or I shall burn, I am quite done enough." But the lazy girl said, "A pretty story, indeed! just as if I should dirty myself for you!" and went on her way. She soon came to the apple-tree that cried, "Shake me! shake me! for my apples are quite ripe!" but she answered, "I will take care how I do that, for one of you might fall upon my head;" so she went on. At length she came to Mother Holle's house, and readily agreed to be her maid. The first day she behaved herself very well, and did what her mistress told her; for she thought of the gold she would give her; but the second day she began to be lazy, and the third still more so, for she would not get up in the morning early enough, and when she did she made the bed very badly, and did not shake it so that the feathers would fly out. Mother Holle was soon tired of her, and turned her off; but the lazy girl was quite pleased at that, and thought to herself, "Now the golden rain will come." Then the fairy took her to the same door; but when she stood under it, instead of gold a great kettle full of dirty pitch came showering upon her. "That is your wages," said Mother Holle as she shut the door upon her. So she went home quite black with the pitch, and as she came near her mother's house the cock sat upon the well, and clapt his wings, and cried out —

"Cock a-doodle-doo!
Our dirty slut's come home again!"

The Water of Life

Long before you and I were born there reigned, in a country a great way off, a king who had three sons. This king once fell very ill, so ill that nobody thought he could live. His sons were very much grieved at their father's sickness; and as they walked weeping in the garden of the palace, an old man met them and asked what they ailed. They told him their father was so ill that they were afraid nothing could save him. "I know what would," said the old man; "it is the Water of Life. If he could have a draught of it he would be well again, but it is very hard to get." Then the eldest son said, "I will soon find it," and went to the sick king, and begged that he might go in search of the Water of Life, as it was the only thing that could save him. "No," said the king; "I had rather die than place you in such great danger as you must meet with in your journey." But he begged so hard that the king let him go; and the prince thought to himself, "If I bring my father this water I shall be his dearest son, and he will make me heir to his kingdom."

Then he set out, and when he had gone on his way some time he came to a deep valley overhung with rocks and woods; and as he looked around there stood above him on one of the rocks a little dwarf, who called out to him and said, "Prince, whither hastest thou so fast?" "What is that to you, little ugly one?" said the prince sneeringly, and rode on his way. But the little dwarf fell into a great rage at his behaviour, and laid a spell of ill luck upon him, so that, as he rode on, the mountain pass seemed to become narrower and narrower, and at last the way was so straitened that he could not go a step forward, and when he thought to have turned his horse round and gone back the way he came, the passage he found had closed behind also, and shut him quite up; he next tried to get off his horse and make his way on foot, but this he was unable to do, and so there he was forced to abide spell-bound.

Meantime the king his father was lingering on in daily hope of his return, till at last the second son said, "Father, I will go in search of this Water;" for he thought to himself, "My brother is surely dead, and the kingdom will fall to me if I have good luck in my journey." The king was at first very unwilling to let him go, but at last yielded to his wish. So he set out and followed the same road which his brother had taken, and met the same dwarf, who stopped him at the same spot, and said as before, "Prince, whither hastest thou so fast?" "Mind your own affairs, busybody!" answered the prince scornfully, and rode off. But the dwarf put the same enchantment upon him, and when he came like the other to the narrow pass in the mountains he could neither move forward nor backward. Thus it is with proud silly people, who think themselves too wise to take advice.

When the second prince had thus staid away a long while, the youngest said he would go and search for the Water of Life, and trusted he should soon be able to make his father well again. The dwarf met him too at the same spot, and said, "Prince, whither hastest thou so fast?" and the prince said, "I go in search of the Water of Life, because my father is ill and like to die: — can you help me?" "Do you know where it is to be found?" asked the dwarf. “No,” said the prince. “Then as you have spoken to me kindly and sought for advice, I will tell you how and where to go. The Water you seek springs from a well in an enchanted castle, and that you may be able to go in safety I will give you an iron wand and two little loaves of bread; strike the iron door of the castle three times with the wand, and it will open: two hungry lions will be lying down inside gaping for their prey; but if you throw them the bread they will let you pass; then hasten on to the well and take some of the Water of Life before the clock strikes twelve, for if you tarry longer the door will shut upon you for ever.”

Then the prince thanked the dwarf for his friendly aid, and took the wand and the bread and went travelling on and on over sea and land, till he came to his journey’s end, and found everything to be as the dwarf had told him. The door flew open at the third stroke of the wand, and when the lions were quieted he went on through the castle, and came at length to a beautiful hall; around it he saw several knights sitting in a trance; then he pulled off their rings and put them on his own fingers. In another room he saw on a table a sword and a loaf of bread, which he also took. Further on he came to a room where a beautiful young lady sat upon a couch, who welcomed him joyfully, and said, if he would set her free from the spell that bound her, the kingdom should be his if he would come back in a year and marry her; then she told him that the well that held the Water of Life was in the palace gardens, and bade him make haste and draw what he wanted before the clock struck twelve. Then he went on, and as he walked through beautiful gardens he came to a delightful shady spot in which stood a couch; and he thought to himself, as he felt tired, that he would rest himself for a while and gaze on the lovely scenes around him. So he laid himself down, and sleep fell upon him unawares and he did not wake up till the clock was striking a quarter to twelve; then he sprang from the couch dreadfully frightened, ran to the well, filled a cup that was standing by him full of Water, and hastened to get away in time. Just as he was going out of the iron door it struck twelve, and the door fell so quickly upon him that it tore away a piece of his heel.

When he found himself safe he was overjoyed to think that he had got the Water of Life; and as he was going on his way homewards, he passed by the little dwarf, who when he saw the sword and the loaf said, “You have made a noble prize; with the sword you can at a blow slay whole armies, and the bread will never fail.” Then the prince thought to himself, “I cannot go home to my father without my brothers;” so he said, “Dear dwarf, cannot you tell me where my two brothers are, who set out in search of the Water of Life before me and never came back?” “I have shut them up by a charm between two mountains,” said the dwarf, “because they were proud and ill behaved, and scorned to ask advice.” The prince begged so hard for his brothers that the dwarf at last set them free, though unwillingly, saying, “Beware of them, for they have bad hearts.” Their brother, however, was greatly rejoiced to see them, and told them all that had happened to him, how he had found the Water of Life, and had taken a cup full of it, and how he had set a beautiful princess free from a spell that bound her; and how she had engaged to wait a whole year, and then to marry him and give him the kingdom. Then they all three rode on together, and on their way home came to a country that was laid waste by war and a dreadful famine, so that it was feared all must die for want. But the prince gave the king of the land the bread, and all his kingdom ate of it. And he slew the enemy's army with the wonderful sword, and left the kingdom in peace and plenty. In the same manner he befriended two other countries that they passed through on their way.

When they came to the sea, they got into a ship, and during their voyage the two eldest said to themselves, "Our brother has got the Water which we could not find, therefore our father will forsake us, and give him the kingdom which is our right;" so they were full of envy and revenge, and agreed together how they could ruin him. They waited till he was fast asleep, and then poured the Water of Life out of the cup and took it for themselves, giving him bitter sea-water instead. And when they came to their journey's end, the youngest son brought his cup to the sick king, that he might drink and be healed. Scarcely, however, had he tasted the bitter sea-water when he became worse even than he was before, and then both the elder sons came in and blamed the youngest for what he had done, and said that he wanted to poison their father, but that they had found the Water of Life and had brought it with them. He no sooner began to drink of what they brought him, than he felt his sickness leave him, and was as strong and well as in his young days; then they went to their brother and laughed at him, and said, "Well, brother, you found the Water of Life, did you? you have had the trouble and we shall have the reward; pray, with all your cleverness why did not you manage to keep your eyes open? Next year one of us will take away your beautiful princess, if you do not take care; you had better say nothing about this to our father, for he does not believe a word you say, and if you tell tales, you shall lose your life into the bargain, but be quiet and we will let you off."

The old king was still very angry with his youngest son, and thought that he really meant to have taken away his life; so he called his court together and asked what should be done, and it was settled that he should be put to death. The prince knew nothing of what was going on, till one day when the king's chief huntsman went a-hunting with him, and they were alone in the wood together, the huntsman looked so sorrowful that the prince said, "My friend, what is the matter with you?" "I cannot and dare not tell you," said he. But the prince begged hard and said, "Only say what it is, and do not think I shall be angry, for I will forgive you." "Alas!" said the huntsman, "the king has ordered me to shoot you." The prince started at this, and said, "Let me live, and I will change dresses with you; you shall take my royal coat to show to my father, and do you give me your shabby one." "With all my heart," said the huntsman; "I am sure I shall be glad to save you, for I could not have shot you." Then he took the prince's coat, and gave him the shabby one, and went away through the wood.

Some time after, three grand embassies came to the old king's court, with rich gifts of gold and precious stones for his youngest son, which were sent from the three kings to whom he had lent his sword and loaf of bread, to rid them of their enemy, and feed their people. This touched the old king's heart, and he thought his son might still be guiltless, and said to his court, "Oh! that my son were still alive! how it grieves me that I had him killed!" "He still lives," said the huntsman; "and I rejoice that I had pity on him, and saved him, for when the time came, I could not shoot him, but let him go in peace and brought home his royal coat." At this the king was overwhelmed with joy, and made it known throughout all his kingdom, that if his son would come back to his court, he would forgive him.

Meanwhile the princess was eagerly waiting the return of her deliverer, and had a road made leading up to her palace all of shining gold; and told her courtiers that who ever came on horseback and rode straight up to the gate upon it, was her true lover, and that they must let him in; but whoever rode on one side of it, they must be sure was not the right one, and must send him away at once.

The time soon came, when the eldest thought he would make haste to go to the princess, and say that he was the one who had set her free, and that he should have her for his wife, and the kingdom with her. As he came before the palace and saw the golden road, he stopt to look at it, and thought to himself, "It is a pity to ride upon this beautiful road;" so he turned aside and road on the right of it. But when he came to the gate, the guards said to him, he was not what he said he was, and must go about his business. The second prince set out soon afterwards on the same errand; and when he came to the golden road, and his horse had set one foot upon it, he stopt to look at it, and thought it very beautiful, and said to himself, "What a pity it is that anything should tread here!" then he too turned aside and rode on the left of it. But when he came to the gate the guards said he was not the true prince, and that he too must go away.

Now when the full year was come, the third brother left the wood, where he had lain for fear of his father's anger, and set out in search of his betrothed bride. So he journeyed on, thinking of her all the way, and rode so quickly that he did not even see the golden road, but went with his horse straight over it; and as he came to the gate, it flew open, and the princess welcomed him with joy, and said he was her deliverer and should now be her husband and lord of the kingdom, and the marriage was soon kept with great feasting. When it was over, the princess told him she had heard of his father having forgiven him, and of his wish to have him home again: so he went to visit him, and told him everything, how his brothers had cheated and robbed him, and yet that he had borne all these wrongs for the love of his father. Then the old king was very angry, and wanted to punish his wicked sons; but they made their escape, and got into a ship and sailed away over the wide sea, and were never heard of any more.

Peter the Goatherd

In the wilds of the Hartz Forest there is a high mountain, where the fairies and goblins dance by night, and where they say the great Emperor Frederic Barbarossa still holds his court among the caverns. Now and then he shows himself and punishes those whom he dislikes, or gives some rich gift to the lucky wight whom he takes it into his head to befriend. He sits on a throne of marble with his red beard sweeping on the ground, and once or twice in a long course of years rouses himself for a while from the trance in which he is buried, but soon falls again into his former forgetfulness. Strange chances have befallen many who have strayed within the range of his court — you shall hear one of them.

A great many years ago there lived in the village at the foot of the mountain, one Peter, a goatherd. Every morning he drove his flock to feed upon the green spots that are here and there found on the mountain's side, and in the evening he sometimes thought it too far to drive his charge home, so he used in such cases to shut it up in a spot amongst the woods, where an old ruined wall was left standing, high enough to form a fold, in which he could count his goats and rest in peace for the night. One evening he found that the prettiest goat of his flock had vanished soon after they were driven into this fold, but was there again in the morning. Again and again he watched, and the same strange thing happened. He thought he would look still more narrowly, and soon found a cleft in the old wall, through which it seemed that his favourite made her way. Peter followed, scrambling as well as he could down the side of the rock, and wondered not a little, on overtaking his goat, to find it employing itself very much at its ease in a cavern, eating corn, which kept dropping from some place above. He went into the cavern and looked about him to see where all this corn, that rattled about his ears like a hail-storm, could come from: but all was dark, and he could find no clue to this strange business. At last, as he stood listening, he thought he heard the neighing and stamping of horses. He listened again; it was plainly so; and after a while he was sure that horses were feeding above him, and that the corn fell from their mangers. What could these horses be, which were thus kept in a mountain where none but the goat's foot ever trod? Peter pondered a while; but his wonder only grew greater and greater, when on a sudden a little page came forth and beckoned him to follow; he did so, and came at last to a court-yard surrounded by an old wall. The spot seemed the bosom of the valley; above rose on every hand high masses of rock; wide branching trees threw their arms overhead, so that nothing but a glimmering twilight made its way through; and here, on the cool smooth shaven turf, were twelve old knights, who looked very grave and sober, but were amusing themselves with a game of nine-pins.

Not a word fell from their lips; but they ordered Peter by dumb signs to busy himself in setting up the pins, as they knocked them down. At first his knees trembled, as he dared to snatch a stolen sidelong glance at the long beards and old-fashioned dresses of the worthy knights. Little by little, however, he grew bolder; and at last he plucked up his heart so far as to take his turn in the draught at the can, which stood beside him and sent up the smell of the richest old wine. This gave him new strength for his work; and as often as he flagged at all, he turned to the same kind friend for help in his need.

Sleep at last overpowered him; and when he awoke he found himself stretched out upon the old spot where he had folded his flock. The same green turf was spread beneath, and the same tottering walls surrounded him: he rubbed his eyes, but neither dog nor goat was to be seen, and when he had looked about him again the grass seemed to be longer under his feet, and trees hung over his head which he had either never seen before or had forgotten. Shaking his head, and hardly knowing whether he were in his right mind, he wound his way among the mountain steeps, through paths where his flocks were wont to wander; but still not a goat was to be seen. Below him in the plain lay the village where his home was, and at length he took the downward path, and set out with a heavy heart in search of his flock. The people who met him as he drew near to the village were all unknown to him; they were not even drest as his neighbours were, and they seemed as if they hardly spoke the same tongue; and when he eagerly asked after his goats, they only stared at him and stroked their chins. At last he did the same too, and what was his wonder to find that his beard was grown at least a foot long! The world, thought he now to himself, is turned over, or at any rate bewitched; and yet he knew the mountain (as he turned round to gaze upon its woody heights); and he knew the houses and cottages also, with their little gardens, all of which were in the same places as he had always known them; he heard some children, too, call the village by its old name, as a traveller that passed by was asking his way.

Again he shook his head and went straight through the village to his own cottage. Alas! it looked sadly out of repair; and in the court-yard lay an unknown child, in a ragged dress, by the side of a rough, toothless dog, whom he thought he ought to know, but who snarled and barked in his face when he called him to him. He went in at an opening in the wall where a door had once stood, but found all so dreary and empty that he staggered out again like a drunken man, and called his wife and children loudly by their names; but no one heard, at least no one answered him.

A crowd of women and children soon flocked around the long gray-bearded man, and all broke upon him at once with the questions, “Who are you?” “Whom do you want?” It seemed to him so odd to ask other people at his own door after his wife and children, that in order to get rid of the crowd he named the first man that came into his head— “Hans, the blacksmith!” said he. Most held their tongues and stared, but at last an old woman said, “He went these seven years ago to a place that you will not reach to-day.” “Frank the tailor, then!” “Heaven rest his soul!” said an old beldame upon crutches; “he has laid these ten years in a house that he’ll never leave.”

Peter looked at the old woman, and shuddered as he saw her to be one of his old friends, only with a strangely altered face. All wish to ask further questions was gone; but at last a young woman made her way through the gaping throng with a baby in her arms, and a little girl about three years old clinging to her other hand; all three looked the very image of his wife. “What is thy name?” asked he wildly. “Mary.” “And your father’s?” “Heaven bless him! Peter! It is now twenty years since we sought him day and night on the mountain; his flock came back, but he never was heard of any more. I was then seven years old.” The goatherd could hold no longer. “I am Peter,” cried he; “I am Peter, and no other;” as he took the child from his daughter’s arms and kissed it. All stood gaping, and not knowing what to say or think, till at length one voice was heard, “Why, it is Peter!” and then several others cried, “Yes, it is, it is Peter! Welcome neighbour, welcome home, after twenty long years!”

The Four Clever Brothers

“Dear children,” said a poor man to his four sons, “I have nothing to give you; you must go out into the world, and try your luck. Begin by learning some trade, and see how you can get on.” So the four brothers took their walking-sticks in their hands, and their little bundles on their shoulders, and, after bidding their father good-bye, went all out at the gate together. When they had got on some way they came to four cross-ways, each leading to a different country. Then the eldest said, “Here we must part; but this day four years we will come back to this spot; and in the meantime each must try what he can do for himself.” So each brother went his way; and as the oldest was hastening on, a man met him, and asked him where he was going and what he wanted. “I am going to try my luck in the world, and should like to begin by learning some trade,” answered he. “Then,” said the man, “go with me, and I will teach you how to become the cunningest thief that ever was.” “No,” said the other, “that is not an honest calling, and what can one look to earn by it in the end but the gallows?” “Oh!” said the man, “you need not fear the gallows; for I will only teach you to steal what will be fair game; I meddle with nothing but what no one else can get or care anything about, and where no one can find you out.” So the young man agreed to follow his trade, and he soon showed himself so clever that nothing could escape him that he had once set his mind upon.

The second brother also met a man, who, when he found out what he was setting out upon, asked him what trade he meant to learn. “I do not know yet,” said he. “Then come with me, and be a star-gazer. It is a noble trade, for nothing can be hidden from you when you understand the stars.” The plan pleased him much, and he soon became such a skilful star-gazer, that when he had served out his time, and wanted to leave his master, he gave him a glass, and said, “With this you can see all that is passing in the sky and on earth, and nothing can be hidden from you.”

The third brother met a huntsman, who took him with him, and taught him so well all that belonged to hunting, that he became very clever in that trade; and when he left his master he gave him a bow, and said, “Whatever you shoot at with this bow you will be sure to hit.”

The youngest brother likewise met a man who asked him what he wished to do. “Would not you like,” said he, “to be a tailor?” “Oh no!” said the young man; “sitting cross-legged from morning to night, working backwards and forwards with a needle and a goose, will never suit me.” “Oh!” answered the man, “that is not my sort of tailoring; come with me, and you will learn quite another kind of trade from that.” Not knowing what better to do, he came into the plan, and learnt the trade from the beginning; and when he left his master, he gave him a needle, and said, “You can sew anything with this, be it as soft as an egg, or as hard as steel, and the joint will be so fine that no seam will be seen.”

After the space of four years, at the time agreed upon, the four brothers met at the four cross-roads, and having welcomed each other, set off towards their father’s home, where they told him all that had happened to them, and how each had learned some trade. Then one day, as they were sitting before the house under a very high tree, the father said, “I should like to try what each of you can do in his trade.” So he looked up, and said to the second son, “At the top of this tree there is a chaffinch’s nest; tell me how many eggs there are in it.” The star-gazer took his glass, looked up, and said, “Five.” “Now,” said the father to the eldest son, “take away the eggs without the bird that is sitting upon them and hatching them, knowing anything of what you are doing.” So the cunning thief climbed up the tree, and brought away to his father the five eggs from under the bird, who never saw or felt what he was doing, but kept sitting on at her ease. Then the father took the eggs, and put one on each corner of the table and the fifth in the middle, and said to the huntsman, “Cut all the eggs in two pieces at one shot.” The huntsman took up his bow, and at one shot struck all the five eggs as his father wished. “Now comes your turn,” said he to the young tailor; “sew the eggs and the young birds in them together again, so neatly that the shot shall have done them no harm.” Then the tailor took his needle, and sewed the eggs as he was told; and when he had done, the thief was sent to take them back to the nest, and put them under the bird, without its knowing it. Then she went on sitting, and hatched them; and in a few days they crawled out, and had only a little red streak across their necks where the tailor had sewed them together.

“Well done, sons!” said the old man, “you have made good use of your time, and learnt something worth the knowing; but I am sure I do not know which ought to have the prize. Oh! that a time might soon come for you to turn your skill to some account!”

Not long after this there was a great bustle in the country; for the king’s daughter had been carried off by a mighty dragon, and the king mourned over his loss day and night, and made it known that whoever brought her back to him should have her for a wife. Then the four brothers said to each other, “Here is a chance for us; let us try what we can do.” And they agreed to see whether they could not set the princess free. “I will soon find out where she is, however,” said the star-gazer as he looked through his glass, and soon cried out, “I see her afar off, sitting upon a rock in the sea, and I can spy the dragon close by, guarding her.” Then he went to the king, and asked for a ship for himself and his brothers, and went with them upon the sea till they came to the right place. There they found the princess sitting, as the star-gazer had said, on the rock, and the dragon was lying asleep with his head upon her lap. “I dare not shoot at him,” said the huntsman, “for I should kill the beautiful young lady also.” “Then I will try my skill,” said the thief; and went and stole her away from under the dragon so quickly and gently that the beast did not know it, but went on snoring.

Then away they hastened with her full of joy in their boat towards the ship; but soon came the dragon roaring behind them through the air, for he awoke and missed the princess; but when he got over the boat, and wanted to pounce upon them and carry off the princess, the huntsman took up his bow and shot him straight at the heart, so that he fell down dead. They were still not safe; for he was such a great beast, that in his fall he overset the boat, and they had to swim in the open sea upon a few planks. So the tailor took his needle, and with a few large stitches put some of the planks together, and sat down upon them, and sailed about and gathered up all the pieces of the boat, and tacked them together so quickly that the boat was soon ready, and they then reached the ship and got home safe.

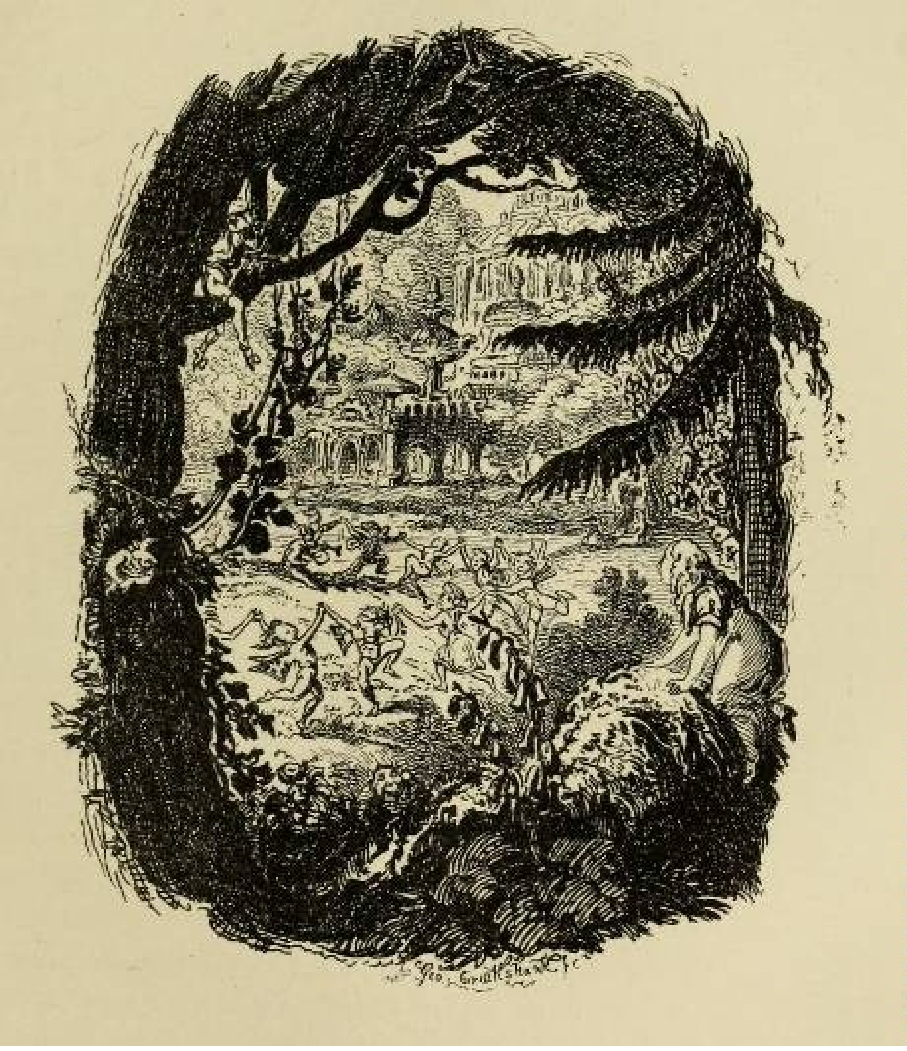
When they had brought home the princess to her father, there was great rejoicing; and he said to the four brothers, “One of you shall marry her, but you must settle amongst yourselves which it is to be.” Then there arose a quarrel between them; and the star-gazer said, “If I had not found the princess out, all your skill would have been of no use; therefore she ought to be mine.” “Your seeing her would have been of no use,” said the thief, “if I had not taken her away from the dragon; therefore she ought to be mine.” “No, she is mine,” said the huntsman; “for if I had not killed the dragon, he would after all have torn you and the princess into pieces.” “And if I had not sewed the boat together again,” said the tailor, “you would all have been drowned; therefore she is mine.” Then the king put in a word, and said, “Each of you is right; and as all cannot have the young lady, the best way is for neither of you to have her; and to make up for the loss, I will give each, as a reward for his skill, half a kingdom.” So the brothers agreed that would be much better than quarrelling; and the king then gave each half a kingdom, as he had said; and they lived very happily the rest of their days, and took good care of their father.

The Elfin Grove

“I hope,” said a woodman one day to his wife, “that the children will not run into that fir-grove by the side of the river; who they are that have come to live there I cannot tell, but I am sure it looks more dark and gloomy than ever, and some queer-looking beings are to be seen lurking about it every night, as I am told.” The woodman could not say that they brought any ill luck as yet, whatever they were; for all the village had thriven more than ever since they came; the fields looked gayer and greener, and even the sky was a deeper blue. Not knowing what to say of them, the farmer very wisely let his new friends alone, and in truth troubled his head very little about them.

That very evening little Mary and her playfellow Martin were playing at hide and seek in the valley. “Where can he be hid?” said she; “he must have gone into the fir-grove,” and down she ran to look. Just then she spied a little dog that jumped round her and wagged his tail, and led her on towards the wood. Then he ran into it, and she soon jumped up the bank to look after him, but was overjoyed to see, instead of a gloomy grove of firs, a delightful garden, where flowers and shrubs of every kind grew upon turf of the softest green; gay butterflies flew about her, the birds sang sweetly, and, what was strangest, the prettiest little children sported about on all sides, some twining the flowers, and others dancing in rings upon the shady spots beneath the trees. In the midst, instead of the hovels of which Mary had heard, there was a palace that dazzled her eyes with its brightness. For a while she gazed on the fairy scene around her, till at last one of the little dancers ran up to her, and said, “And you are come at last to see us? we have often seen you play about, and wished to have you with us.” Then she plucked some of the fruit that grew near; and Mary at the first taste forgot her home, and wished only to see and know more of her fairy friends.

Then they led her about with them and showed her all their sports. One while they danced by moonlight on the primrose banks; at another time they skipped from bough to bough among the trees that hung over the cooling streams; for they moved as lightly and easily through the air as on the ground: and Mary went with them everywhere, for they bore her in their arms wherever they wished to go. Sometimes they would throw seeds on the turf, and directly little trees sprang up; and then they would set their feet upon the branches, while the trees grew under them, till they danced upon the boughs in the air, wherever the breezes carried them; and again the trees would sink down into the earth and land them safely at their bidding. At other times they would go and visit the palace of their queen; and there the richest food was spread before them, and the softest music was heard; and there all around grew flowers which were always changing their hues, from scarlet to purple and yellow and emerald. Sometimes they went to look at the heaps of treasure which were piled up in the royal stores; for little dwarfs were always employed in searching the earth for gold. Small as this fairyland looked from without, it seemed within to have no end; a mist hung around it to shield it from the eyes of men; and some of the little elves sat perched upon the outermost trees, to keep watch lest the step of man should break in and spoil the charm.



“And who are you?” said Mary one day. “We are what are called elves in your world,” said one whose name was Gossamer, and who had become her dearest friend: “we are told you talk a great deal about us; some of our tribes like to work you mischief, but we who live here seek only to be happy: we meddle little with mankind; but when we do come among them, it is to do them good.” “And where is your queen?” said little Mary. “Hush! hush! you cannot see or know her: you must leave us before she comes back, which will be now very soon, for mortal step cannot come where she is. But you will know that she is here when you see the meadows gayer, the rivers more sparkling, and the sun brighter.”

Soon afterwards Gossamer told Mary the time was come to bid her farewell, and gave her a ring in token of their friendship, and led her to the edge of the grove. “Think of me,” said she; “but beware how you tell what you have seen, or try to visit any of us again, for if you do, we shall quit this grove and come back no more.” Turning back, Mary saw nothing but the gloomy fir-grove she had known before. “How frightened my father and mother will be!” thought she as she looked at the sun, which had risen some time. “They will wonder where I have been all night, and yet I must not tell them what I have seen.” She hastened homewards, wondering however, as she went, to see that the leaves, which were yesterday so fresh and green, were now falling dry and yellow around her. The cottage too seemed changed, and, when she went in, there sat her father looking some years older than when she saw him last; and her mother, whom she hardly knew, was by his side. Close by was a young man; “Father,” said Mary, “who is this?” “Who are you that call me father?” said he; “are you — no you cannot be — our long-lost Mary?” But they soon saw that it was their Mary; and the young man, who was her old friend and playfellow Martin, said, “No wonder you had forgotten me in seven years; do not you remember how we parted seven years ago while playing in the field? We thought you were quite lost; but we are glad to see that some one has taken care of you and brought you home at last.” Mary said nothing, for she could not tell all; but she wondered at the strange tale, and felt gloomy at the change from fairyland to her father’s cottage.

Little by little she came to herself, thought of her story as a mere dream, and soon became Martin’s bride. Everything seemed to thrive around them; and Mary called her first little girl Elfie, in memory of her friends. The little thing was loved by every one. It was pretty and very good-tempered; Mary thought that it was very like a little elf; and all, without knowing why, called it the fairy child.

One day, while Mary was dressing her little Elfie, she found a piece of gold hanging round her neck by a silken thread, and knew it to be of the same sort as she had seen in the hands of the fairy dwarfs. Elfie seemed sorry at its being seen, and said that she had found it in the garden. But Mary watched her, and soon found that she went every afternoon to sit by herself in a shady place behind the house: so one day she hid herself to see what the child did there; and to her great wonder Gossamer was sitting by her side. “Dear Elfie,” she was saying, “your mother and I used to sit thus when she was young and lived among us. Oh! if you could but come and do so too! but since our queen came to us it cannot be; yet I will come and see you and talk to you, whilst you are a child; when you grow up we must part for ever.” Then she plucked one of the roses that grew around them and breathed gently upon it, and said, “Take this for my sake. It will keep its freshness a whole year.”

Then Mary loved her little Elfie more than ever; and when she found that she spent some hours of almost every day with the elf, she used to hide herself and watch them without being seen, till one day when Gossamer was bearing her little friend through the air from tree to tree, her mother was so frightened lest her child should fall that she could not help screaming out, and Gossamer set her gently on the ground and seemed angry, and flew away. But still she used sometimes to come and play with her little friend, and would soon have done so perhaps the same as before, had not Mary one day told her husband the whole story, for she could not bear to hear him always wondering and laughing at their little child's odd ways, and saying he was sure there was something in the fir-grove that brought them no good. So to show him that all she said was true, she took him to see Elfie and the fairy; but no sooner did Gossamer know that he was there, (which she did in an instant), than she changed herself into a raven and flew off into the fir-grove.

Mary burst into tears, and so did Elfie, for she knew she should see her dear friend no more: but Martin was restless and bent upon following up his search after the fairies; so when night came he stole away towards the grove. When he came to it nothing was to be seen but the gloomy firs and the old hovels; and the thunder rolled, and the wind groaned and whistled through the trees. It seemed that all about him was angry so he turned homewards frightened at what he had done.

In the morning all the neighbours flocked around, asking one another what the noise and bustle of the last night could mean; and when they looked about them, their trees looked blighted, and the meadows parched, the streams were dried up, and everything seemed troubled and sorrowful; but they all thought that somehow or other the fir-grove had not near so forbidding a look as it used to have. Strange stories were told, how one had heard flutterings in the air, another had seen the fir-grove as it were alive with little beings that flew away from it. Each neighbour told his tale, and all wondered what could have happened; but Mary and her husband knew what was the matter, and bewailed their folly; for they foresaw that their kind neighbours, to whom they owed all their luck, were gone for ever. Among the bystanders none told a wilder story than the old ferryman who plied across the river at the foot of the grove; he told how at midnight his boat was carried away, and how hundreds of little beings seemed to load it with treasures; how a strange piece of gold was left for him in the boat, as his fare; how the air seemed full of fairy forms, fluttering around; and how at last a great train passed over that seemed to be guarding their leader to the meadows on the other side; and how he heard soft music floating around as they flew; and how sweet voices sang as they hovered over his head,

Fairy Queen! Fairy Queen! Mortal steps are on the green; Come away! Haste away! Fairies, guard your Queen! Hither, hither, fairy Queen! Lest thy silvery wing be seen; O'er the sky Fly, fly, fly! Fairies, guard your lady Queen! O'er the sky Fly, fly, fly! Fairies, guard your Queen! Fairy Queen! Fairy Queen! Thou hast pass'd the treach'rous scene; Now we may Down and play O'er the daisied green. Lightly, lightly, fairy Queen! Trip it gently o'er the green: Fairies gay, Trip away Round about your lady Queen! Fairies gay, Trip away Round about your Queen!

Elfie mourned their loss the most, and would spend whole hours in looking upon the rose that her playfellow had given her, and singing over it the pretty airs she had taught her; till at length when the year's charm had passed away and it began to fade, she planted the stalk in her garden, and there it grew and grew till she could sit under the shade of it and think of her friend Gossamer.

The Salad

As a merry young huntsman was once going briskly along through a wood, there came up a little old woman, and said to him, “Good day, good day; you seem merry enough, but I am hungry and thirsty; do pray give me something to eat.” The huntsman took pity on her, and put his hand in his pocket and gave her what he had. Then he wanted to go his way; but she took hold of him, and said, “Listen, my friend, to what I am going to tell you; I will reward you for your kindness; go your way, and after a little time you will come to a tree where you will see nine birds sitting on a cloak. Shoot into the midst of them, and one will fall down dead: the cloak will fall too; take it, it is a wishing-cloak, and when you wear it you will find yourself at any place where you may wish to be. Cut open the dead bird, take out its heart and keep it, and you will find a piece of gold under your pillow every morning when you rise. It is the bird’s heart that will bring you this good luck.”

The huntsman thanked her, and thought to himself, “If all this does happen, it will be a fine thing for me.” When he had gone a hundred steps or so, he heard a screaming and chirping in the branches over him, and looked up and saw a flock of birds pulling a cloak with their bills and feet; screaming, fighting, and tugging at each other as if each wished to have it himself. “Well,” said the huntsman, “this is wonderful; this happens just as the old woman said;” then he shot into the midst of them so that their feathers flew all about. Off went the flock chattering away; but one fell down dead, and the cloak with it. Then the huntsman did as the old woman told him, cut open the bird, took out the heart, and carried the cloak home with him.

The next morning when he awoke he lifted up his pillow, and there lay the piece of gold glittering underneath; the same happened next day, and indeed every day when he arose. He heaped up a great deal of gold, and at last thought to himself, “Of what use is this gold to me whilst I am at home? I will go out into the world and look about me.”

Then he took leave of his friends, and hung his bag and bow about his neck, and went his way. It so happened that his road one day led through a thick wood, at the end of which was a large castle in a green meadow, and at one of the windows stood an old woman with a very beautiful young lady by her side looking about them. Now the old woman was a fairy, and said to the young lady, “There is a young man coming out of the wood who carries a wonderful prize; we must get it away from him, my dear child, for it is more fit for us than for him. He has a bird’s heart that brings a piece of gold under his pillow every morning.” Meantime the huntsman came nearer and looked at the lady, and said to himself, “I have been travelling so long that I should like to go into this castle and rest myself, for I have money enough to pay for anything I want;” but the real reason was, that he wanted to see more of the beautiful lady. Then he went into the house, and was welcomed kindly;

and it was not long before he was so much in love that he thought of nothing else but looking at the lady's eyes, and doing everything that she wished. Then the old woman said, "Now is the time for getting the bird's heart." So the lady stole it away, and he never found any more gold under his pillow, for it lay now under the young lady's, and the old woman took it away every morning; but he was so much in love that he never missed his prize.

"Well," said the old fairy, "we have got the bird's heart, but not the wishing-cloak yet, and that we must also get." "Let us leave him that," said the young lady; "he has already lost his wealth." Then the fairy was very angry, and said, "Such a cloak is a very rare and wonderful thing, and I must and will have it." So she did as the old woman told her, and set herself at the window, and looked about the country and seemed very sorrowful; then the huntsman said, "What makes you so sad?" "Alas! dear sir," said she, "yonder lies the granite rock where all the costly diamonds grow, and I want so much to go there, that whenever I think of it I cannot help being sorrowful, for who can reach it? only the birds and the flies — man cannot." "If that's all your grief," said the huntsman, "I'll take you there with all my heart;" so he drew her under his cloak, and the moment he wished to be on the granite mountain they were both there. The diamonds glittered so on all sides that they were delighted with the sight and picked up the finest. But the old fairy made a deep sleep come upon him, and he said to the young lady, "Let us sit down and rest ourselves a little, I am so tired that I cannot stand any longer." So they sat down, and he laid his head in her lap and fell asleep; and whilst he was sleeping on she took the cloak from his shoulders, hung it on her own, picked up the diamonds, and wished herself home again.

When he awoke and found that his lady had tricked him, and left him alone on the wild rock, he said, "Alas! what roguery there is in the world!" and there he sat in great grief and fear, not knowing what to do. Now this rock belonged to fierce giants who lived upon it; and as he saw three of them striding about, he thought to himself, "I can only save myself by feigning to be asleep;" so he laid himself down as if he were in a sound sleep. When the giants came up to him, the first pushed him with his foot, and said, "What worm is this that lies here curled up?" "Tread upon him and kill him," said the second. "It's not worth the trouble," said the third; "let him live, he'll go climbing higher up the mountain, and some cloud will come rolling and carry him away." And they passed on. But the huntsman had heard all they said; and as soon as they were gone, he climbed to the top of the mountain, and when he had sat there a short time a cloud came rolling around him, and caught him in a whirlwind and bore him along for some time, till it settled in a garden, and he fell quite gently to the ground amongst the greens and cabbages.

Then he looked around him, and said, "I wish I had something to eat, if not I shall be worse off than before; for here I see neither apples nor pears, nor any kind of fruits, nothing but vegetables." At last he thought to himself, "I can eat salad, it will refresh and strengthen me." So he picked out a fine head and ate of it; but scarcely had he swallowed two bites when he felt himself quite changed, and saw with horror that he was turned into an ass. However, he still felt very hungry, and the salad tasted very nice; so he ate on till he came to another kind of salad, and scarcely had he tasted it when he felt another change come over him, and soon saw that he was lucky enough to have found his old shape again.

Then he laid himself down and slept off a little of his weariness; and when he awoke the next morning he broke off a head both of the good and the bad salad, and thought to himself, "This will help me to my fortune again, and enable me to pay off some folks for their treachery." So he went away to try and find the castle of his old friends; and after wandering about a few days he luckily found it. Then he stained his face all over brown, so that even his mother would not have known him, and went into the castle and asked for a lodging; "I am so tired," said he, "that I can go no further." "Countryman," said the fairy, "who are you? and what is your business?" "I am," said he, "a messenger sent by the king to find the finest salad that grows under the sun. I have been lucky enough to find it, and have brought it with me; but the heat of the sun scorches so that it begins to wither, and I don't know that I can carry it further."

When the fairy and the young lady heard of this beautiful salad, they longed to taste it, and said, "Dear countryman, let us just taste it." "To be sure," answered he; "I have two heads of it with me, and will give you one;" so he opened his bag and gave them the bad. Then the fairy herself took it into the kitchen to be dressed; and when it was ready she could not wait till it was carried up, but took a few leaves immediately and put them in her mouth, and scarcely were they swallowed when she lost her own form and ran braying down into the court in the form of an ass. Now the servant-maid came into the kitchen, and seeing the salad ready was going to carry it up; but in the way she too felt a wish to taste it as the old woman had done, and ate some leaves; so she also was turned into an ass and ran after the other, letting the dish with the salad fall on the ground. The messenger sat all this time with the beautiful young lady, and as nobody came with the salad and she longed to taste it, she said, "I don't know where the salad can be." Then he thought something must have happened, and said, "I will go into the kitchen and see." And as he went he saw two asses in the court running about, and the salad lying on the ground. "All right!" said he; "those two have had their share." Then he took up the rest of the leaves, laid them on the dish and brought them to the young lady, saying, "I bring you the dish myself that you may not wait any longer." So she ate of it, and like the others ran off into the court, braying away.

Then the huntsman washed his face and went into the court that they might know him. "Now you shall be paid for your roguery," said he; and tied them all three to a rope and took them along with him till he came to a mill and knocked at the window. "What's the matter?" said the miller. "I have three tiresome beasts here," said the other; "if you will take them, give them food and room, and treat them as I tell you, I will pay you whatever you ask." "With all my heart," said the miller; "but how shall I treat them?"

Then the huntsman said, “Give the old one stripes three times a day and hay once; give the next (who was the servant-maid) stripes once a day and hay three times; and give the youngest (who was the beautiful lady) hay three times a day and no stripes:” for he could not find it in his heart to have her beaten. After this he went back to the castle, where he found everything he wanted.

Some days after the miller came to him, and told him that the old ass was dead; “the other two,” said he, “are alive and eat, but are so sorrowful that they cannot last long.” Then the huntsman pitied them, and told the miller to drive them back to him, and when they came, he gave them some of the good salad to eat. And the beautiful young lady fell upon her knees before him, and said, “Oh dearest huntsman! forgive me all the ill I have done you; my mother forced me to it, it was against my will, for I always loved you very much. Your wishing-cloak hangs up in the closet, and as for the bird’s heart, I will give it you too.” But he said, “Keep it, it will be just the same thing, for I mean to make you my wife.” So they were married, and lived together very happily till they died.

The Nose

Did you ever hear the story of the three poor soldiers, who, after having fought hard in the wars, set out on their road home begging their way as they went?

They had journeyed on a long way, sick at heart with their bad luck at thus being turned loose on the world in their old days, when one evening they reached a deep gloomy wood through which they must pass; night came fast upon them, and they found that they must, however unwillingly, sleep in the wood; so to make all as safe as they could, it was agreed that two should lie down and sleep, while a third sat up and watched lest wild beasts should break in and tear them to pieces; when he was tired he was to wake one of the others and sleep in his turn, and so on with the third, so as to share the work fairly among them.

The two who were to rest first soon lay down and fell fast asleep, and the other made himself a good fire under the trees and sat down by the side to keep watch. He had not sat long before all on a sudden up came a little man in a red jacket. “Who’s there?” said he. “A friend,” said the soldier. “What sort of a friend?” “An old broken soldier,” said the other, “with his two comrades who have nothing left to live on; come, sit down and warm yourself.” “Well, my worthy fellow,” said the little man, “I will do what I can for you; take this and show it to your comrades in the morning.” So he took out an old cloak and gave it to the soldier, telling him that whenever he put it over his shoulders anything that he wished for would be fulfilled; then the little man made him a bow and walked away.

The second soldier’s turn to watch soon came, and the first laid himself down to sleep; but the second man had not sat by himself long before up came the little man in the red jacket again. The soldier treated him in a friendly way as his comrade had done, and the little man gave him a purse, which he told him was always full of gold, let him draw as much as he would.

Then the third soldier’s turn to watch came, and he also had the little man for his guest, who gave him a wonderful horn that drew crowds around it whenever it was played; and made every one forget his business to come and dance to its beautiful music.

In the morning each told his story and showed his treasure; and as they all liked each other very much and were old friends, they agreed to travel together to see the world, and for a while only to make use of the wonderful purse. And thus they spent their time very joyously, till at last they began to be tired of this roving life, and thought they should like to have a home of their own. So the first soldier put his old cloak on, and wished for a fine castle. In a moment it stood before their eyes; fine gardens and green lawns spread round it, and flocks of sheep and goats and herds of oxen were grazing about, and out of the gate came a fine coach with three dapple gray horses to meet them and bring them home.

All this was very well for a time; but it would not do to stay at home always, so they got together all their rich clothes and houses and servants, and ordered their coach with three horses, and set out on a journey to see a neighbouring king. Now this king had an only daughter, and as he took the three soldiers for kings' sons, he gave them a kind welcome. One day, as the second soldier was walking with the princess, she saw him with the wonderful purse in his hand; and having asked him what it was, he was foolish enough to tell her — though indeed it did not much signify, for she was a witch and knew all the wonderful things that the three soldiers brought. Now this princess was very cunning and artful; so she set to work and made a purse so like the soldier's that no one would know one from the other, and then asked him to come and see her, and made him drink some wine that she had got ready for him, till he fell fast asleep. Then she felt in his pocket, and took away the wonderful purse and left the one she had made in its place.

The next morning the soldiers set out home, and soon after they reached their castle, happening to want some money, they went to their purse for it, and found something indeed in it, but to their great sorrow when they had emptied it, none came in the place of what they took. Then the cheat was soon found out; for the second soldier knew where he had been, and how he had told the story to the princess, and he guessed that she had betrayed him. "Alas!" cried he, "poor wretches that we are, what shall we do?" "Oh!" said the first soldier, "let no gray hairs grow for this mishap; I will soon get the purse back." So he threw his cloak across his shoulders and wished himself in the princess's chamber. There he found her sitting alone, telling her gold that fell around her in a shower from the purse. But the soldier stood looking at her too long, for the moment she saw him she started up and cried out with all her force, "Thieves! Thieves!" so that the whole court came running in and tried to seize him. The poor soldier now began to be dreadfully frightened in his turn, and thought it was high time to make the best of his way off; so without thinking of the ready way of travelling that his cloak gave him, he ran to the window, opened it, and jumped out; and unluckily in his haste his cloak caught and was left hanging, to the great joy of the princess, who knew its worth.

The poor soldier made the best of his way home to his comrades, on foot and in a very downcast mood; but the third soldier told him to keep up his heart, and took his horn and blew a merry tune. At the first blast a countless troop of foot and horse came rushing to their aid, and they set out to make war against their enemy. Then the king's palace was besieged, and he was told that he must give up the purse and cloak, or that not one stone should be left upon another. And the king went into his daughter's chamber and talked with her; but she said, "Let me try first if I cannot beat them some other way." So she thought of a cunning scheme to overreach them, and dressed herself out as a poor girl with a basket on her arm; and set out by night with her maid, and went into the enemy's camp as if she wanted to sell trinkets.

In the morning she began to ramble about, singing ballads so beautifully, that all the tents were left empty, and the soldiers ran round in crowds and thought of nothing but hearing her sing. Amongst the rest came the soldier to whom the horn belonged, and as soon as she saw him she winked to her maid, who slipped slily through the crowd and went into his tent where it hung, and stole it away. This done, they both got safely back to the palace; the besieging army went away, the three wonderful gifts were all left in the hands of the princess, and the three soldiers were as penniless and forlorn as when the little man with the red jacket found them in the wood.

Poor fellows! they began to think what was now to be done. “Comrades,” at last said the second soldier, who had had the purse, “we had better part, we cannot live together, let each seek his bread as well as he can.” So he turned to the right, and the other two to the left; for they said they would rather travel together. Then on he strayed till he came to a wood; (now this was the same wood where they had met with so much good luck before;) and he walked on a long time till evening began to fall, when he sat down tired beneath a tree, and soon fell asleep.

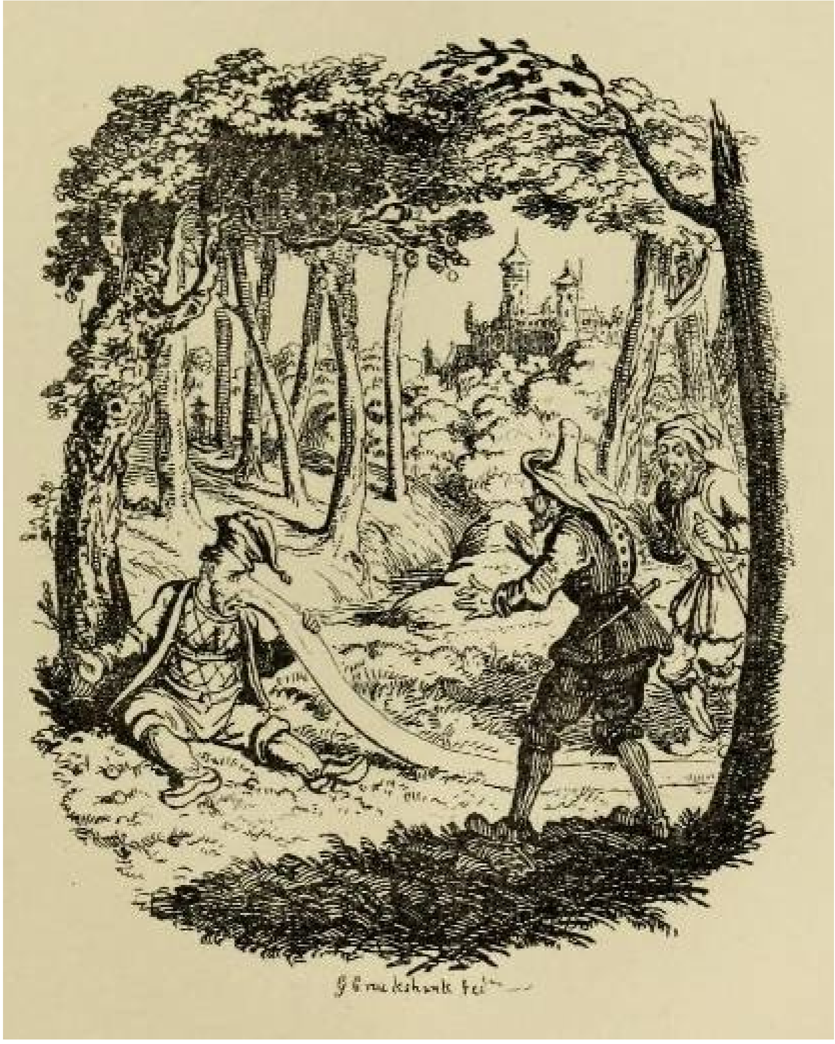
Morning dawned, and he was greatly delighted, at opening his eyes, to see that the tree was laden with the most beautiful apples. He was hungry enough, so he soon plucked and ate first one, then a second, then a third apple. A strange feeling came over his nose: when he put the apple to his mouth something was in the way; he felt it; it was his nose, that grew and grew till it hung down to his breast. It did not stop there, still it grew and grew; “Heavens!” thought he, “when will it have done growing?” And well might he ask, for by this time it reached the ground as he sat on the grass, and thus it kept creeping on till he could not bear its weight, or raise himself up; and it seemed as if it would never end, for already it stretched its enormous length all through the wood.

Meantime his comrades were journeying on, till on a sudden one of them stumbled against something. “What can that be?” said the other. They looked, and could think of nothing that it was like but a nose. “We will follow it and find its owner, however,” said they; so they traced it up till at last they found their poor comrade lying stretched along under the apple tree. What was to be done? They tried to carry him, but in vain. They caught an ass that was passing by, and raised him upon its back; but it was soon tired of carrying such a load. So they sat down in despair, when up came the little man in the red jacket. “Why, how now, friend?” said he, laughing; “well, I must find a cure for you, I see.” So he told them to gather a pear from a tree that grew close by, and the nose would come right again. No time was lost, and the nose was soon brought to its proper size, to the poor soldier’s joy.

“I will do something more for you yet,” said the little man; “take some of those pears and apples with you; whoever eats one of the apples will have his nose grow like yours just now; but if you give him a pear, all will come right again. Go to the princess and get her to eat some of your apples; her nose will grow twenty times as long as yours did; then look sharp, and you will get what you want of her.”

Then they thanked their old friend very heartily for all his kindness, and it was agreed that the poor soldier who had already tried the power of the apple should undertake the task. So he dressed himself up as a gardener’s boy, and went to the king’s palace, and said he had apples to sell, such as were never seen there before. Every one that saw them was delighted and wanted to taste, but he said they were only for the princess; and she soon sent her maid to buy his stock. They were so ripe and rosy that she soon began eating, and had already eaten three when she too began to wonder what ailed her nose, for it grew and grew, down to the ground, out at the window, and over the garden, nobody knows where.

Then the king made known to all his kingdom, that whoever would heal her of this dreadful disease should be richly rewarded. Many tried, but the princess got no relief. And now the old soldier dressed himself up very sprucely as a doctor, who said he could cure her; so he chopped up some of the apple, and to punish her a little more gave her a dose, saying he would call to-morrow and see her again. The morrow came, and of course, instead of being better, the nose had been growing fast all night, and the poor princess was in a dreadful fright. So the doctor chopped up a very little of the pear and gave her, and said he was sure that would do good, and he would call again the next day. Next day came, and the nose was to be sure a little smaller, but yet it was bigger than it was when the doctor first began to meddle with it.



Then he thought to himself, “I must frighten this cunning princess a little more before I shall get what I want of her;” so he gave her another dose of the apple, and said he would call on the morrow. The morrow came, and the nose was ten times as bad as before. “My good lady,” said the doctor; “something works against my medicine, and is too strong for it; but I know by the force of my art what it is; you have stolen goods about you, I am sure, and if you do not give them back, I can do nothing for you.” But the princess denied very stoutly that she had anything of the kind. “Very well,” said the doctor, “you may do as you please, but I am sure I am right, and you will die if you do not own it.” Then he went to the king, and told him how the matter stood. “Daughter,” said he, “send back the cloak, the ring, and the horn, that you stole from the right owners.”

Then she ordered her maid to fetch all three, and gave them to the doctor, and begged him to give them back to the soldiers; and the moment he had them safe he gave her a whole pear to eat, and the nose came right. And as for the doctor, he put on the cloak, wished the king and all his court a good day, and was soon with his two brothers, who lived from that time happily at home in their palace, except when they took airings in their coach with the three dapple gray horses.

The Five Servants

Some time ago there reigned in a country many thousands of miles off, an old queen who was very spiteful and delighted in nothing so much as mischief. She had one daughter, who was thought to be the most beautiful princess in the world; but her mother only made use of her as a trap for the unwary; and whenever any suitor who had heard of her beauty came to seek her in marriage, the only answer the old lady gave to each was, that he must undertake some very hard task and forfeit his life if he failed. Many, led by the report of the princess's charms, undertook these tasks, but failed in doing what the queen set them to do. No mercy was ever shown them; but the word was given at once, and off their heads were cut.

Now it happened that a prince who lived in a country far off, heard of the great beauty of this young lady, and said to his father, "Dear father, let me go and try my luck." "No," said the king; "if you go you will surely lose your life." The prince, however, had set his heart so much upon the scheme, that when he found his father was against it he fell very ill, and took to his bed for seven years, and no art could cure him, or recover his lost spirits: so when his father saw that if he went on thus he would die, he said to him with a heart full of grief, "If it must be so, go and try your luck." At this he rose from his bed, recovered his health and spirits, and went forward on his way light of heart and full of joy.

Then on he journeyed over hill and dale, through fair weather and foul, till one day, as he was riding through a wood, he thought he saw afar off some large animal upon the ground, and as he drew near he found that it was a man lying along upon the grass under the trees; but he looked more like a mountain than a man, he was so fat and jolly. When this big fellow saw the traveller, he arose, and said, "If you want any one to wait upon you, you will do well to take me into your service." "What should I do with such a fat fellow as you?" said the prince. "It would be nothing to you if I were three thousand times as fat," said the man, "so that I do but behave myself well." "That's true," answered the prince; "so come with me, I can put you to some use or another I dare say." Then the fat man rose up and followed the prince, and by and by they saw another man lying on the ground with his ear close to the turf. The prince said, "What are you doing there?" "I am listening," answered the man. "To what?" "To all that is going on in the world, for I can hear everything, I can even hear the grass grow." "Tell me," said the prince, "what you hear is going on at the court of the old queen, who has the beautiful daughter?" "I hear," said the listener, "the noise of the sword that is cutting off the head of one of her suitors." "Well!" said the prince, "I see I shall be able to make you of use — come along with me!" They had not gone far before they saw a pair of feet, and then part of the legs of a man stretched out; but they were so long that they could not see the rest of the body, till they had passed on a good deal further, and at last they came to the body, and, after going on a while further, to the head; "Bless me!" said the prince, “what a long rope you are!” “Oh!” answered the tall man, “this is nothing, when I choose to stretch myself to my full length, I am three times as high as any mountain you have seen on your travels, I warrant you; I will willingly do what I can to serve you if you will let me.” “Come along then,” said the prince, “I can turn you to account in some way.”

The prince and his train went on further into the wood, and next saw a man lying by the road side basking in the heat of the sun, yet shaking and shivering all over, so that not a limb lay still. “What makes you shiver,” said the prince, “while the sun is shining so warm?” “Alas!” answered the man, “the warmer it is, the colder I am; the sun only seems to me like a sharp frost that thrills through all my bones; and on the other hand, when others are what you call cold I begin to be warm, so that I can neither bear the ice for its heat nor the fire for its cold.” “You are a queer fellow,” said the prince; “but if you have nothing else to do, come along with me.” The next thing they saw was a man standing, stretching his neck and looking around him from hill to hill. “What are you looking for so eagerly?” said the prince. “I have such sharp eyes,” said the man, “that I can see over woods and fields and hills and dales; — in short, all over the world.” “Well,” said the prince, “come with me if you will, for I want one more to make up my train.”

Then they all journeyed on, and met with no one else till they came to the city where the beautiful princess lived. The prince went straight to the old queen, and said, “Here I am, ready to do any task you set me, if you will give me your daughter as a reward when I have done.” “I will set you three tasks,” said the queen; “and if you get through all, you shall be the husband of my daughter. First, you must bring me a ring which I dropped in the red sea.” The prince went home to his friends and said, “The first task is not an easy one; it is to fetch a ring out of the red sea, so lay your heads together and say what is to be done.” Then the sharp-sighted one said, “I will see where it lies,” and looked down into the sea, and cried out, “There it lies upon a rock at the bottom.” “I would fetch it out,” said the tall man, “if I could but see it.” “Well!” cried out the fat one, “I will help you to do that,” and laid himself down and held his mouth to the water, and drank up the waves till the bottom of the sea was as dry as a meadow. Then the tall man stooped a little and pulled out the ring with his hand, and the prince took it to the old queen, who looked at it, and wondering said, “It is indeed the right ring; you have gone through this task well: but now comes the second; look yonder at the meadow before my palace; see! there are a hundred fat oxen feeding there; you must eat them all up before noon: and underneath in my cellar there are a hundred casks of wine, which you must drink all up.” “May I not invite some guests to share the feast with me?” said the prince. “Why, yes!” said the old woman with a spiteful laugh; “you may ask one of your friends to breakfast with you, but no more.”

Then the prince went home and said to the fat man, “You must be my guest to-day, and for once you shall eat your fill.” So the fat man set to work and ate the hundred oxen without leaving a bit, and asked if that was to be all he should have for his breakfast? and he drank the wine out of the casks without leaving a drop, licking even his fingers when he had done. When the meal was ended, the prince went to the old woman and told her the second task was done. “Your work is not all over, however,” muttered the old hag to herself; “I will catch you yet, you shall not keep your head upon your shoulders if I can help it.” “This evening,” said she, “I will bring my daughter into your house and leave her with you; you shall sit together there, but take care that you do not fall asleep; for I shall come when the clock strikes twelve, and if she is not then with you, you are undone.” “O!” thought the prince, “it is an easy task to keep such a watch as that; I will take care to keep my eyes open.” So he called his servants and told them all that the old woman had said. “Who knows though,” said he, “but there may be some trick at the bottom of this? it is as well to be upon our guard and keep watch that the young lady does not get away.” When it was night the old woman brought her daughter to the prince’s house; then the tall man twisted himself round about it, the listener put his ear to the ground, the fat man placed himself before the door so that no living soul could enter, and the sharp-eyed one looked out afar and watched. Within sat the princess without saying a word, but the moon shone bright through the window upon her face, and the prince gazed upon her wonderful beauty. And while he looked upon her with a heart full of joy and love, his eyelids did not droop; but at eleven o’clock the old woman cast a charm over them so that they all fell asleep, and the princess vanished in a moment.

And thus they slept till a quarter to twelve, when the charm had no longer any power over them, and they all awoke. “Alas! alas! woe is me,” cried the prince; “now I am lost for ever.” And his faithful servants began to weep over their unhappy lot; but the listener said, “Be still and I will listen;” so he listened a while, and cried out, “I hear her bewailing her fate;” and the sharp-sighted man looked, and said, “I see her sitting on a rock three hundred miles hence; now help us, my tall friend; if you stand up, you will reach her in two steps.” “Very well,” answered the tall man; and in an instant, before one could turn one’s head round, he was at the foot of the enchanted rock. Then the tall man took the young lady in his arms and carried her back to the prince a moment before it struck twelve; and they all sat down again and made merry. And when the clock struck twelve the old queen came sneaking by with a spiteful look, as if she was going to say “Now he is mine;” nor could she think otherwise, for she knew that her daughter was but the moment before on the rock three hundred miles off; but when she came and saw her daughter in the prince’s room, she started, and said, “There is somebody here who can do more than I can.” However, she now saw that she could no longer avoid giving the prince her daughter for a wife, but said to her in a whisper, “It is a shame that you should be won by servants, and not have a husband of your own choice.”

Now the young lady was of a very proud haughty temper, and her anger was raised to such a pitch, that the next morning she ordered three hundred loads of wood to be brought and piled up; and told the prince it was true he had by the help of his servants done the three tasks, but that before she would marry him some one must sit upon that pile of wood when it was set on fire and bear the heat. She thought to herself that though his servants had done everything else for him, none of them would go so far as to burn themselves for him, and that then she should put his love to the test by seeing whether he would sit upon it himself. But she was mistaken; for when the servants heard this, they said, “We have all done something but the frosty man; now his turn is come;” and they took him and put him on the wood and set it on fire. Then the fire rose and burnt for three long days, till all the wood was gone; and when it was out, the frosty man stood in the midst of the ashes trembling like an aspen-leaf, and said, “I never shivered so much in my life; if it had lasted much longer, I should have lost the use of my limbs.”

When the princess had no longer any plea for delay, she saw that she was bound to marry the prince; but when they were going to church, the old woman said, “I will never consent;” and sent secret orders out to her horseman to kill and slay all before them and bring back her daughter before she could be married. However, the listener had pricked up his ears and heard all that the old woman said, and told it to the prince. So they made haste and got to the church first, and were married; and then the five servants took their leave and went away saying, “We will go and try our luck in the world on our own account.”

The prince set out with his wife, and at the end of the first day’s journey came to a village, where a swineherd was feeding his swine; and as they came near he said to his wife, “Do you know who I am? I am not a prince, but a poor swineherd; he whom you see yonder with the swine is my father, and our business will be to help him to tend them.” Then he went into the swineherd’s hut with her, and ordered her royal clothes to be taken away in the night; so that when she awoke in the morning, she had nothing to put on, till the woman who lived there made a great favour of giving her an old gown and a pair of worsted stockings. “If it were not for your husband’s sake,” said she, “I would not have given you anything.” Then the poor princess gave herself up for lost, and believed that her husband must indeed be a swineherd; but she thought she would make the best of it, and began to help him to feed them, and said, “It is a just reward for my pride.” When this had lasted eight days she could bear it no longer, for her feet were all over wounds, and as she sat down and wept by the way-side, some people came up to her and pitied her, and asked if she knew what her husband really was. “Yes,” said she; “a swineherd; he is just gone out to market with some of his stock.” But they said, “Come along and we will take you to him;” and they took her over the hill to the palace of the prince’s father; and when they came into the hall, there stood her husband so richly drest in his royal clothes that she did not know him till he fell upon her neck and kissed her, and said, “I have borne much for your sake, and you too have also borne a great deal for me.” Then the guests were sent for, and the marriage feast was given, and all made merry and danced and sang, and the best wish that I can wish is, that you and I had been there too.

Cat-Skin

There was once a king, whose queen had hair of the purest gold, and was so beautiful that her match was not to be met with on the whole face of the earth. But this beautiful queen fell ill, and when she felt that her end drew near, she called the king to her and said, “Vow to me that you will never marry again, unless you meet with a wife who is as beautiful as I am, and who has golden hair like mine.” Then when the king in his grief had vowed all she asked, she shut her eyes and died. But the king was not to be comforted, and for a long time never thought of taking another wife. At last, however, his counsellors said, “This will not do; the king must marry again, that we may have a queen.” So messengers were sent far and wide, to seek for a bride who was as beautiful as the late queen. But there was no princess in the world so beautiful; and if there had been, still there was not one to be found who had such golden hair. So the messengers came home and had done all their work for nothing.

Now the king had a daughter who was just as beautiful as her mother, and had the same golden hair. And when she had grown up, the king looked at her and saw that she was just like his late queen: then he said to his courtiers, “May I not marry my daughter? she is the very image of my dead wife: unless I have her, I shall not find any bride upon the whole earth, and you say there must be a queen.” When the courtiers heard this, they were shocked, and said, “Heaven forbid that a father should marry his daughter! out of so great a sin no good can come.” And his daughter was also shocked, but hoped the king would soon give up such thoughts: so she said to him, “Before I marry any one I must have three dresses; one must be of gold like the sun, another must be of shining silver like the moon, and a third must be dazzling as the stars: besides this, I want a mantle of a thousand different kinds of fur put together, to which every beast in the kingdom must give a part of his skin.” And thus she thought he would think of the matter no more. But the king made the most skilful workmen in his kingdom weave the three dresses, one as golden as the sun, another as silvery as the moon, and a third shining like the stars; and his hunters were told to hunt out all the beasts in his kingdom and take the finest fur out of their skins: and so a mantle of a thousand furs was made.

When all was ready, the king sent them to her; but she got up in the night when all were asleep, and took three of her trinkets, a golden ring, a golden necklace, and a golden brooch; and packed the three dresses of the sun, moon, and stars, up in a nutshell, and wrapped herself up in the mantle of all sorts of fur, and besmeared her face and hands with soot. Then she threw herself upon heaven for help in her need, and went away and journeyed on the whole night, till at last she came to a large wood. As she was very tired, she sat herself down in the hollow of a tree and soon fell asleep: and there she slept on till it was mid-day: and it happened, that as the king to whom the wood belonged was hunting in it, his dogs came to the tree, and began to snuff about and run round and round, and then to bark. “Look sharp,” said the king to the huntsmen, “and see what sort of game lies there.” And the huntsmen went up to the tree, and when they came back again said, “In the hollow tree there lies a most wonderful beast, such as we never saw before; its skin seems of a thousand kinds of fur, but there it lies fast asleep.” “See,” said the king, “if you can catch it alive, and we will take it with us.” So the huntsmen took it up, and the maiden awoke and was greatly frightened, and said, “I am a poor child that has neither father nor mother left; have pity on me and take me with you.” Then they said, “Yes, Miss Cat-skin, you will do for the kitchen; you can sweep up the ashes and do things of that sort.” So they put her in the coach and took her home to the king’s palace. Then they showed her a little corner under the staircase where no light of day ever peeped in, and said, “Cat-skin, you may lie and sleep there.” And she was sent into the kitchen, and made to fetch wood and water, to blow the fire, pluck the poultry, pick the herbs, sift the ashes, and do all the dirty work.

Thus Cat-skin lived for a long time very sorrowfully. “Ah! pretty princess!” thought she, “what will now become of thee!” But it happened one day that a feast was to be held in the king’s castle; so she said to the cook, “May I go up a little while and see what is going on? I will take care and stand behind the door.” And the cook said, “Yes, you may go, but be back again in half an hour’s time to rake out the ashes.” Then she took her little lamp, and went into her cabin, and took off the fur skin, and washed the soot from off her face and hands, so that her beauty shone forth like the sun from behind the clouds. She next opened her nutshell, and brought out of it the dress that shone like the sun, and so went to the feast. Every one made way for her, for nobody knew her, and they thought she could be no less than a king’s daughter. But the king came up to her and held out his hand and danced with her, and he thought in his heart, “I never saw any one half so beautiful.”

When the dance was at an end, she curtsied; and when the king looked round for her, she was gone, no one knew whither. The guards who stood at the castle gate were called in; but they had seen no one. The truth was, that she had run into her little cabin, pulled off her dress, blacked her face and hands, put on the fur-skin cloak, and was Cat-skin again. When she went into the kitchen to her work, and began to rake the ashes, the cook said, “Let that alone till the morning, and heat the king’s soup; I should like to run up now and give a peep; but take care you don’t let a hair fall into it, or you will run a chance of never eating again.”

As soon as the cook went away, Cat-skin heated the king’s soup and toasted up a slice of bread as nicely as ever she could; and when it was ready, she went and looked in the cabin for her little golden ring, and put it into the dish in which the soup was. When the dance was over, the king ordered his soup to be brought in, and it pleased him so well, that he thought he had never tasted any so good before. At the bottom he saw a gold ring lying, and as he could not make out how it had got there, he ordered the cook to be sent for. The cook was frightened when she heard the order, and said to Cat-skin, “You must have let a hair fall into the soup; if it be so, you will have a good beating.” Then she went before the king, and he asked her who had cooked the soup. “I did,” answered she. But the king said, “That is not true; it was better done than you could do it.” Then she answered, “To tell the truth, I did not cook it, but Cat-skin did.” “Then let Cat-skin come up,” said the king: and when she came, he said to her, “Who are you?” “I am a poor child,” said she, “who has lost both father and mother.” “How came you in my palace?” asked he. “I am good for nothing,” said she, “but to be scullion girl, and to have boots and shoes thrown at my head.” “But how did you get the ring that was in the soup?” asked the king. But she would not own that she knew anything about the ring; so the king sent her away again about her business.

After a time there was another feast, and Cat-skin asked the cook to let her go up and see it as before. “Yes,” said she, “but come back again in half an hour, and cook the king the soup that he likes so much.” Then she ran to her little cabin, washed herself quickly, and took the dress out which was silvery as the moon, and put it on; and when she went in looking like a king’s daughter, the king went up to her and rejoiced at seeing her again, and when the dance began, he danced with her. After the dance was at an end, she managed to slip out so slily that the king did not see where she was gone; but she sprang into her little cabin and made herself into Cat-skin again, and went into the kitchen to cook the soup. Whilst the cook was above, she got the golden necklace, and dropped it into the soup; then it was brought to the king, who ate it, and it pleased him as well as before; so he sent for the cook, who was again forced to tell him that Cat-skin had cooked it. Cat-skin was brought again before the king; but she still told him that she was only fit to have the boots and shoes thrown at her head.

But when the king had ordered a feast to be got ready for the third time, it happened just the same as before. “You must be a witch, Cat-skin,” said the cook; “for you always put something into the soup, so that it pleases the king better than mine.” However, she let her go up as before. Then she put on the dress which sparkled like the stars, and went into the ballroom in it; and the king danced with her again, and thought she had never looked so beautiful as she did then: so whilst he was dancing with her, he put a gold ring on her finger without her seeing it, and ordered that the dance should be kept up a long time. When it was at an end, he would have held her fast by the hand; but she slipt away and sprang so quickly through the crowd that he lost sight of her; and she ran as fast as she could into her little cabin under the stairs. But this time she kept away too long, and staid beyond the half-hour; so she had not time to take off her fine dress, but threw her fur mantle over it, and in her haste did not soot herself all over, but left one finger white.

Then she ran into the kitchen, and cooked the king’s soup; and as soon as the cook was gone, she put the golden brooch into the dish. When the king got to the bottom, he ordered Cat-skin to be called once more, and soon saw the white finger and the ring that he had put on it whilst they were dancing: so he seized her hand, and kept fast hold of it, and when she wanted to loose herself and spring away, the fur cloak fell off a little on one side, and the starry dress sparkled underneath it. Then he got hold of the fur and tore it off, and her golden hair and beautiful form were seen, and she could no longer hide herself: so she washed the soot and ashes from off her face, and showed herself to be the most beautiful princess upon the face of the earth. But the king said, “You are my beloved bride, and we will never more be parted from each other.” And the wedding feast was held, and a merry day it was.

The Robber-Bridegroom

There was once a miller who had a pretty daughter; and when she was grown up, he thought to himself, “If a seemly man should come to ask her for his wife, I will give her to him that she may be taken care of.” Now it so happened that one did come, who seemed to be very rich, and behaved very well; and as the miller saw no reason to find fault with him, he said he should have his daughter. Yet the maiden did not love him quite so well as a bride ought to love her bridegroom, but, on the other hand, soon began to feel a kind of inward shuddering whenever she saw or thought of him.

One day he said to her, “Why do you not come and see my home, since you are to be my bride?” “I do not know where your house is,” said the girl. “’Tis out there,” said her bridegroom, “yonder in the dark green wood.” Then she began to try and avoid going, and said, “But I cannot find the way thither.” “Well, but you must come and see me next Sunday,” said the bridegroom; “I have asked some guests to meet you, and that you may find your way through the wood, I will strew ashes for you along the path.”

When Sunday came and the maiden was to go out, she felt very much troubled, and took care to put on two pockets, and filled them with peas and beans. She soon came to the wood, and found her path strewed with ashes; so she followed the track, and at every step threw a pea on the right and a bean on the left side of the road; and thus she journeyed on the whole day till she came to a house which stood in the middle of the dark wood. She saw no one within, and all was quite still, till on a sudden she heard a voice cry,

“Turn again, bonny bride!
Turn again home!
Haste from the robber’s den,
Haste away home!”

She looked around, and saw a little bird sitting in a cage that hung over the door; and he flapped his wings, and again she heard him cry,

“Turn again, bonny bride!
Turn again home!
Haste from the robber’s den,
Haste away home!”

However, the bride went in, and roamed along from one room to another, and so over all the house; but it was quite empty, and not a soul could she see. At last she came to a room where a very very old woman was sitting. “Pray, can you tell me, my good woman,” said she, “if my bridegroom lives here?” “Ah! my dear child!” said the old woman, “you are come to fall into the trap laid for you: your wedding can only be with Death, for the robber will surely take away your life; if I do not save you, you are lost!” So she hid the bride behind a large cask, and then said to her, “Do not stir or move yourself at all, lest some harm should befall you; and when the robbers are asleep we will run off; I have long wished to get away.”

She had hardly done this when the robbers came in, and brought another young maiden with them that had been ensnared like the bride. Then they began to feast and drink, and were deaf to her shrieks and groans: and they gave her some wine to drink, three glasses, one of white, one of red, and one of yellow; upon which she fainted and fell down dead. Now the bride began to grow very uneasy behind the cask, and thought that she too must die in her turn. Then the one that was to be her bridegroom saw that there was a gold ring on the little finger of the maiden they had murdered; and as he tried to snatch it off, it flew up in the air and fell down again behind the cask just in the bride's lap. So he took a light and searched about all round the room for it, but could not find anything; and another of the robbers said, "Have you looked behind the large cask yet?" "Pshaw!" said the old woman, "Come, sit still and eat your supper now, and leave the ring alone till to-morrow; it won't run away, I'll warrant."

So the robbers gave up the search, and went on with their eating and drinking; but the old woman dropped a sleeping-draught into their wine, and they laid themselves down and slept, and snored roundly. And when the bride heard this, she stepped out from behind the cask; and as she was forced to walk over the sleepers, who were lying about on the floor, she trembled lest she should awaken some of them. But heaven aided her, so that she soon got through her danger; and the old woman went upstairs with her, and they both ran away from this murderous den. The ashes that had been strewed were now all blown away, but the peas and beans had taken root and were springing up, and showed her the way by the light of the moon. So they walked the whole night, and in the morning reached the mill; when the bride told her father all that had happened to her.

As soon as the day arrived when the wedding was to take place, the bridegroom came; and the miller gave orders that all his friends and relations should be asked to the feast. And as they were all sitting at table, one of them proposed that each of the guests should tell some tale. Then the bridegroom said to the bride, when it came to her turn, "Well, my dear, do you know nothing? come, tell us some story." "Yes," answered she, "I can tell you a dream that I dreamt. I once thought I was going through a wood, and went on and on till I came to a house where there was not a soul to be seen, but a bird in a cage, that cried out twice,

"Turn again, bonny bride!
Turn again home!
Haste from the robber's den,
Haste away home!"

— I only dreamt that, my love. Then I went through all the rooms, which were quite empty, until I came to a room where there sat a very old woman; and I said to her, 'Does my bridegroom live here?' but she answered, 'Ah! my dear child! you have fallen into a murderer's snare; your bridegroom will surely kill you' — I only dreamt that, my love. But she hid me behind a large cask; and hardly had she done this, when the robbers came in, dragging a young woman along with them; then they gave her three kinds of wine to drink, white, red, and yellow, till she fell dead upon the ground — I only dreamt that, my love. After they had done this, one of the robbers saw that there was a gold ring on her little finger, and snatched at it; but it flew up to the ceiling, and then fell behind the great cask just where I was, and into my lap; and here is the ring!" At these words she brought out the ring and showed it to the guests.

When the robber saw all this, and heard what she said, he grew as pale as ashes with fright, and wanted to run off; but the guests held him fast and gave him up to justice, so that he and all his gang met with the due reward of their wickedness.

The Three Sluggards

The king of a country a long way off had three sons. He liked one as well as another, and did not know which to leave his kingdom to after his death: so when he was dying he called them all to him, and said, “Dear children, the laziest sluggard of the three shall be king after me.” “Then,” said the eldest, “the kingdom is mine; for I am so lazy that when I lie down to sleep, if anything were to fall into my eyes so that I could not shut them, I should still go on sleeping.” The second said, “Father, the kingdom belongs to me; for I am so lazy that when I sit by the fire to warm myself, I would sooner have my toes burnt than take the trouble to draw my legs back.” The third said, “Father, the kingdom is mine; for I am so lazy that if I were going to be hanged, with the rope round my neck, and somebody were to put a sharp knife into my hands to cut it, I had rather be hanged than raise my hand to do it.” When the father heard this, he said, “You shall be the king; for you are the fittest man.”

The Seven Ravens

There was once a man who had seven sons, and last of all one daughter. Although the little girl was very pretty, she was so weak and small that they thought she could not live; but they said she should at once be christened.

So the father sent one of his sons in haste to the spring to get some water, but the other six ran with him. Each wanted to be first at drawing the water, and so they were in such a hurry that all let their pitchers fall into the well, and they stood very foolishly looking at one another, and did not know what to do, for none dared go home. In the meantime the father was uneasy, and could not tell what made the young men stay so long. “Surely,” said he, “the whole seven must have forgotten themselves over some game of play;” and when he had waited still longer and they yet did not come, he flew into a rage and wished them all turned into ravens. Scarcely had he spoken these words when he heard a croaking over his head, and looked up and saw seven ravens as black as coals flying round and round. Sorry as he was to see his wish so fulfilled, he did not know how what was done could be undone, and comforted himself as well as he could for the loss of his seven sons with his dear little daughter, who soon became stronger and every day more beautiful.

For a long time she did not know that she had ever had any brothers; for her father and mother took care not to speak of them before her: but one day by chance she heard the people about her speak of them. “Yes,” said they, “she is beautiful indeed, but still ’tis a pity that her brothers should have been lost for her sake.” Then she was much grieved, and went to her father and mother, and asked if she had any brothers, and what had become of them. So they dared not longer hide the truth from her, but said it was the will of heaven, and that her birth was only the innocent cause of it; but the little girl mourned sadly about it every day, and thought herself bound to do all she could to bring her brothers back; and she had neither rest nor ease, till at length one day she stole away, and set out into the wide world to find her brothers, wherever they might be, and free them, whatever it might cost her.

She took nothing with her but a little ring which her father and mother had given her, a loaf of bread in case she should be hungry, a little pitcher of water in case she should be thirsty, and a little stool to rest upon when she should be weary. Thus she went on and on, and journeyed till she came to the world’s end: then she came to the sun, but the sun looked much too hot and fiery; so she ran away quickly to the moon, but the moon was cold and chilly, and said, “I smell flesh and blood this way!” so she took herself away in a hurry and came to the stars, and the stars were friendly and kind to her, and each star sat upon his own little stool; but the morning-star rose up and gave her a little piece of wood, and said, “If you have not this little piece of wood, you cannot unlock the castle that stands on the glass-mountain, and there your brothers live.” The little girl took the piece of wood, rolled it up in a little cloth, and went on again until she came to the glass-mountain, and found the door shut. Then she felt for the little piece of wood; but when she unwrapped the cloth it was not there, and she saw she had lost the gift of the good stars. What was to be done? she wanted to save her brothers, and had no key of the castle of the glass-mountain; so this faithful little sister took a knife out of her pocket and cut off her little finger, that was just the size of the piece of wood she had lost, and put it in the door and opened it.

As she went in, a little dwarf came up to her, and said, “What are you seeking for?” “I seek for my brothers, the seven ravens,” answered she. Then the dwarf said, “My masters are not at home; but if you will wait till they come, pray step in.” Now the little dwarf was getting their dinner ready, and he brought their food upon seven little plates, and their drink in seven little glasses, and set them upon the table, and out of each little plate their sister ate a small piece, and out of each little glass she drank a small drop; but she let the ring that she had brought with her fall into the last glass.

On a sudden she heard a fluttering and croaking in the air, and the dwarf said, “Here come my masters.” When they came in, they wanted to eat and drink, and looked for their little plates and glasses. Then said one after the other, “Who has eaten from my little plate? and who has been drinking out of my little glass?

“Caw! Caw! well I ween
Mortal lips have this way been.”

When the seventh came to the bottom of his glass, and found there the ring, he looked at it, and knew that it was his father’s and mother’s, and said, “Oh that our little sister would but come! then we should be free.” When the little girl heard this (for she stood behind the door all the time and listened), she ran forward, and in an instant all the ravens took their right form again; and all hugged and kissed each other, and went merrily home.

Roland and May-Bird

There was once a poor man who went every day to cut wood in the forest. One day as he went along he heard a cry like a little child's; so he followed the sound till at last he looked up a high tree, and on one of the branches sat a very little girl. Its mother had fallen asleep, and a vulture had taken it out of her lap and flown away with it and left it on the tree. Then the wood-cutter climbed up, took the little child down, and said to himself, "I will take this poor child home and bring it up with my own son Roland." So he brought it to his cottage, and both grew up together; and he called the little girl May-bird, because he had found her on a tree in May; and May-bird and Roland were so very fond of each other that they were never happy but when they were together.

But the wood-cutter became very poor, and had nothing in the world he could call his own, and indeed he had scarcely bread enough for his wife and the two children to eat. At last the time came when even that was all gone, and he knew not where to seek for help in his need. Then at night, as he lay on his bed and turned himself here and there, restless and full of care, his wife said to him, "Husband listen to me, and take the two children out early to-morrow morning; give each of them a piece of bread, and then lead them into the midst of the wood where it is thickest, make a fire for them, and go away and leave them alone to shift for themselves, for we can no longer keep them here." "No, wife," said the husband, "I cannot find it in my heart to leave the children to the wild beasts of the forest, who would soon tear them to pieces." "Well, if you will not do as I say," answered the wife, "we must all starve together:" and she let him have no peace until he came into her plan.

Meantime the poor children too were lying awake restless and weak from hunger, so that they heard all that their mother said to her husband. "Now," thought May-bird to herself, "it is all up with us:" and she began to weep. But Roland crept to her bedside, and said, "Do not be afraid, May-bird, I will find out some help for us." Then he got up, put on his jacket, and opened the door and went out.

The moon shone bright upon the little court before the cottage, and the white pebbles glittered like daisies on the green meadows. So he stooped down, and put as many as he could into his pocket, and then went back to the house. "Now, May-bird," said he, "rest in peace;" and he went to bed and fell fast asleep.

Early in the morning, before the sun had risen, the woodman's wife came and woke them. "Get up, children," said she, "we are going into the wood; there is a piece of bread for each of you, but take care of it and keep some for the afternoon." May-bird took the bread and carried it in her apron, because Roland had his pocket full of stones, and they made their way into the wood.

After they had walked on for a time, Roland stood still and looked towards home, and after a while turned again, and so on several times. Then his father said, “Roland, why do you keep turning and lagging about so? move your legs on a little faster.” “Ah! father,” answered Roland, “I am stopping to look at my white cat that sits on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me.” “You little fool!” said his mother, “that is not your cat; ’tis the morning sun shining on the chimney top.” Now Roland had not been looking at the cat, but had all the while been staying behind to drop from his pocket one white pebble after another along the road.

When they came into the midst of the wood, the woodman said, “Run about, children, and pick up some wood, and I will make a fire to keep us all warm.” So they piled up a little heap of brush-wood, and set it a-fire; and as the flame burnt bright, the mother said, “Now set yourselves by the fire and go to sleep, while we go and cut wood in the forest; be sure you wait till we come again and fetch you.” Roland and May-bird sat by the fire-side till the afternoon, and then each of them ate their piece of bread. They fancied the woodman was still in the wood, because they thought they heard the blows of his axe; but it was a bough which he had cunningly hung upon a tree, so that the wind blew it backwards and forwards, and it sounded like the axe as it hit the other boughs. Thus they waited till evening; but the woodman and his wife kept away, and no one came to fetch them.

When it was quite dark May-bird began to cry; but Roland said, “Wait awhile till the moon rises.” And when the moon rose, he took her by the hand, and there lay the pebbles along the ground, glittering like new pieces of money, and marked the way out. Towards morning they came again to the woodman’s house, and he was glad in his heart when he saw the children again; for he had grieved at leaving them alone. His wife also seemed to be glad; but in her heart she was angry at it.

Not long after there was again no bread in the house, and May-bird and Roland heard the wife say to her husband, “The children found their way back once, and I took it in good part; but there is only half a loaf of bread left for them in the house; to-morrow you must take them deeper into the wood, that they may not find their way out, or we shall all be starved.” It grieved the husband in his heart to do as his wife wished, and he thought it would be better to share their last morsel with the children; but as he had done as she said once, he did not dare to say no. When the children had heard all their plan, Roland got up and wanted to pick up pebbles as before; but when he came to the door he found his mother had locked it. Still he comforted May-bird, and said, “Sleep in peace, dear May-bird; God is very kind and will help us.” Early in the morning a piece of bread was given to each of them, but still smaller than the one they had before. Upon the road Roland crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still, and threw a crumb upon the ground. “Why do you lag so behind, Roland?” said the woodman; “go your ways on before.” “I am looking at my little dove that is sitting upon the roof and wants to say good-bye to me.” “You silly boy!” said the wife, “that is not your little dove, it is the morning sun that shines on the chimney top." But Roland went on crumbling his bread, and throwing it on the ground. And thus they went on still further into the wood, where they had never been before in all their life. There they were again told to sit down by a large fire, and sleep; and the woodman and his wife said they would come in the evening and fetch them away. In the afternoon Roland shared May-bird's bread, because he had strewed all his upon the road; but the day passed away, and evening passed away too, and no one came to the poor children. Still Roland comforted May-bird, and said, "Wait till the moon rises; then I shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewed, and they will show us the way home."

The moon rose; but when Roland looked for the crumbs, they were gone; for thousands of little birds in the wood had found them and picked them up. Roland, however, set out to try and find his way home; but they soon lost themselves in the wilderness, and went on through the night and all the next day, till at last they lay down and fell asleep for weariness: and another day they went on as before, but still did not reach the end of the wood, and were as hungry as could be, for they had nothing to eat.

In the afternoon of the third day they came to a strange little hut, made of bread, with a roof of cake, and windows of sparkling sugar. "Now we will sit down and eat till we have had enough," said Roland; "I will eat off the roof for my share; do you eat the windows, May-bird, they will be nice and sweet for you." Whilst May-bird, however, was picking at the sugar, a sweet pretty voice called from within:

"Tip, tap! who goes there?"

But the children answered:

"The wind, the wind,
That blows through the air;"

and went on eating; and May-bird broke out a round pane of the window for herself, and Roland tore off a large piece of cake from the roof, when the door opened, and a little old fairy came gliding out. At this May-bird and Roland were so frightened, that they let fall what they had in their hands. But the old lady shook her head, and said, "Dear children, where have you been wandering about? come in with me; you shall have something good." So she took them both by the hand, and led them into her little hut, and brought out plenty to eat — milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts; and then two beautiful little beds were got ready, and May-bird and Roland laid themselves down, and thought they were in heaven: but the fairy was a spiteful one, and had made her pretty sweetmeat house to entrap little children. Early in the morning, before they were awake, she went to their little beds, and when she saw the two sleeping and looking so sweetly, she had no pity on them, but was glad they were in her power. Then she took up Roland, and put him in a little coop by himself; and when he awoke, he found himself behind a grating, shut up as little chickens are: but she shook May-bird, and called out, "Get up, you lazy little thing, and fetch some water; and go into the kitchen and cook something good to eat: your brother is shut up yonder; I shall first fatten him, and when he is fat, I think I shall eat him."

When the fairy was gone, the little girl watched her time and got up and ran to Roland, and told him what she had heard, and said, "We must run away quickly, for the old woman is a bad fairy, and will kill us." But Roland said, "You must first steal away her fairy wand, that we may save ourselves, if she should follow." Then the little maiden ran back, and fetched the magic wand, and away they went together; so when the old fairy came back, she could see no one at home, and sprang in a great rage to the window, and looked out into the wide world (which she could do far and near), and a long way off she spied May-bird running away with her dear Roland; "You are already a great way off," said she; "but you will still fall into my hands." Then she put on her boots, which walked several miles at a step, and scarcely made two steps with them, before she overtook the children: but May-bird saw that the fairy was coming after them, and by the help of the wand turned her dear Roland into a lake, and herself into a swan which swam about in the middle of it. So the fairy set herself down on the shore, and took a great deal of trouble to decoy the swan, and threw crumbs of bread to it; but it would not come near her, and she was forced to go home in the evening, without taking her revenge. And May-bird changed herself and her dear Roland back into their own forms once more and they went journeying on the whole night until the dawn of day; and then the maiden turned herself into a beautiful rose, which grew in the midst of a quickset hedge, and Roland sat by the side and played upon his flute.

The fairy soon came striding along. "Good piper," said she, "may I pluck the beautiful rose for myself?" "Oh yes," answered he; "and I will play to you meantime." So when she had crept into the hedge in a great hurry to gather the flower (for she well knew what it was), he began to play upon his flute; and, whether she liked it or not, such was the wonderful power of the music that she was forced to dance a merry jig, on and on without any rest. And as he did not cease playing a moment, the thorns at length tore the clothes from off her body, and pricked her sorely, and there she stuck quite fast.

Then May-bird was free once more; but she was very tired, and Roland said, "Now I will hasten home for help, and by and by we will be married." And May-bird said, "I will stay here in the meantime and wait for you; and, that no one may know me, I will turn myself into a stone and lie in the corner of yonder field." Then Roland went away, and May-bird was to wait for him. But Roland met with another maiden, who pleased him so much that he stopped where she lived, and forgot his former friend; and when May-bird had staid in the field a long time, and found he did not come back, she became quite sorrowful, and turned herself into a little daisy, and thought to herself, "Some one will come and tread me under foot, and so my sorrows will end." But it so happened that as a shepherd was keeping watch in the field he found the flower, and thinking it very pretty, took it home, placed it in a box in his room, and said, “I have never found so pretty a flower before.” From that time everything throve wonderfully at the shepherd’s house: when he got up in the morning, all the household work was ready done; the room was swept and cleaned; the fire made, and the water fetched: and in the afternoon, when he came home, the table-cloth was laid and a good dinner ready set for him. He could not make out how all this happened; for he saw no one in his house; and although it pleased him well enough, he was at length troubled to think how it could be, and went to a cunning woman who lived hard by, and asked her what he should do. She said, “There must be witchcraft in it; look out to-morrow morning early, and see if anything stirs about in the room; if it does, throw a white cloth at once over it, and then the witchcraft will be stopped.” The shepherd did as she said, and the next morning saw the box open and the daisy come out: then he sprang up quickly and threw a white cloth over it: in an instant the spell was broken, and May-bird stood before him; for it was she who had taken care of his house for him; and as she was so beautiful he asked her if she would marry him. She said “No,” because she wished to be faithful to her dear Roland; but she agreed to stay and keep house for him.

Time passed on, and Roland was to be married to the maiden that he had found; and according to an old custom in that land, all the maidens were to come and sing songs in praise of the bride and bridegroom. But May-bird was so grieved when she heard that her dearest Roland had forgotten her, and was to be married to another, that her heart seemed as if it would burst within her, and she would not go for a long time. At length she was forced to go with the rest; but she kept hiding herself behind the others until she was left the last. Then she could not any longer help coming forward; and the moment she began to sing, Roland sprang up, and cried out, “That is the true bride; I will have no other but her”; for he knew her by the sound of her voice; and all that he had forgotten came back into his mind, and his heart was opened towards her. So faithful May-bird was married to her dear Roland, and there was an end of her sorrows; and from that time forward she lived happily till she died.

The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage

Once upon a time a mouse, a bird, and a sausage took it into their heads to keep house together: and to be sure they managed to live for a long time very comfortably and happily; and beside that added a great deal to their store, so as to become very rich. It was the bird's business to fly every day into the forest and bring wood; the mouse had to carry the water, to make the fire, and lay the cloth for dinner; but the sausage was cook to the household.

He who is too well off often begins to be lazy and to long for something fresh. Now it happened one day that our bird met with one of his friends, to whom he boasted greatly of his good plight. But the other bird laughed at him for a poor fool, who worked hard, whilst the two at home had an easy job of it: for when the mouse had made her fire and fetched the water, she went and laid down in her own little room till she was called to lay the cloth; and the sausage sat by the pot, and had nothing to do but to see that the food was well cooked; and when it was meal time, had only to butter, salt, and get it ready to eat, which it could do in a minute. The bird flew home, and having laid his burden on the ground, they all sat down to table, and after they had made their meal slept soundly until the next morning. Could any life be more glorious than this?

The next day the bird, who had been told what to do by his friend, would not go into the forest, saying, he had waited on them, and been made a fool of long enough; they should change about, and take their turns at the work. Although the mouse and the sausage begged hard that things might go on as they were, the bird carried the day. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon the sausage to fetch wood, while the mouse was to be cook, and the bird was to bring the water.

What happened by thus taking people from their proper work? The sausage set out towards the wood, the little bird made a fire, the mouse set on the pot, and only waited for the sausage to come home and bring wood for the next day. But the sausage kept away so long that they both thought something must have happened to him, and the bird flew out a little way to look out for him; but not far off he found a dog on the road, who said he had met with a poor little sausage, and taking him for fair prey, had laid hold of him and knocked him down. The bird made a charge against the dog of open robbery and murder; but words were of no use; for the dog said, he found the sausage out of its proper work, and under false colours; and so he was taken for a spy and lost his life. The little bird took up the wood very sorrowfully and went home and told what he had seen and heard. The mouse and he were very much grieved, but agreed to do their best and keep together.

The little bird undertook to spread the table, and the mouse got ready the dinner; but when she went to dish it up, she fell into the pot and was drowned. When the bird came into the kitchen and wanted the dinner to put upon the table, no cook was to be seen; so he threw the wood about here, there, and everywhere, and called and sought on all sides, but still could not find the cook. Meantime the fire fell upon the wood and set it on fire; the bird hastened away to get water, but his bucket fell into the well, and he after it; and so ends the story of this clever family.

The Juniper Tree

A long while ago, perhaps as much as two thousand years, there was a rich man who had a wife of whom he was very fond; but they had no children. Now in the garden before the house where they lived, there stood a juniper tree; and one winter's day as the lady was standing under the juniper tree, paring an apple, she cut her finger, and the drops of blood trickled down upon the snow. "Ah!" said she, sighing deeply and looking down upon the blood, "how happy should I be if I had a little child as white as snow and as red as blood!" And as she was saying this, she grew quite cheerful, and was sure her wish would be fulfilled. And after a little time the snow went away, and soon afterwards the fields began to look green. Next the spring came, and the meadows were dressed with flowers; the trees put forth their green leaves; the young branches shed their blossoms upon the ground; and the little birds sang through the groves. And then came summer, and the sweet-smelling flowers of the juniper tree began to unfold; and the lady's heart leaped within her, and she fell on her knees for joy. But when autumn drew near, the fruit was thick upon the trees. Then the lady plucked the red berries from the juniper tree, and looked sad and sorrowful; and she called her husband to her, and said, "If I die, bury me under the juniper tree." Not long after this a pretty little child was born; it was, as the lady wished, as red as blood, and as white as snow; and as soon as she had looked upon it, her joy overcame her, and she fainted away and died.

Then her husband buried her under the juniper tree, and wept and mourned over her; but after a little while he grew better, and at length dried up his tears, and married another wife.

Time passed on, and he had a daughter born; but the child of his first wife, that was as red as blood, and as white as snow, was a little boy. The mother loved her daughter very much, but hated the little boy, and bethought herself how she might get all her husband's money for her own child; so she used the poor fellow very harshly, and was always pushing him about from one corner of the house to another, and thumping him one while and pinching him another, so that he was for ever in fear of her, and when he came home from school, could never find a place in the house to play in.

Now it happened that once when the mother was going into her store-room, the little girl came up to her, and said, "Mother, may I have an apple?" "Yes, my dear," said she, and gave her a nice rosy apple out of the chest. Now you must know that this chest had a very thick heavy lid, with a great sharp iron lock upon it. "Mother," said the little girl, "pray give me one for my little brother too." Her mother did not much like this; however, she said, "Yes, my child; when he comes from school, he shall have one too." As she was speaking, she looked out of the window and saw the little boy coming; so she took the apple from her daughter, and threw it back into the chest and shut the lid, telling her that she should have it again when her brother came home. When the little boy came to the door, this wicked woman said to him with a kind voice, “Come in, my dear, and I will give you an apple.” “How kind you are, mother!” said the little boy; “I should like to have an apple very much.” “Well, come with me then,” said she. So she took him into the store-room and lifted up the cover of the chest, and said, “There, take one out for yourself”; and then, as the little boy stooped down to reach one of the apples out of the chest, bang! she let the lid fall, so hard that his head fell off amongst the apples. When she found what she had done, she was very much frightened, and did not know how she should get the blame off her shoulders. However, she went into her bedroom, and took a white handkerchief out of a drawer, and then fitted the little boy’s head upon his neck, and tied the handkerchief round it, so that no one could see what had happened, and seated him on a stool before the door with the apple in his hand.

Soon afterwards Margery came into the kitchen to her mother, who was standing by the fire, and stirring about some hot water in a pot. “Mother,” said Margery, “my brother is sitting before the door with an apple in his hand; I asked him to give it me, but he did not say a word, and looked so pale that I was quite frightened.” “Nonsense!” said her mother; “go back again, and if he won’t answer you, give him a good box on the ear.” Margery went back, and said, “Brother, give me that apple.” But he answered not a word; so she gave him a box on the ear; and immediately his head fell off. At this, you may be sure she was sadly frightened, and ran screaming out to her mother, that she had knocked off her brother’s head, and cried as if her heart would break. “O Margery!” said her mother, “what have you been doing? However, what is done cannot be undone; so we had better put him out of the way, and say nothing to any one about it.”

When the father came home to dinner, he said, “Where is my little boy?” And his wife said nothing, but put a large dish of black soup upon the table; and Margery wept bitterly all the time, and could not hold up her head. And the father asked after his little boy again. “Oh!” said his wife, “I should think he is gone to his uncle’s.” “What business could he have to go away without bidding me good-bye?” said his father. “I know he wished very much to go,” said the woman; “and begged me to let him stay there some time; he will be well taken care of there.” “Ah!” said the father, “I don’t like that; he ought not to have gone away without wishing me good-bye.” And with that he began to eat; but he seemed still sorrowful about his son, and said, “Margery, what do you cry so for? your brother will come back again, I hope.” But Margery by and by slipped out of the room and went to her drawers and took her best silk handkerchief out of them, and tying it round her little brother’s bones, carried them out of the house weeping bitterly all the while, and laid them under the juniper tree; and as soon as she had done this, her heart felt lighter, and she left off crying. Then the juniper tree began to move itself backwards and forwards, and to stretch its branches out, one from another, and then bring them together again, just like a person clapping hands for joy; and after this, a kind of cloud came from the tree, and in the middle of the cloud was a burning fire, and out of the fire came a pretty bird, that flew away into the air, singing merrily. And as soon as the bird was gone, the handkerchief and the little boy were gone too, and the tree looked just as it had done before; but Margery felt quite happy and joyful within herself, just as if she had known that her brother had been alive again, and went into the house and ate her dinner.

But the bird flew away, and perched upon the roof of a goldsmith's house, and sang:

"My mother slew her little son;
My father thought me lost and gone:
But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a fine bird am I!"

The goldsmith was sitting in his shop finishing a gold chain; and when he heard the bird singing on the house-top, he started up so suddenly that one of his shoes slipped off; however, without stopping to put it on again, he ran out into the street with his apron on, holding his pincers in one hand, and the gold chain in the other. And when he saw the bird sitting on the roof with the sun shining on its bright feathers, he said, "How sweetly you sing, my pretty bird! pray sing that song again." "No," said the bird, "I can't sing twice for nothing; if you will give me that gold chain, I'll try what I can do." "There," said the goldsmith, "take the chain, only pray sing that song again." So the bird flew down, and taking the chain in its right claw, perched a little nearer to the goldsmith, and sang:

"My mother slew her little son;
My father thought me lost and gone:
But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a fine bird am I!"

After that the bird flew away to a shoemaker's, and sitting upon the roof of the house, sang the same song as it had done before.

When the shoemaker heard the song, he ran to the door without his coat, and looked up to the top of the house; but he was obliged to hold his hand before his eyes, because the sun shone so brightly. "Bird," said he, "how sweetly you sing!" Then he called into the house, "Wife! wife! come out here, and see what a pretty bird is singing on the top of our house!" And he called out his children and workmen; and they all ran out and stood gazing at the bird, with its beautiful red and green feathers, and the bright golden ring about its neck, and eyes which glittered like the stars. "O bird!" said the shoemaker, "pray sing that song again." "No," said the bird, "I cannot sing twice for nothing; you must give me something if I do." "Wife," said the shoemaker, "run upstairs into the workshop, and bring me down the best pair of new red shoes you can find." So his wife ran and fetched them. "Here, my pretty bird," said the shoemaker, "take these shoes; but pray sing that song again." The bird came down, and taking the shoes in his left claw, flew up again to the house-top, and sang:

"My mother slew her little son;
My father thought me lost and gone:
But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a fine bird am I!"

And when he had done singing, he flew away, holding the shoes in one claw and the chain in the other. And he flew a long, long way off, till at last he came to a mill. The mill was going clipper! clapper! clipper! clapper! and in the mill were twenty millers, who were all hard at work hewing a millstone; and the millers hewed, hick! hack! hick! hack! and the mill went on, clipper! clapper! clipper! clapper!

So the bird perched upon a linden tree close by the mill, and began its song:

"My mother slew her little son;
My father thought me lost and gone:"

here two of the millers left off their work and listened:

"But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper tree;"

now all the millers but one looked up and left their work;

"And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a fine bird am I!"

Just as the song was ended, the last miller heard it, and started up, and said, "O bird! how sweetly you sing! do let me hear the whole of that song; pray, sing it again!" "No," said the bird, "I cannot sing twice for nothing; give me that millstone, and I'll sing again." "Why," said the man, "the millstone does not belong to me; if it was all mine, you should have it and welcome." "Come," said the other millers, "if he will only sing that song again, he shall have the millstone." Then the bird came down from the tree: and the twenty millers fetched long poles and worked and worked, heave, ho! heave, ho! till at last they raised the millstone on its side; and then the bird put its head through the hole in the middle of it, and flew away to the linden tree, and sang the same song at it had done before.

And when he had done, he spread his wings, and, with the chain in one claw, and the shoes in the other, and the millstone about his neck, he flew away to his father's house.

Now it happened that his father and mother and Margery were sitting together at dinner. His father was saying, "How light and cheerful I am!" But his mother said, "Oh, I am so heavy and so sad, I feel just as if a great storm was coming on." And Margery said nothing, but sat and cried. Just then the bird came flying along, and perched upon the top of the house; "Bless me!" said the father, "how cheerful I am; I feel as if I was about to see an old friend again." "Alas!" said the mother, "I am so sad, and my teeth chatter so, and yet it seems as if my blood was all on fire in my veins!" and she tore open her gown to cool herself. And Margery sat by herself in a corner, with her plate on her lap before her, and wept so bitterly that she cried her plate quite full of tears.

And the bird flew to the top of the juniper tree and sang:

"My mother slew her little son;—"

Then the mother held her ears with her hands, and shut her eyes close, that she might neither see nor hear; but there was a sound in her ears like a frightful storm, and her eyes burned and glared like lightning.

"My father thought me lost and gone:—"

"O wife!" said the father, "what a beautiful bird that is, and how finely he sings; and his feathers glitter in the sun like so many spangles!"

"But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper tree;—"

At this Margery lifted up her head and sobbed sadly, and her father said, "I must go out, and look at that bird a little nearer." "Oh! don't leave me alone," said his wife; "I feel just as if the house was burning." However, he would go out to look at the bird; and it went on singing:

"But now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a fine bird am I!"

As soon as the bird had done singing, he let fall the gold chain upon his father's neck, and it fitted so nicely that he went back into the house and said, "Look here, what a beautiful chain the bird has given me; only see how grand it is!" But his wife was so frightened that she fell all along on the floor, so that her cap flew off, and she lay as if she were dead. And when the bird began singing again, Margery said, "I must go out and see whether the bird has not something to give me." And just as she was going out of the door, the bird let fall the red shoes before her; and when she had put on the shoes, she all at once became quite light and happy, and jumped into the house and said, "I was so heavy and sad when I went out, and now I'm so happy! see what fine shoes the bird has given me!" Then the mother said, “Well, if the world should fall to pieces, I must go out and try whether I shall not be better in the air.” And as she was going out, the bird let fall the millstone upon her head and crushed her to pieces.

The father and Margery hearing the noise ran out, and saw nothing but smoke and fire and flame rising up from the place; and when this was passed and gone, there stood the little boy beside them; and he took his father and Margery by the hand, and they went into the house, and ate their dinner together very happily.

MARGARET HUNT TRANSLATION, 1884

Translated by Margaret Hunt

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The Frog-King, or Iron Henry

In old times when wishing still helped one, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which has seen so much, was astonished whenever it shone in her face. Close by the King’s castle lay a great dark forest, and under an old lime-tree in the forest was a well, and when the day was very warm, the King’s child went out into the forest and sat down by the side of the cool fountain, and when she was dull she took a golden ball, and threw it up on high and caught it, and this ball was her favorite plaything.

Now it so happened that on one occasion the princess’s golden ball did not fall into the little hand which she was holding up for it, but on to the ground beyond, and rolled straight into the water. The King’s daughter followed it with her eyes, but it vanished, and the well was deep, so deep that the bottom could not be seen. On this she began to cry, and cried louder and louder, and could not be comforted. And as she thus lamented some one said to her, “What ails thee, King’s daughter? Thou weepest so that even a stone would show pity.” She looked round to the side from whence the voice came, and saw a frog stretching forth its thick, ugly head from the water. “Ah! old water-splasher, is it thou?” said she; “I am weeping for my golden ball, which has fallen into the well.”

“Be quiet, and do not weep,” answered the frog, “I can help thee, but what wilt thou give me if I bring thy plaything up again?” “Whatever thou wilt have, dear frog,” said she— “My clothes, my pearls and jewels, and even the golden crown which I am wearing.”

The frog answered, “I do not care for thy clothes, thy pearls and jewels, or thy golden crown, but if thou wilt love me and let me be thy companion and play-fellow, and sit by thee at thy little table, and eat off thy little golden plate, and drink out of thy little cup, and sleep in thy little bed — if thou wilt promise me this I will go down below, and bring thee thy golden ball up again.”

“Oh yes,” said she, “I promise thee all thou wishest, if thou wilt but bring me my ball back again.” She, however, thought, “How the silly frog does talk! He lives in the water with the other frogs, and croaks, and can be no companion to any human being!”

But the frog when he had received this promise, put his head into the water and sank down, and in a short while came swimmming up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. The King’s daughter was delighted to see her pretty plaything once more, and picked it up, and ran away with it. “Wait, wait,” said the frog. “Take me with thee. I can’t run as thou canst.” But what did it avail him to scream his croak, croak, after her, as loudly as he could? She did not listen to it, but ran home and soon forgot the poor frog, who was forced to go back into his well again.

The next day when she had seated herself at table with the King and all the courtiers, and was eating from her little golden plate, something came creeping splish splash, splish splash, up the marble staircase, and when it had got to the top, it knocked at the door and cried, “Princess, youngest princess, open the door for me.” She ran to see who was outside, but when she opened the door, there sat the frog in front of it. Then she slammed the door to, in great haste, sat down to dinner again, and was quite frightened. The King saw plainly that her heart was beating violently, and said, “My child, what art thou so afraid of? Is there perchance a giant outside who wants to carry thee away?” “Ah, no,” replied she. “It is no giant but a disgusting frog.”

“What does a frog want with thee?” “Ah, dear father, yesterday as I was in the forest sitting by the well, playing, my golden ball fell into the water. And because I cried so, the frog brought it out again for me, and because he so insisted, I promised him he should be my companion, but I never thought he would be able to come out of his water! And now he is outside there, and wants to come in to me.”

In the meantime it knocked a second time, and cried,

“Princess! youngest princess!
Open the door for me!
Dost thou not know what thou saidst to me

Yesterday by the cool waters of the fountain?
Princess, youngest princess!
Open the door for me!”

Then said the King, “That which thou hast promised must thou perform. Go and let him in.” She went and opened the door, and the frog hopped in and followed her, step by step, to her chair. There he sat and cried, “Lift me up beside thee.” She delayed, until at last the King commanded her to do it. When the frog was once on the chair he wanted to be on the table, and when he was on the table he said, “Now, push thy little golden plate nearer to me that we may eat together.” She did this, but it was easy to see that she did not do it willingly. The frog enjoyed what he ate, but almost every mouthful she took choked her. At length he said, “I have eaten and am satisfied; now I am tired, carry me into thy little room and make thy little silken bed ready, and we will both lie down and go to sleep.”

The King’s daughter began to cry, for she was afraid of the cold frog which she did not like to touch, and which was now to sleep in her pretty, clean little bed. But the King grew angry and said, “He who helped thee when thou wert in trouble ought not afterwards to be despised by thee.” So she took hold of the frog with two fingers, carried him upstairs, and put him in a corner. But when she was in bed he crept to her and said, “I am tired, I want to sleep as well as thou, lift me up or I will tell thy father.” Then she was terribly angry, and took him up and threw him with all her might against the wall. “Now, thou wilt be quiet, odious frog,” said she. But when he fell down he was no frog but a King’s son with beautiful kind eyes. He by her father’s will was now her dear companion and husband. Then he told her how he had been bewitched by a wicked witch, and how no one could have delivered him from the well but herself, and that to-morrow they would go together into his kingdom. Then they went to sleep, and next morning when the sun awoke them, a carriage came driving up with eight white horses, which had white ostrich feathers on their heads, and were harnessed with golden chains, and behind stood the young King’s servant Faithful Henry. Faithful Henry had been so unhappy when his master was changed into a frog, that he had caused three iron bands to be laid round his heart, lest it should burst with grief and sadness. The carriage was to conduct the young King into his Kingdom. Faithful Henry helped them both in, and placed himself behind again, and was full of joy because of this deliverance. And when they had driven a part of the way the King’s son heard a cracking behind him as if something had broken. So he turned round and cried, “Henry, the carriage is breaking.”

“No, master, it is not the carriage. It is a band from my heart, which was put there in my great pain when you were a frog and imprisoned in the well.” Again and once again while they were on their way something cracked, and each time the King’s son thought the carriage was breaking; but it was only the bands which were springing from the heart of faithful Henry because his master was set free and was happy.

Cat and Mouse in Partnership

A certain cat had made the acquaintance of a mouse, and had said so much to her about the great love and friendship she felt for her, that at length the mouse agreed that they should live and keep house together. “But we must make a provision for winter, or else we shall suffer from hunger,” said the cat, “and you, little mouse, cannot venture everywhere, or you will be caught in a trap some day.” The good advice was followed, and a pot of fat was bought, but they did not know where to put it. At length, after much consideration, the cat said, “I know no place where it will be better stored up than in the church, for no one dares take anything away from there. We will set it beneath the altar, and not touch it until we are really in need of it.” So the pot was placed in safety, but it was not long before the cat had a great yearning for it, and said to the mouse, “I want to tell you something, little mouse; my cousin has brought a little son into the world, and has asked me to be godmother; he is white with brown spots, and I am to hold him over the font at the christening. Let me go out to-day, and you look after the house by yourself.” “Yes, yes,” answered the mouse, “by all means go, and if you get anything very good, think of me, I should like a drop of sweet red christening wine too.” All this, however, was untrue; the cat had no cousin, and had not been asked to be godmother. She went straight to the church, stole to the pot of fat, began to lick at it, and licked the top of the fat off. Then she took a walk upon the roofs of the town, looked out for opportunities, and then stretched herself in the sun, and licked her lips whenever she thought of the pot of fat, and not until it was evening did she return home. “Well, here you are again,” said the mouse, “no doubt you have had a merry day.” “All went off well,” answered the cat. “What name did they give the child?” “Top off!” said the cat quite coolly. “Top off!” cried the mouse, “that is a very odd and uncommon name, is it a usual one in your family?” “What does it signify,” said the cat, “it is no worse than Crumb-stealer, as your god-children are called.”

Before long the cat was seized by another fit of longing. She said to the mouse, “You must do me a favour, and once more manage the house for a day alone. I am again asked to be godmother, and, as the child has a white ring round its neck, I cannot refuse.” The good mouse consented, but the cat crept behind the town walls to the church, and devoured half the pot of fat. “Nothing ever seems so good as what one keeps to oneself,” said she, and was quite satisfied with her day’s work. When she went home the mouse inquired, “And what was this child christened?” “Half-done,” answered the cat. “Half-done! What are you saying? I never heard the name in my life, I’ll wager anything it is not in the calendar!”

The cat’s mouth soon began to water for some more licking. “All good things go in threes,” said she, “I am asked to stand godmother again. The child is quite black, only it has white paws, but with that exception, it has not a single white hair on its whole body; this only happens once every few years, you will let me go, won't you?" "Top-off! Half-done!" answered the mouse, "they are such odd names, they make me very thoughtful." "You sit at home," said the cat, "in your dark-grey fur coat and long tail, and are filled with fancies, that's because you do not go out in the daytime." During the cat's absence the mouse cleaned the house, and put it in order but the greedy cat entirely emptied the pot of fat. "When everything is eaten up one has some peace," said she to herself, and well filled and fat she did not return home till night. The mouse at once asked what name had been given to the third child. "It will not please you more than the others," said the cat. "He is called All-gone." "All-gone," cried the mouse, "that is the most suspicious name of all! I have never seen it in print. All-gone; what can that mean?" and she shook her head, curled herself up, and lay down to sleep.

From this time forth no one invited the cat to be god-mother, but when the winter had come and there was no longer anything to be found outside, the mouse thought of their provision, and said, "Come cat, we will go to our pot of fat which we have stored up for ourselves — we shall enjoy that." "Yes," answered the cat, "you will enjoy it as much as you would enjoy sticking that dainty tongue of yours out of the window." They set out on their way, but when they arrived, the pot of fat certainly was still in its place, but it was empty. "Alas!" said the mouse, "now I see what has happened, now it comes to light! You are a true friend! You have devoured all when you were standing godmother. First top off, then half done, then — ." "Will you hold your tongue," cried the cat, "one word more and I will eat you too." "All gone" was already on the poor mouse's lips; scarcely had she spoken it before the cat sprang on her, seized her, and swallowed her down. Verily, that is the way of the world.

Our Lady’s Child

Hard by a great forest dwelt a wood-cutter with his wife, who had an only child, a little girl three years old. They were so poor, however, that they no longer had daily bread, and did not know how to get food for her. One morning the wood-cutter went out sorrowfully to his work in the forest, and while he was cutting wood, suddenly there stood before him a tall and beautiful woman with a crown of shining stars on her head, who said to him, “I am the Virgin Mary, mother of the child Jesus. Thou art poor and needy, bring thy child to me, I will take her with me and be her mother, and care for her.” The wood-cutter obeyed, brought his child, and gave her to the Virgin Mary, who took her up to heaven with her. There the child fared well, ate sugar-cakes, and drank sweet milk, and her clothes were of gold, and the little angels played with her. And when she was fourteen years of age, the Virgin Mary called her one day and said, “Dear child, I am about to make a long journey, so take into thy keeping the keys of the thirteen doors of heaven. Twelve of these thou mayest open, and behold the glory which is within them, but the thirteenth, to which this little key belongs, is forbidden thee. Beware of opening it, or thou wilt bring misery on thyself.” The girl promised to be obedient, and when the Virgin Mary was gone, she began to examine the dwellings of the kingdom of heaven. Each day she opened one of them, until she had made the round of the twelve. In each of them sat one of the Apostles in the midst of a great light, and she rejoiced in all the magnificence and splendour, and the little angels who always accompanied her rejoiced with her. Then the forbidden door alone remained, and she felt a great desire to know what could be hidden behind it, and said to the angels, “I will not quite open it, and I will not go inside it, but I will unlock it so that we can just see a little through the opening.” “Oh no,” said the little angels, “that would be a sin. The Virgin Mary has forbidden it, and it might easily cause thy unhappiness.” Then she was silent, but the desire in her heart was not stilled, but gnawed there and tormented her, and let her have no rest. And once when the angels had all gone out, she thought, “Now I am quite alone, and I could peep in. If I do it, no one will ever know.” She sought out the key, and when she had got it in her hand, she put it in the lock, and when she had put it in, she turned it round as well. Then the door sprang open, and she saw there the Trinity sitting in fire and splendour. She stayed there awhile, and looked at everything in amazement; then she touched the light a little with her finger, and her finger became quite golden. Immediately a great fear fell on her. She shut the door violently, and ran away. Her terror too would not quit her, let her do what she might, and her heart beat continually and would not be still; the gold too stayed on her finger, and would not go away, let her rub it and wash it never so much.

It was not long before the Virgin Mary came back from her journey. She called the girl before her, and asked to have the keys of heaven back. When the maiden gave her the bunch, the Virgin looked into her eyes and said, "Hast thou not opened the thirteenth door also?" "No," she replied. Then she laid her hand on the girl's heart, and felt how it beat and beat, and saw right well that she had disobeyed her order and had opened the door. Then she said once again, "Art thou certain that thou hast not done it?" "Yes," said the girl, for the second time. Then she perceived the finger which had become golden from touching the fire of heaven, and saw well that the child had sinned, and said for the third time "Hast thou not done it?" "No," said the girl for the third time. Then said the Virgin Mary, "Thou hast not obeyed me, and besides that thou hast lied, thou art no longer worthy to be in heaven."

Then the girl fell into a deep sleep, and when she awoke she lay on the earth below, and in the midst of a wilderness. She wanted to cry out, but she could bring forth no sound. She sprang up and wanted to run away, but whithersoever she turned herself, she was continually held back by thick hedges of thorns through which she could not break. In the desert, in which she was imprisoned, there stood an old hollow tree, and this had to be her dwelling-place. Into this she crept when night came, and here she slept. Here, too, she found a shelter from storm and rain, but it was a miserable life, and bitterly did she weep when she remembered how happy she had been in heaven, and how the angels had played with her. Roots and wild berries were her only food, and for these she sought as far as she could go. In the autumn she picked up the fallen nuts and leaves, and carried them into the hole. The nuts were her food in winter, and when snow and ice came, she crept amongst the leaves like a poor little animal that she might not freeze. Before long her clothes were all torn, and one bit of them after another fell off her. As soon, however, as the sun shone warm again, she went out and sat in front of the tree, and her long hair covered her on all sides like a mantle. Thus she sat year after year, and felt the pain and the misery of the world. One day, when the trees were once more clothed in fresh green, the King of the country was hunting in the forest, and followed a roe, and as it had fled into the thicket which shut in this part of the forest, he got off his horse, tore the bushes asunder, and cut himself a path with his sword. When he had at last forced his way through, he saw a wonderfully beautiful maiden sitting under the tree; and she sat there and was entirely covered with her golden hair down to her very feet. He stood still and looked at her full of surprise, then he spoke to her and said, "Who art thou? Why art thou sitting here in the wilderness?" But she gave no answer, for she could not open her mouth. The King continued, "Wilt thou go with me to my castle?" Then she just nodded her head a little. The King took her in his arms, carried her to his horse, and rode home with her, and when he reached the royal castle he caused her to be dressed in beautiful garments, and gave her all things in abundance. Although she could not speak, she was still so beautiful and charming that he began to love her with all his heart, and it was not long before he married her.

After a year or so had passed, the Queen brought a son into the world. Thereupon the Virgin Mary appeared to her in the night when she lay in her bed alone, and said, "If thou wilt tell the truth and confess that thou didst unlock the forbidden door, I will open thy mouth and give thee back thy speech, but if thou perseverest in thy sin, and deniest obstinately, I will take thy new-born child away with me." Then the queen was permitted to answer, but she remained hard, and said, "No, I did not open the forbidden door;" and the Virgin Mary took the new-born child from her arms, and vanished with it. Next morning when the child was not to be found, it was whispered among the people that the Queen was a man-eater, and had killed her own child. She heard all this and could say nothing to the contrary, but the King would not believe it, for he loved her so much.

When a year had gone by the Queen again bore a son, and in the night the Virgin Mary again came to her, and said, "If thou wilt confess that thou openedst the forbidden door, I will give thee thy child back and untie thy tongue; but if you continuest in sin and deniest it, I will take away with me this new child also." Then the Queen again said, "No, I did not open the forbidden door;" and the Virgin took the child out of her arms, and away with her to heaven. Next morning, when this child also had disappeared, the people declared quite loudly that the Queen had devoured it, and the King's councillors demanded that she should be brought to justice. The King, however, loved her so dearly that he would not believe it, and commanded the councillors under pain of death not to say any more about it.

The following year the Queen gave birth to a beautiful little daughter, and for the third time the Virgin Mary appeared to her in the night and said, "Follow me." She took the Queen by the hand and led her to heaven, and showed her there her two eldest children, who smiled at her, and were playing with the ball of the world. When the Queen rejoiced thereat, the Virgin Mary said, "Is thy heart not yet softened? If thou wilt own that thou openedst the forbidden door, I will give thee back thy two little sons." But for the third time the Queen answered, "No, I did not open the forbidden door." Then the Virgin let her sink down to earth once more, and took from her likewise her third child.

Next morning, when the loss was reported abroad, all the people cried loudly, "The Queen is a man-eater. She must be judged," and the King was no longer able to restrain his councillors. Thereupon a trial was held, and as she could not answer, and defend herself, she was condemned to be burnt alive. The wood was got together, and when she was fast bound to the stake, and the fire began to burn round about her, the hard ice of pride melted, her heart was moved by repentance, and she thought, "If I could but confess before my death that I opened the door." Then her voice came back to her, and she cried out loudly, "Yes, Mary, I did it;" and straight-way rain fell from the sky and extinguished the flames of fire, and a light broke forth above her, and the Virgin Mary descended with the two little sons by her side, and the new-born daughter in her arms. She spoke kindly to her, and said, "He who repents his sin and acknowledges it, is forgiven." Then she gave her the three children, untied her tongue, and granted her happiness for her whole life.

The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was

A certain father had two sons, the elder of whom was smart and sensible, and could do everything, but the younger was stupid and could neither learn nor understand anything, and when people saw him they said, “There’s a fellow who will give his father some trouble!” When anything had to be done, it was always the elder who was forced to do it; but if his father bade him fetch anything when it was late, or in the night-time, and the way led through the churchyard, or any other dismal place, he answered “Oh, no, father, I’ll not go there, it makes me shudder!” for he was afraid. Or when stories were told by the fire at night which made the flesh creep, the listeners sometimes said “Oh, it makes us shudder!” The younger sat in a corner and listened with the rest of them, and could not imagine what they could mean. “They are always saying ‘it makes me shudder, it makes me shudder!’ It does not make me shudder,” thought he. “That, too, must be an art of which I understand nothing.”

Now it came to pass that his father said to him one day “Hearken to me, thou fellow in the corner there, thou art growing tall and strong, and thou too must learn something by which thou canst earn thy living. Look how thy brother works, but thou dost not even earn thy salt.” “Well, father,” he replied, “I am quite willing to learn something — indeed, if it could but be managed, I should like to learn how to shudder. I don’t understand that at all yet.” The elder brother smiled when he heard that, and thought to himself, “Good God, what a blockhead that brother of mine is! He will never be good for anything as long as he lives. He who wants to be a sickle must bend himself betimes.”

The father sighed, and answered him “thou shalt soon learn what it is to shudder, but thou wilt not earn thy bread by that.”

Soon after this the sexton came to the house on a visit, and the father bewailed his trouble, and told him how his younger son was so backward in every respect that he knew nothing and learnt nothing. “Just think,” said he, “when I asked him how he was going to earn his bread, he actually wanted to learn to shudder.” “If that be all,” replied the sexton, “he can learn that with me. Send him to me, and I will soon polish him.” The father was glad to do it, for he thought, “It will train the boy a little.” The sexton therefore took him into his house, and he had to ring the bell. After a day or two, the sexton awoke him at midnight, and bade him arise and go up into the church tower and ring the bell. “Thou shalt soon learn what shuddering is,” thought he, and secretly went there before him; and when the boy was at the top of the tower and turned round, and was just going to take hold of the bell rope, he saw a white figure standing on the stairs opposite the sounding hole. “Who is there?” cried he, but the figure made no reply, and did not move or stir. “Give an answer,” cried the boy, “or take thy self off, thou hast no business here at night.”

The sexton, however, remained standing motionless that the boy might think he was a ghost. The boy cried a second time, “What do you want here? — speak if thou art an honest fellow, or I will throw thee down the steps!” The sexton thought, “he can’t intend to be as bad as his words,” uttered no sound and stood as if he were made of stone. Then the boy called to him for the third time, and as that was also to no purpose, he ran against him and pushed the ghost down the stairs, so that it fell down ten steps and remained lying there in a corner. Thereupon he rang the bell, went home, and without saying a word went to bed, and fell asleep. The sexton’s wife waited a long time for her husband, but he did not come back. At length she became uneasy, and wakened the boy, and asked, “Dost thou not know where my husband is? He climbed up the tower before thou didst.” “No, I don’t know,” replied the boy, “but some one was standing by the sounding hole on the other side of the steps, and as he would neither give an answer nor go away, I took him for a scoundrel, and threw him downstairs, just go there and you will see if it was he. I should be sorry if it were.” The woman ran away and found her husband, who was lying moaning in the corner, and had broken his leg.

She carried him down, and then with loud screams she hastened to the boy’s father. “Your boy,” cried she, “has been the cause of a great misfortune! He has thrown my husband down the steps and made him break his leg. Take the good-for-nothing fellow away from our house.” The father was terrified, and ran thither and scolded the boy. “What wicked tricks are these?” said he, “the devil must have put this into thy head.” “Father,” he replied, “do listen to me. I am quite innocent. He was standing there by night like one who is intending to do some evil. I did not know who it was, and I entreated him three times either to speak or to go away.” “Ah,” said the father, “I have nothing but unhappiness with you. Go out of my sight. I will see thee no more.”

“Yes, father, right willingly, wait only until it is day. Then will I go forth and learn how to shudder, and then I shall, at any rate, understand one art which will support me.” “Learn what thou wilt,” spake the father, “it is all the same to me. Here are fifty thalers for thee. Take these and go into the wide world, and tell no one from whence thou comest, and who is thy father, for I have reason to be ashamed of thee.” “Yes, father, it shall be as you will. If you desire nothing more than that, I can easily keep it in mind.”

When day dawned, therefore, the boy put his fifty thalers into his pocket, and went forth on the great highway, and continually said to himself, “If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!” Then a man approached who heard this conversation which the youth was holding with himself, and when they had walked a little farther to where they could see the gallows, the man said to him, “Look, there is the tree where seven men have married the ropemaker’s daughter, and are now learning how to fly. Sit down below it, and wait till night comes, and you will soon learn how to shudder.” “If that is all that is wanted,” answered the youth, “it is easily done; but if I learn how to shudder as fast as that, thou shalt have my fifty thalers. Just come back to me early in the morning.” Then the youth went to the gallows, sat down below it, and waited till evening came. And as he was cold, he lighted himself a fire, but at midnight the wind blew so sharply that in spite of his fire, he could not get warm. And as the wind knocked the hanged men against each other, and they moved backwards and forwards, he thought to himself “Thou shiverest below by the fire, but how those up above must freeze and suffer!” And as he felt pity for them, he raised the ladder, and climbed up, unbound one of them after the other, and brought down all seven. Then he stirred the fire, blew it, and set them all round it to warm themselves. But they sat there and did not stir, and the fire caught their clothes. So he said, “Take care, or I will hang you up again.” The dead men, however, did not hear, but were quite silent, and let their rags go on burning. On this he grew angry, and said, “If you will not take care, I cannot help you, I will not be burnt with you,” and he hung them up again each in his turn. Then he sat down by his fire and fell asleep, and the next morning the man came to him and wanted to have the fifty thalers, and said, “Well, dost thou know how to shudder?” “No,” answered he, “how was I to get to know? Those fellows up there did not open their mouths, and were so stupid that they let the few old rags which they had on their bodies get burnt.” Then the man saw that he would not get the fifty thalers that day, and went away saying, “One of this kind has never come my way before.”

The youth likewise went his way, and once more began to mutter to himself, “Ah, if I could but shudder! Ah, if I could but shudder!” A waggoner who was striding behind him heard that and asked, “Who are you?” “I don’t know,” answered the youth. Then the waggoner asked, “From whence comest thou?” “I know not.” “Who is thy father?” “That I may not tell thee.” “What is it that thou art always muttering between thy teeth.” “Ah,” replied the youth, “I do so wish I could shudder, but no one can teach me how to do it.” “Give up thy foolish chatter,” said the waggoner. “Come, go with me, I will see about a place for thee.” The youth went with the waggoner, and in the evening they arrived at an inn where they wished to pass the night. Then at the entrance of the room the youth again said quite loudly, “If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!” The host who heard this, laughed and said, “If that is your desire, there ought to be a good opportunity for you here.” “Ah, be silent,” said the hostess, “so many inquisitive persons have already lost their lives, it would be a pity and a shame if such beautiful eyes as these should never see the daylight again.”

But the youth said, “However difficult it may be, I will learn it and for this purpose indeed have I journeyed forth.” He let the host have no rest, until the latter told him, that not far from thence stood a haunted castle where any one could very easily learn what shuddering was, if he would but watch in it for three nights. The King had promised that he who would venture should have his daughter to wife, and she was the most beautiful maiden the sun shone on. Great treasures likewise lay in the castle, which were guarded by evil spirits, and these treasures would then be freed, and would make a poor man rich enough. Already many men had gone into the castle, but as yet none had come out again. Then the youth went next morning to the King and said if he were allowed he would watch three nights in the haunted castle. The King looked at him, and as the youth pleased him, he said, “Thou mayest ask for three things to take into the castle with thee, but they must be things without life.” Then he answered, “Then I ask for a fire, a turning lathe, and a cutting-board with the knife.” The King had these things carried into the castle for him during the day. When night was drawing near, the youth went up and made himself a bright fire in one of the rooms, placed the cutting-board and knife beside it, and seated himself by the turning-lathe. “Ah, if I could but shudder!” said he, “but I shall not learn it here either.” Towards midnight he was about to poke his fire, and as he was blowing it, something cried suddenly from one corner, “Au, miau! how cold we are!” “You simpletons!” cried he, “what are you crying about? If you are cold, come and take a seat by the fire and warm yourselves.” And when he had said that, two great black cats came with one tremendous leap and sat down on each side of him, and looked savagely at him with their fiery eyes. After a short time, when they had warmed themselves, they said, “Comrade, shall we have a game at cards?” “Why not?” he replied, “but just show me your paws.” Then they stretched out their claws. “Oh,” said he, “what long nails you have! Wait, I must first cut them for you.” Thereupon he seized them by the throats, put them on the cutting-board and screwed their feet fast. “I have looked at your fingers,” said he, “and my fancy for card-playing has gone,” and he struck them dead and threw them out into the water. But when he had made away with these two, and was about to sit down again by his fire, out from every hole and corner came black cats and black dogs with red-hot chains, and more and more of them came until he could no longer stir, and they yelled horribly, and got on his fire, pulled it to pieces, and tried to put it out. He watched them for a while quietly, but at last when they were going too far, he seized his cutting-knife, and cried, “Away with ye, vermin,” and began to cut them down. Part of them ran away, the others he killed, and threw out into the fish-pond. When he came back he fanned the embers of his fire again and warmed himself. And as he thus sat, his eyes would keep open no longer, and he felt a desire to sleep. Then he looked round and saw a great bed in the corner. “That is the very thing for me,” said he, and got into it. When he was just going to shut his eyes, however, the bed began to move of its own accord, and went over the whole of the castle. “That’s right,” said he, “but go faster.” Then the bed rolled on as if six horses were harnessed to it, up and down, over thresholds and steps, but suddenly hop, hop, it turned over upside down, and lay on him like a mountain. But he threw quilts and pillows up in the air, got out and said, “Now any one who likes, may drive,” and lay down by his fire, and slept till it was day. In the morning the King came, and when he saw him lying there on the ground, he thought the evil spirits had killed him and he was dead. Then said he, “After all it is a pity, — he is a handsome man.” The youth heard it, got up, and said, “It has not come to that yet.” Then the King was astonished, but very glad, and asked how he had fared. “Very well indeed,” answered he; “one night is past, the two others will get over likewise.” Then he went to the innkeeper, who opened his eyes very wide, and said, “I never expected to see thee alive again! Hast thou learnt how to shudder yet?” “No,” said he, “it is all in vain. If some one would but tell me.”

The second night he again went up into the old castle, sat down by the fire, and once more began his old song, “If I could but shudder.” When midnight came, an uproar and noise of tumbling about was heard; at first it was low, but it grew louder and louder. Then it was quiet for awhile, and at length with a loud scream, half a man came down the chimney and fell before him. “Hollo!” cried he, “another half belongs to this. This is too little!” Then the uproar began again, there was a roaring and howling, and the other half fell down likewise. “Wait,” said he, “I will just blow up the fire a little for thee.” When he had done that and looked round again, the two pieces were joined together, and a frightful man was sitting in his place. “That is no part of our bargain,” said the youth, “the bench is mine.” The man wanted to push him away; the youth, however, would not allow that, but thrust him off with all his strength, and seated himself again in his own place. Then still more men fell down, one after the other; they brought nine dead men’s legs and two skulls, and set them up and played at nine-pins with them. The youth also wanted to play and said “Hark you, can I join you?” “Yes, if thou hast any money.” “Money enough,” replied he, “but your balls are not quite round.” Then he took the skulls and put them in the lathe and turned them till they were round. “There, now, they will roll better!” said he. “Hurrah! Now it goes merrily!” He played with them and lost some of his money, but when it struck twelve, everything vanished from his sight. He lay down and quietly fell asleep. Next morning the King came to inquire after him. “How has it fared with you this time?” asked he. “I have been playing at nine-pins,” he answered, “and have lost a couple of farthings.” “Hast thou not shuddered then?” “Eh, what?” said he, “I have made merry. If I did but know what it was to shudder!”

The third night he sat down again on his bench and said quite sadly, “If I could but shudder.” When it grew late, six tall men came in and brought a coffin. Then said he, “Ha, ha, that is certainly my little cousin, who died only a few days ago,” and he beckoned with his finger, and cried “Come, little cousin, come.” They placed the coffin on the ground, but he went to it and took the lid off, and a dead man lay therein. He felt his face, but it was cold as ice. “Stop,” said he, “I will warm thee a little,” and went to the fire and warmed his hand and laid it on the dead man’s face, but he remained cold. Then he took him out, and sat down by the fire and laid him on his breast and rubbed his arms that the blood might circulate again. As this also did no good, he thought to himself “When two people lie in bed together, they warm each other,” and carried him to the bed, covered him over and lay down by him. After a short time the dead man became warm too, and began to move. Then said the youth, “See, little cousin, have I not warmed thee?” The dead man, however, got up and cried, “Now will I strangle thee.”

"What!" said he, "is that the way thou thankest me? Thou shalt at once go into thy coffin again," and he took him up, threw him into it, and shut the lid. Then came the six men and carried him away again. "I cannot manage to shudder," said he. "I shall never learn it here as long as I live."

Then a man entered who was taller than all others, and looked terrible. He was old, however, and had a long white beard. "Thou wretch," cried he, "thou shalt soon learn what it is to shudder, for thou shalt die." "Not so fast," replied the youth. "If I am to die, I shall have to have a say in it." "I will soon seize thee," said the fiend. "Softly, softly, do not talk so big. I am as strong as thou art, and perhaps even stronger." "We shall see," said the old man. "If thou art stronger, I will let thee go — come, we will try." Then he led him by dark passages to a smith's forge, took an axe, and with one blow struck an anvil into the ground. "I can do better than that," said the youth, and went to the other anvil. The old man placed himself near and wanted to look on, and his white beard hung down. Then the youth seized the axe, split the anvil with one blow, and struck the old man's beard in with it. "Now I have thee," said the youth. "Now it is thou who will have to die." Then he seized an iron bar and beat the old man till he moaned and entreated him to stop, and he would give him great riches. The youth drew out the axe and let him go. The old man led him back into the castle, and in a cellar showed him three chests full of gold. "Of these," said he, "one part is for the poor, the other for the king, the third is thine." In the meantime it struck twelve, and the spirit disappeared; the youth, therefore, was left in darkness. "I shall still be able to find my way out," said he, and felt about, found the way into the room, and slept there by his fire. Next morning the King came and said "Now thou must have learnt what shuddering is?" "No," he answered; "what can it be? My dead cousin was here, and a bearded man came and showed me a great deal of money down below, but no one told me what it was to shudder." "Then," said the King, "thou hast delivered the castle, and shalt marry my daughter." "That is all very well," said he, "but still I do not know what it is to shudder."

Then the gold was brought up and the wedding celebrated; but howsoever much the young king loved his wife, and however happy he was, he still said always "If I could but shudder — if I could but shudder." And at last she was angry at this. Her waiting-maid said, "I will find a cure for him; he shall soon learn what it is to shudder." She went out to the stream which flowed through the garden, and had a whole bucketful of gudgeons brought to her. At night when the young king was sleeping, his wife was to draw the clothes off him and empty the bucketful of cold water with the gudgeons in it over him, so that the little fishes would sprawl about him. When this was done, he woke up and cried "Oh, what makes me shudder so? — what makes me shudder so, dear wife? Ah! now I know what it is to shudder!"

The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids

There was once upon a time an old goat who had seven little kids, and loved them with all the love of a mother for her children. One day she wanted to go into the forest and fetch some food. So she called all seven to her and said, “Dear children, I have to go into the forest, be on your guard against the wolf; if he come in, he will devour you all — skin, hair, and all. The wretch often disguises himself, but you will know him at once by his rough voice and his black feet.” The kids said, “Dear mother, we will take good care of ourselves; you may go away without any anxiety.” Then the old one bleated, and went on her way with an easy mind.

It was not long before some one knocked at the house-door and called, “Open the door, dear children; your mother is here, and has brought something back with her for each of you.” But the little kids knew that it was the wolf, by the rough voice; “We will not open the door,” cried they, “thou art not our mother. She has a soft, pleasant voice, but thy voice is rough; thou art the wolf!” Then the wolf went away to a shopkeeper and bought himself a great lump of chalk, ate this and made his voice soft with it. The he came back, knocked at the door of the house, and cried, “Open the door, dear children, your mother is here and has brought something back with her for each of you.” But the wolf had laid his black paws against the window, and the children saw them and cried, “We will not open the door, our mother has not black feet like thee; thou art the wolf.” Then the wolf ran to a baker and said, “I have hurt my feet, rub some dough over them for me.” And when the baker had rubbed his feet over, he ran to the miller and said, “Strew some white meal over my feet for me.” The miller thought to himself, “The wolf wants to deceive someone,” and refused; but the wolf said, “If thou wilt not do it, I will devour thee.” Then the miller was afraid, and made his paws white for him. Truly men are like that.

So now the wretch went for the third time to the house-door, knocked at it and said, “Open the door for me, children, your dear little mother has come home, and has brought every one of you something back from the forest with her.” The little kids cried, “First show us thy paws that we may know if thou art our dear little mother.” Then he put his paws in through the window, and when the kids saw that they were white, they believed that all he said was true, and opened the door. But who should come in but the wolf! They were terrified and wanted to hide themselves. One sprang under the table, the second into the bed, the third into the stove, the fourth into the kitchen, the fifth into the cupboard, the sixth under the washing-bowl, and the seventh into the clock-case. But the wolf found them all, and used no great ceremony; one after the other he swallowed them down his throat. The youngest, who was in the clock-case, was the only one he did not find. When the wolf had satisfied his appetite he took himself off, laid himself down under a tree in the green meadow outside, and began to sleep. Soon afterwards the old goat came home again from the forest. Ah! What a sight she saw there! The house-door stood wide open. The table, chairs, and benches were thrown down, the washing-bowl lay broken to pieces, and the quilts and pillows were pulled off the bed. She sought her children, but they were nowhere to be found. She called them one after another by name, but no one answered. At last, when she came to the youngest, a soft voice cried, “Dear mother, I am in the clock-case.” She took the kid out, and it told her that the wolf had come and had eaten all the others. Then you may imagine how she wept over her poor children.

At length in her grief she went out, and the youngest kid ran with her. When they came to the meadow, there lay the wolf by the tree and snored so loud that the branches shook. She looked at him on every side and saw that something was moving and struggling in his gorged belly. “Ah, heavens,” said she, “is it possible that my poor children whom he has swallowed down for his supper, can be still alive?” Then the kid had to run home and fetch scissors, and a needle and thread, and the goat cut open the monster’s stomach, and hardly had she make one cut, than one little kid thrust its head out, and when she cut farther, all six sprang out one after another, and were all still alive, and had suffered no injury whatever, for in his greediness the monster had swallowed them down whole. What rejoicing there was! They embraced their dear mother, and jumped like a sailor at his wedding. The mother, however, said, “Now go and look for some big stones, and we will fill the wicked beast’s stomach with them while he is still asleep.” Then the seven kids dragged the stones thither with all speed, and put as many of them into his stomach as they could get in; and the mother sewed him up again in the greatest haste, so that he was not aware of anything and never once stirred.

When the wolf at length had had his sleep out, he got on his legs, and as the stones in his stomach made him very thirsty, he wanted to go to a well to drink. But when he began to walk and move about, the stones in his stomach knocked against each other and rattled. Then cried he,

“What rumbles and tumbles
Against my poor bones?
I thought ‘t was six kids,
But it’s naught but big stones.”

And when he got to the well and stooped over the water and was just about to drink, the heavy stones made him fall in, and there was no help, but he had to drown miserably. When the seven kids saw that, they came running to the spot and cried aloud, “The wolf is dead! The wolf is dead!” and danced for joy round about the well with their mother.

Faithful John

There was once on a time an old king who was ill, and thought to himself, “I am lying on what must be my death-bed.” Then said he, “Tell Faithful John to come to me.” Faithful John was his favourite servant, and was so called, because he had for his whole life long been so true to him. When therefore he came beside the bed, the King said to him, “Most faithful John, I feel my end approaching, and have no anxiety except about my son. He is still of tender age, and cannot always know how to guide himself. If thou dost not promise me to teach him everything that he ought to know, and to be his foster-father, I cannot close my eyes in peace.” Then answered Faithful John, “I will not forsake him, and will serve him with fidelity, even if it should cost me my life.” On this, the old King said, “Now I die in comfort and peace.” Then he added, “After my death, thou shalt show him the whole castle: all the chambers, halls, and vaults, and all the treasures which lie therein, but the last chamber in the long gallery, in which is the picture of the princess of the Golden Dwelling, shalt thou not show. If he sees that picture, he will fall violently in love with her, and will drop down in a swoon, and go through great danger for her sake, therefore thou must preserve him from that.” And when Faithful John had once more given his promise to the old King about this, the King said no more, but laid his head on his pillow, and died.

When the old King had been carried to his grave, Faithful John told the young King all that he had promised his father on his deathbed, and said, “This will I assuredly perform, and will be faithful to thee as I have been faithful to him, even if it should cost me my life.” When the mourning was over, Faithful John said to him, “It is now time that thou shouldst see thine inheritance. I will show thee thy father’s palace.” Then he took him about everywhere, up and down, and let him see all the riches, and the magnificent apartments, only there was one room which he did not open, that in which hung the dangerous picture. The picture was, however, so placed that when the door was opened you looked straight on it, and it was so admirably painted that it seemed to breathe and live, and there was nothing more charming or more beautiful in the whole world. The young King, however, plainly remarked that Faithful John always walked past this one door, and said, “Why dost thou never open this one for me?” “There is something within it,” he replied, “which would terrify thee.” But the King answered, “I have seen all the palace, and I will know what is in this room also,” and he went and tried to break open the door by force. Then Faithful John held him back and said, “I promised thy father before his death that thou shouldst not see that which is in this chamber, it might bring the greatest misfortune on thee and on me.” “Ah, no,” replied the young King, “if I do not go in, it will be my certain destruction. I should have no rest day or night until I had seen it with my own eyes. I shall not leave the place now until thou hast unlocked the door.”

Then Faithful John saw that there was no help for it now, and with a heavy heart and many sighs, sought out the key from the great bunch. When he had opened the door, he went in first, and thought by standing before him he could hide the portrait so that the King should not see it in front of him, but what availed that? The King stood on tip-toe and saw it over his shoulder. And when he saw the portrait of the maiden, which was so magnificent and shone with gold and precious stones, he fell fainting to the ground. Faithful John took him up, carried him to his bed, and sorrowfully thought, "The misfortune has befallen us, Lord God, what will be the end of it?" Then he strengthened him with wine, until he came to himself again. The first words the King said were, "Ah, the beautiful portrait! whose it it?" "That is the princess of the Golden Dwelling," answered Faithful John. Then the King continued, "My love for her is so great, that if all the leaves on all the trees were tongues, they could not declare it. I will give my life to win her. Thou art my most Faithful John, thou must help me."

The faithful servant considered within himself for a long time how to set about the matter, for it was difficult even to obtain a sight of the King's daughter. At length he thought of a way, and said to the King, "Everything which she has about her is of gold — tables, chairs, dishes, glasses, bowls, and household furniture. Among thy treasures are five tons of gold; let one of the goldsmiths of the Kingdom work these up into all manner of vessels and utensils, into all kinds of birds, wild beasts and strange animals, such as may please her, and we will go there with them and try our luck."

The King ordered all the goldsmiths to be brought to him, and they had to work night and day until at last the most splendid things were prepared. When everything was stowed on board a ship, Faithful John put on the dress of a merchant, and the King was forced to do the same in order to make himself quite unrecognizable. Then they sailed across the sea, and sailed on until they came to the town wherein dwelt the princess of the Golden Dwelling.

Faithful John bade the King stay behind on the ship, and wait for him. "Perhaps I shall bring the princess with me," said he, "therefore see that everything is in order; have the golden vessels set out and the whole ship decorated." Then he gathered together in his apron all kinds of gold things, went on shore and walked straight to the royal palace. When he entered the courtyard of the palace, a beautiful girl was standing there by the well with two golden buckets in her hand, drawing water with them. And when she was just turning round to carry away the sparkling water she saw the stranger, and asked who he was. So he answered, "I am a merchant," and opened his apron, and let her look in. Then she cried, "Oh, what beautiful gold things!" and put her pails down and looked at the golden wares one after the other. Then said the girl, "The princess must see these, she has such great pleasure in golden things, that she will buy all you have." She took him by the hand and led him upstairs, for she was the waiting-maid. When the King's daughter saw the wares, she was quite delighted and said, "They are so beautifully worked, that I will buy them all of thee." But Faithful John said, “I am only the servant of a rich merchant. The things I have here are not to be compared with those my master has in his ship. They are the most beautiful and valuable things that have ever been made in gold.” She wanted to have everything brought to her there, but he said, “There are so many of them that it would take a great many days to do that, and so many rooms would be required to exhibit them, that your house is not big enough.” Then her curiosity and longing were still more excited, until at last she said, “Conduct me to the ship, I will go there myself, and behold the treasures of thine master.”

On this Faithful John was quite delighted, and led her to the ship, and when the King saw her, he perceived that her beauty was even greater than the picture had represented it to be, and thought no other than that his heart would burst in twain. Then she got into the ship, and the King led her within. Faithful John, however, remained behind with the pilot, and ordered the ship to be pushed off, saying, “Set all sail, till it fly like a bird in air.” Within, however, the King showed her the golden vessels, every one of them, also the wild beasts and strange animals. Many hours went by whilst she was seeing everything, and in her delight she did not observe that the ship was sailing away. After she had looked at the last, she thanked the merchant and wanted to go home, but when she came to the side of the ship, she saw that it was on the deep sea far from land, and hurrying onwards with all sail set. “Ah,” cried she in her alarm, “I am betrayed! I am carried away and have fallen into the power of a merchant — I would die rather!” The King, however, seized her hand, and said, “I am not a merchant. I am a king, and of no meaner origin than thou art, and if I have carried thee away with subtlety, that has come to pass because of my exceeding great love for thee. The first time that I looked on thy portrait, I fell fainting to the ground.” When the princess of the Golden Dwelling heard that, she was comforted, and her heart was inclined unto him, so that she willingly consented to be his wife.

It so happened, however, while they were sailing onwards over the deep sea, that Faithful John, who was sitting on the fore part of the vessel, making music, saw three ravens in the air, which came flying towards them. On this he stopped playing and listened to what they were saying to each other, for that he well understood. One cried, “Oh, there he is carrying home the princess of the Golden Dwelling.” “Yes,” replied the second, “but he has not got her yet.” Said the third, “But he has got her, she is sitting beside him in the ship.” Then the first began again, and cried, “What good will that do him? When they reach land a chestnut horse will leap forward to meet him, and the prince will want to mount it, but if he does that, it will run away with him, and rise up into the air with him, and he will never see his maiden more.” Spake the second, “But is there no escape?”

“Oh, yes, if any one else gets on it swiftly, and takes out the pistol which must be in its holster, and shoots the horse dead with it, the young King is saved. But who knows that? And whosoever does know it, and tells it to him, will be turned to stone from the toe to the knee.” Then said the second, "I know more than that; even if the horse be killed, the young King will still not keep his bride. When they go into the castle together, a wrought bridal garment will be lying there in a dish, and looking as if it were woven of gold and silver; it is, however, nothing but sulphur and pitch, and if he put it on, it will burn him to the very bone and marrow." Said the third, "Is there no escape at all?"

"Oh, yes," replied the second, "if any one with gloves on seizes the garment and throws it into the fire and burns it, the young King will be saved. "But what avails that?" "Whosoever knows it and tells it to him, half his body will become stone from the knee to the heart."

Then said the third, "I know still more; even if the bridal garment be burnt, the young King will still not have his bride. After the wedding, when the dancing begins and the young queen is dancing, she will suddenly turn pale and fall down as if dead, and if some one does not lift her up and draw three drops of blood from her right breast and spit them out again, she will die. But if any one who knows that were to declare it, he would become stone from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot." When the ravens had spoken of this together, they flew onwards, and Faithful John had well understood everything, but from that time forth he became quiet and sad, for if he concealed what he had heard from his master, the latter would be unfortunate, and if he discovered it to him, he himself must sacrifice his life. At length, however, he said to himself, "I will save my master, even if it bring destruction on myself."

When therefore they came to shore, all happened as had been foretold by the ravens, and a magnificent chestnut horse sprang forward. "Good," said the King, "he shall carry me to my palace," and was about to mount it when Faithful John got before him, jumped quickly on it, drew the pistol out of the holster, and shot the horse. Then the other attendants of the King, who after all were not very fond of Faithful John, cried, "How shameful to kill the beautiful animal, that was to have carried the King to his palace." But the King said, "Hold your peace and leave him alone, he is my most faithful John, who knows what may be the good of that!" They went into the palace, and in the hall there stood a dish, and therein lay the bridal garment looking no otherwise than as if it were made of gold and silver. The young King went towards it and was about to take hold of it, but Faithful John pushed him away, seized it with gloves on, carried it quickly to the fire and burnt it. The other attendants again began to murmur, and said, "Behold, now he is even burning the King's bridal garment!" But the young King said, "Who knows what good he may have done, leave him alone, he is my most faithful John."

And now the wedding was solemnized: the dance began, and the bride also took part in it; then Faithful John was watchful and looked into her face, and suddenly she turned pale and fell to the ground, as if she were dead. On this he ran hastily to her, lifted her up and bore her into a chamber — then he laid her down, and knelt and sucked the three drops of blood from her right breast, and spat them out. Immediately she breathed again and recovered herself, but the young King had seen this, and being ignorant why Faithful John had done it, was angry and cried, “Throw him into a dungeon.” Next morning Faithful John was condemned, and led to the gallows, and when he stood on high, and was about to be executed, he said, “Every one who has to die is permitted before his end to make one last speech; may I too claim the right?” “Yes,” answered the King, “it shall be granted unto thee.” Then said Faithful John, “I am unjustly condemned, and have always been true to thee,” and he related how he had hearkened to the conversation of the ravens when on the sea, and how he had been obliged to do all these things in order to save his master. Then cried the King, “Oh, my most Faithful John. Pardon, pardon — bring him down.” But as Faithful John spoke the last word he had fallen down lifeless and become a stone.

Thereupon the King and the Queen suffered great anguish, and the King said, “Ah, how ill I have requited great fidelity!” and ordered the stone figure to be taken up and placed in his bedroom beside his bed. And as often as he looked on it he wept and said, “Ah, if I could bring thee to life again, my most faithful John.” Some time passed and the Queen bore twins, two sons who grew fast and were her delight. Once when the Queen was at church and the two children were sitting playing beside their father, the latter full of grief again looked at the stone figure, sighed and said, “Ah, if I could but bring thee to life again, my most faithful John.” Then the stone began to speak and said, “Thou canst bring me to life again if thou wilt use for that purpose what is dearest to thee.” Then cried the King, “I will give everything I have in the world for thee.” The stone continued, “If thou wilt will cut off the heads of thy two children with thine own hand, and sprinkle me with their blood, I shall be restored to life.”

The King was terrified when he heard that he himself must kill his dearest children, but he thought of faithful John’s great fidelity, and how he had died for him, drew his sword, and with his own hand cut off the children’s heads. And when he had smeared the stone with their blood, life returned to it, and Faithful John stood once more safe and healthy before him. He said to the King, “Thy truth shall not go unrewarded,” and took the heads of the children, put them on again, and rubbed the wounds with their blood, on which they became whole again immediately, and jumped about, and went on playing as if nothing had happened. Then the King was full of joy, and when he saw the Queen coming he hid Faithful John and the two children in a great cupboard. When she entered, he said to her, “Hast thou been praying in the church?” “Yes,” answered she, “but I have constantly been thinking of Faithful John and what misfortune has befallen him through us.” Then said he, “Dear wife, we can give him his life again, but it will cost us our two little sons, whom we must sacrifice.” The Queen turned pale, and her heart was full of terror, but she said, “We owe it to him, for his great fidelity.” Then the King was rejoiced that she thought as he had thought, and went and opened the cupboard, and brought forth Faithful John and the children, and said, “God be praised, he is delivered, and we have our little sons again also,” and told her how everything had occurred. Then they dwelt together in much happiness until their death.

The Good Bargain

There was once a peasant who had driven his cow to the fair, and sold her for seven thalers. On the way home he had to pass a pond, and already from afar he heard the frogs crying, “Aik, aik, aik, aik.” “Well,” said he to himself, “they are talking without rhyme or reason, it is seven that I have received, not eight.” When he got to the water, he cried to them, “Stupid animals that you are! Don’t you know better than that? It is seven thalers and not eight.” The frogs, however, stood to their, “aik aik, aik, aik.” “Come, then, if you won’t believe it, I can count it out to you.” And he took his money out of his pocket and counted out the seven thalers, always reckoning four and twenty groschen to a thaler. The frogs, however, paid no attention to his reckoning, but still cried, “aik, aik, aik, aik.” “What,” cried the peasant, quite angry, “since you are determined to know better than I, count it yourselves,” and threw all the money into the water to them. He stood still and wanted to wait until they were done and had brought him his own again, but the frogs maintained their opinion and cried continually, “aik, aik, aik, aik,” and besides that, did not throw the money out again. He still waited a long while until evening came on and he was forced to go home. Then he abused the frogs and cried, “You water-splashers, you thick-heads, you goggle-eyes, you have great mouths and can screech till you hurt one’s ears, but you cannot count seven thalers! Do you think I’m going to stand here till you get done?” And with that he went away, but the frogs still cried, “aik, aik, aik, aik,” after him till he went home quite angry.

After a while he bought another cow, which he killed, and he made the calculation that if he sold the meat well he might gain as much as the two cows were worth, and have the skin into the bargain. When therefore he got to the town with the meat, a great troop of dogs were gathered together in front of the gate, with a large greyhound at the head of them, which jumped at the meat, snuffed at it, and barked, “Wow, wow, wow.” As there was no stopping him, the peasant said to him, “Yes, yes, I know quite well that thou art saying, ‘wow, wow, wow,’ because thou wantest some of the meat; but I should fare badly if I were to give it to thee.” The dog, however, answered nothing but “wow, wow.” “Wilt thou promise not to devour it all then, and wilt thou go bail for thy companions?” “Wow, wow, wow,” said the dog. “Well, if thou insistest on it, I will leave it for thee; I know thee well, and know who is thy master; but this I tell thee, I must have my money in three days or else it will go ill with thee; thou must just bring it out to me.” Thereupon he unloaded the meat and turned back again, the dogs fell upon it and loudly barked, “wow, wow.”

The countryman, who heard them from afar, said to himself, “Hark, now they all want some, but the big one is responsible to me for it.”

When three days had passed, the countryman thought, “To-night my money will be in my pocket,” and was quite delighted. But no one would come and pay it. “There is no trusting any one now,” said he; and at last he lost patience, and went into the town to the butcher and demanded his money. The butcher thought it was a joke, but the peasant said, “Jesting apart, I will have my money! Did not the great dog bring you the whole of the slaughtered cow three days ago?” Then the butcher grew angry, snatched a broomstick and drove him out. “Wait a while,” said the peasant, “there is still some justice in the world!” and went to the royal palace and begged for an audience. He was led before the King, who sat there with his daughter, and asked him what injury he had suffered. “Alas!” said he, “the frogs and the dogs have taken from me what is mine, and the butcher has paid me for it with the stick,” and he related at full length all that had happened. Thereupon the King’s daughter began to laugh heartily, and the King said to him, “I cannot give you justice in this, but you shall have my daughter to wife for it, — in her whole life she has never yet laughed as she has just done at thee, and I have promised her to him who could make her laugh. Thou mayst thank God for thy good fortune!”

“Oh,” answered the peasant, “I will not have her, I have a wife already, and she is one too many for me; when I go home, it is just as bad as if I had a wife standing in every corner.” Then the King grew angry, and said, “Thou art a boor.” “Ah, Lord King,” replied the peasant, “what can you expect from an ox, but beef?” “Stop,” answered the King, “thou shalt have another reward. Be off now, but come back in three days, and then thou shalt have five hundred counted out in full.”

When the peasant went out by the gate, the sentry said, “Thou hast made the King’s daughter laugh, so thou wilt certainly receive something good.” “Yes, that is what I think,” answered the peasant; “five hundred are to be counted out to me.” “Hark thee,” said the soldier, “give me some of it. What canst thou do with all that money?” “As it is thou,” said the peasant, “thou shalt have two hundred; present thyself in three days’ time before the King, and let it be paid to thee.” A Jew, who was standing by and had heard the conversation, ran after the peasant, held him by the coat, and said, “Oh, wonder! what a luck-child thou art! I will change it for thee, I will change it for thee into small coins, what dost thou want with the great thalers?” “Jew,” said the countryman, “three hundred canst thou still have; give it to me at once in coin, in three days from this, thou wilt be paid for it by the King.” The Jew was delighted with the profit, and brought the sum in bad groschen, three of which were worth two good ones. After three days had passed, according to the King’s command, the peasant went before the King. “Pull his coat off,” said the latter, “and he shall have his five hundred.” “Ah!” said the peasant, “they no longer belong to me; I presented two hundred of them to the sentinel, and three hundred the Jew has changed for me, so by right nothing at all belongs to me.” In the meantime the soldier and the Jew entered and claimed what they had gained from the peasant, and they received the blows strictly counted out. The soldier bore it patiently and knew already how it tasted, but the Jew said sorrowfully, “Alas, alas, are these the heavy thalers?” The King could not help laughing at the peasant, and as all his anger was gone, he said, “As thou hast already lost thy reward before it fell to thy lot, I will give thee something in the place of it. Go into my treasure chamber and get some money for thyself, as much as thou wilt." The peasant did not need to be told twice, and stuffed into his big pockets whatsoever would go in. Afterwards he went to an inn and counted out his money. The Jew had crept after him and heard how he muttered to himself, "That rogue of a King has cheated me after all, why could he not have given me the money himself, and then I should have known what I had? How can I tell now if what I have had the luck to put in my pockets is right or not?" "Good heavens!" said the Jew to himself, "that man is speaking disrespectfully of our lord the King, I will run and inform, and then I shall get a reward, and he will be punished as well."

When the King heard of the peasant's words he fell into a passion, and commanded the Jew to go and bring the offender to him. The Jew ran to the peasant, "You are to go at once to the lord King in the very clothes you have on." "I know what's right better than that," answered the peasant, "I shall have a new coat made first. Dost thou think that a man with so much money in his pocket is to go there in his ragged old coat?" The Jew, as he saw that the peasant would not stir without another coat, and as he feared that if the King's anger cooled, he himself would lose his reward, and the peasant his punishment, said, "I will out of pure friendship lend thee a coat for the short time. What will people not do for love!" The peasant was contented with this, put the Jew's coat on, and went off with him.

The King reproached the countryman because of the evil speaking of which the Jew had informed him. "Ah," said the peasant, "what a Jew says is always false — no true word ever comes out of his mouth! That rascal there is capable of maintaining that I have his coat on."

"What is that?" shrieked the Jew. "Is the coat not mine? Have I not lent it to thee out of pure friendship, in order that thou might appear before the lord King?" When the King heard that, he said, "The Jew has assuredly deceived one or the other of us, either myself or the peasant," and again he ordered something to be counted out to him in hard thalers. The peasant, however, went home in the good coat, with the good money in his pocket, and said to himself, "This time I have hit it!"

The Wonderful Musician

There was once a wonderful musician, who went quite alone through a forest and thought of all manner of things, and when nothing was left for him to think about, he said to himself, “Time is beginning to pass heavily with me here in the forest, I will fetch hither a good companion for myself.” Then he took his fiddle from his back, and played so that it echoed through the trees. It was not long before a wolf came trotting through the thicket towards him. “Ah, here is a wolf coming! I have no desire for him!” said the musician; but the wolf came nearer and said to him, “Ah, dear musician, how beautifully thou dost play. I should like to learn that, too.” “It is soon learnt,” the musician replied, “thou hast only to do all that I bid thee.” “Oh, musician,” said the wolf, “I will obey thee as a scholar obeys his master.” The musician bade him follow, and when they had gone part of the way together, they came to an old oak-tree which was hollow inside, and cleft in the middle. “Look,” said the musician, “if thou wilt learn to fiddle, put thy fore paws into this crevice.” The wolf obeyed, but the musician quickly picked up a stone and with one blow wedged his two paws so fast that he was forced to stay there like a prisoner. “Stay there until I come back again,” said the musician, and went his way.

After a while he again said to himself, “Time is beginning to pass heavily with me here in the forest, I will fetch hither another companion,” and took his fiddle and again played in the forest. It was not long before a fox came creeping through the trees towards him. “Ah, there’s a fox coming!” said the musician. “I have no desire for him.” The fox came up to him and said, “Oh, dear musician, how beautifully thou dost play! I should like to learn that too.” “That is soon learnt,” said the musician. “Thou hast only to do everything that I bid thee.” “Oh, musician,” then said the fox, “I will obey thee as a scholar obeys his master.” “Follow me,” said the musician; and when they had walked a part of the way, they came to a footpath, with high bushes on both sides of it. There the musician stood still, and from one side bent a young hazel-bush down to the ground, and put his foot on the top of it, then he bent down a young tree from the other side as well, and said, “Now little fox, if thou wilt learn something, give me thy left front paw.” The fox obeyed, and the musician fastened his paw to the left bough. “Little fox,” said he, “now reach me thy right paw” and he tied it to the right bough. When he had examined whether they were firm enough, he let go, and the bushes sprang up again, and jerked up the little fox, so that it hung struggling in the air. “Wait there till I come back again,” said the musician, and went his way.

Again he said to himself, “Time is beginning to pass heavily with me here in the forest, I will fetch hither another companion,” so he took his fiddle, and the sound echoed through the forest. Then a little hare came springing towards him. “Why, a hare is coming,” said the musician, “I do not want him.” “Ah, dear musician,” said the hare, “how beautifully thou dost fiddle; I too, should like to learn that.” “That is soon learnt,” said the musician, “thou hast only to do everything that I bid thee.”

“Oh, musician,” replied the little hare, “I will obey thee as a scholar obeys his master.” They went a part of the way together until they came to an open space in the forest, where stood an aspen tree. The musician tied a long string round the little hare’s neck, the other end of which he fastened to the tree. “Now briskly, little hare, run twenty times round the tree!” cried the musician, and the little hare obeyed, and when it had run round twenty times, it had twisted the string twenty times round the trunk of the tree, and the little hare was caught, and let it pull and tug as it liked, it only made the string cut into its tender neck. “Wait there till I come back,” said the musician, and went onwards.

The wolf, in the meantime, had pushed and pulled and bitten at the stone, and had worked so long that he had set his feet at liberty and had drawn them once more out of the cleft. Full of anger and rage he hurried after the musician and wanted to tear him to pieces. When the fox saw him running, he began to lament, and cried with all his might, “Brother wolf, come to my help, the musician has betrayed me!” The wolf drew down the little tree, bit the cord in two, and freed the fox, who went with him to take revenge on the musician. They found the tied-up hare, whom likewise they delivered, and then they all sought the enemy together.

The musician had once more played his fiddle as he went on his way, and this time he had been more fortunate. The sound reached the ears of a poor wood-cutter, who instantly, whether he would or no, gave up his work and came with his hatchet under his arm to listen to the music. “At last comes the right companion,” said the musician, “for I was seeking a human being, and no wild beast.” And he began and played so beautifully and delightfully that the poor man stood there as if bewitched, and his heart leaped with gladness. And as he thus stood, the wolf, the fox, and the hare came up, and he saw well that they had some evil design. So he raised his glittering axe and placed himself before the musician, as if to say, “Whoso wishes to touch him let him beware, for he will have to do with me!” Then the beasts were terrified and ran back into the forest. The musician, however, played once more to the man out of gratitude, and then went onwards.

The Twelve Brothers

There were once on a time a king and a queen who lived happily together and had twelve children, but they were all boys. Then said the King to his wife, “If the thirteenth child which thou art about to bring into the world, is a girl, the twelve boys shall die, in order that her possessions may be great, and that the kingdom may fall to her alone.” He caused likewise twelve coffins to be made, which were already filled with shavings, and in each lay the little pillow for the dead, and he had them taken into a locked-up room, and then he gave the Queen the key of it, and bade her not to speak of this to any one.

The mother, however, now sat and lamented all day long, until the youngest son, who was always with her, and whom she had named Benjamin, from the Bible, said to her, “Dear mother, why art thou so sad?”

“Dearest child,” she answered, “I may not tell thee.” But he let her have no rest until she went and unlocked the room, and showed him the twelve coffins ready filled with shavings. Then she said, “my dearest Benjamin, thy father has had these coffins made for thee and for thy eleven brothers, for if I bring a little girl into the world, you are all to be killed and buried in them.” And as she wept while she was saying this, the son comforted her and said, “Weep not, dear mother, we will save ourselves, and go hence.” But she said, “Go forth into the forest with thy eleven brothers, and let one sit constantly on the highest tree which can be found, and keep watch, looking towards the tower here in the castle. If I give birth to a little son, I will put up a white flag, and then you may venture to come back, but if I bear a daughter, I will hoist a red flag, and then fly hence as quickly as you are able, and may the good God protect you. And every night I will rise up and pray for you — in winter that you may be able to warm yourself at a fire, and in summer that you may not faint away in the heat.”

After she had blessed her sons therefore, they went forth into the forest. They each kept watch in turn, and sat on the highest oak and looked towards the tower. When eleven days had passed and the turn came to Benjamin, he saw that a flag was being raised. It was, however, not the white, but the blood-red flag which announced that they were all to die. When the brothers heard that, they were very angry and said, “Are we all to suffer death for the sake of a girl? We swear that we will avenge ourselves! — wheresoever we find a girl, her red blood shall flow.”

Thereupon they went deeper into the forest, and in the midst of it, where it was the darkest, they found a little bewitched hut, which was standing empty. Then said they, “Here we will dwell, and thou Benjamin, who art the youngest and weakest, thou shalt stay at home and keep house, we others will go out and get food.” Then they went into the forest and shot hares, wild deer, birds and pigeons, and whatsoever there was to eat; this they took to Benjamin, who had to dress it for them in order that they might appease their hunger. They lived together ten years in the little hut, and the time did not appear long to them.

The little daughter which their mother the Queen had given birth to, was now grown up; she was good of heart, and fair of face, and had a golden star on her forehead. Once, when it was the great washing, she saw twelve men's shirts among the things, and asked her mother, "To whom do these twelve shirts belong, for they are far too small for father?" Then the Queen answered with a heavy heart, "Dear child, these belong to thy twelve brothers." Said the maiden, "Where are my twelve brothers, I have never yet heard of them?" She replied, "God knows where they are, they are wandering about the world." Then she took the maiden and opened the chamber for her, and showed her the twelve coffins with the shavings, and pillows for the head. "These coffins," said she, "were destined for thy brothers, but they went away secretly before thou wert born," and she related to her how everything had happened; then said the maiden, "Dear mother, weep not, I will go and seek my brothers."

So she took the twelve shirts and went forth, and straight into the great forest. She walked the whole day, and in the evening she came to the bewitched hut. Then she entered it and found a young boy, who asked, "From whence comest thou, and whither art thou bound?" and was astonished that she was so beautiful, and wore royal garments, and had a star on her forehead. And she answered, "I am a king's daughter, and am seeking my twelve brothers, and I will walk as far as the sky is blue until I find them." She likewise showed him the twelve shirts which belonged to them. Then Benjamin saw that she was his sister, and said, "I am Benjamin, thy youngest brother." And she began to weep for joy, and Benjamin wept also, and they kissed and embraced each other with the greatest love. But after this he said, "Dear sister, there is still one difficulty. We have agreed that every maiden whom we meet shall die, because we have been obliged to leave our kingdom on account of a girl." Then said she, "I will willingly die, if by so doing I can deliver my twelve brothers."

"No," answered he, "thou shalt not die, seat thyself beneath this tub until our eleven brothers come, and then I will soon come to an agreement with them."

She did so, and when it was night the others came from hunting, and their dinner was ready. And as they were sitting at table, and eating, they asked, "What news is there?" Said Benjamin, "Don't you know anything?" "No," they answered. He continued, "You have been in the forest and I have stayed at home, and yet I know more than you do." "Tell us then," they cried. He answered, "But promise me that the first maiden who meets us shall not be killed." "Yes," they all cried, "she shall have mercy, only do tell us."

Then said he, "Our sister is here," and he lifted up the tub, and the King's daughter came forth in her royal garments with the golden star on her forehead, and she was beautiful, delicate and fair. Then they were all rejoiced, and fell on her neck, and kissed and loved her with all their hearts.

Now she stayed at home with Benjamin and helped him with the work. The eleven went into the forest and caught game, and deer, and birds, and wood-pigeons that they might have food, and the little sister and Benjamin took care to make it ready for them. She sought for the wood for cooking and herbs for vegetables, and put the pans on the fire so that the dinner was always ready when the eleven came. She likewise kept order in the little house, and put beautifully white clean coverings on the little beds, and the brothers were always contented and lived in great harmony with her.

Once on a time the two at home had prepared a beautiful entertainment, and when they were all together, they sat down and ate and drank and were full of gladness. There was, however, a little garden belonging to the bewitched house wherein stood twelve lily flowers, which are likewise called students. She wished to give her brothers pleasure, and plucked the twelve flowers, and thought she would present each brother with one while at dinner. But at the self-same moment that she plucked the flowers the twelve brothers were changed into twelve ravens, and flew away over the forest, and the house and garden vanished likewise. And now the poor maiden was alone in the wild forest, and when she looked around, an old woman was standing near her who said, "My child, what hast thou done? Why didst thou not leave the twelve white flowers growing? They were thy brothers, who are now for evermore changed into ravens." The maiden said, weeping, "Is there no way of delivering them?"

"No," said the woman, "there is but one in the whole world, and that is so hard that thou wilt not deliver them by it, for thou must be dumb for seven years, and mayst not speak or laugh, and if thou speakest one single word, and only an hour of the seven years is wanting, all is in vain, and thy brothers will be killed by the one word."

Then said the maiden in her heart, "I know with certainty that I shall set my brothers free," and went and sought a high tree and seated herself in it and span, and neither spoke nor laughed. Now it so happened that a king was hunting in the forest, who had a great greyhound which ran to the tree on which the maiden was sitting, and sprang about it, whining, and barking at her. Then the King came by and saw the beautiful King's daughter with the golden star on her brow, and was so charmed with her beauty that he called to ask her if she would be his wife. She made no answer, but nodded a little with her head. So he climbed up the tree himself, carried her down, placed her on his horse, and bore her home. Then the wedding was solemnized with great magnificence and rejoicing, but the bride neither spoke nor smiled. When they had lived happily together for a few years, the King's mother, who was a wicked woman, began to slander the young Queen, and said to the King, "This is a common beggar girl whom thou hast brought back with thee. Who knows what impious tricks she practises secretly! Even if she be dumb, and not able to speak, she still might laugh for once; but those who do not laugh have bad consciences." At first the King would not believe it, but the old woman urged this so long, and accused her of so many evil things, that at last the King let himself be persuaded and sentenced her to death.

And now a great fire was lighted in the courtyard in which she was to be burnt, and the King stood above at the window and looked on with tearful eyes, because he still loved her so much. And when she was bound fast to the stake, and the fire was licking at her clothes with its red tongue, the last instant of the seven years expired. Then a whirring sound was heard in the air, and twelve ravens came flying towards the place, and sank downwards, and when they touched the earth they were her twelve brothers, whom she had delivered. They tore the fire asunder, extinguished the flames, set their dear sister free, and kissed and embraced her. And now as she dared to open her mouth and speak, she told the King why she had been dumb, and had never laughed. The King rejoiced when he heard that she was innocent, and they all lived in great unity until their death. The wicked step-mother was taken before the judge, and put into a barrel filled with boiling oil and venomous snakes, and died an evil death.

The Pack of Ragamuffins

The cock once said to the hen, “It is now the time when our nuts are ripe, so let us go to the hill together and for once eat our fill before the squirrel takes them all away.” “Yes,” replied the hen, “come, we will have some pleasure together.” Then they went away to the hill, and on it was a bright day they stayed till evening. Now I do not know whether it was that they had eaten till they were too fat, or whether they had become proud, but they would not go home on foot, and the cock had to build a little carriage of nut-shells. When it was ready, the little hen seated herself in it and said to the cock, “Thou canst just harness thyself to it.” “I like that!” said the cock, “I would rather go home on foot than let myself be harnessed to it; no, that is not our bargain. I do not mind being coachman and sitting on the box, but drag it myself I will not.”

As they were thus disputing, a duck quacked to them, “You thieving folks, who bade you go to my nut-hill? Well, you shall suffer for it!” and ran with open beak at the cock. But the cock also was not idle, and fell boldly on the duck, and at last wounded her so with his spurs that she also begged for mercy, and willingly let herself be harnessed to the carriage as a punishment. The little cock now seated himself on the box and was coachman, and thereupon they went off in a gallop, with “Duck, go as fast as thou canst.” When they had driven a part of the way they met two foot-passengers, a pin and a needle. They cried, “Stop! stop!” and said that it would soon be as dark as pitch, and then they could not go a step further, and that it was so dirty on the road, and asked if they could not get into the carriage for a while. They had been at the tailor’s public-house by the gate, and had stayed too long over the beer. As they were thin people, who did not take up much room, the cock let them both get in, but they had to promise him and his little hen not to step on their feet. Late in the evening they came to an inn, and as they did not like to go further by night, and as the duck also was not strong on her feet, and fell from one side to the other, they went in. The host at first made many objections, his house was already full, besides he thought they could not be very distinguished persons; but at last, as they made pleasant speeches, and told him that he should have the egg which the little hen has laid on the way, and should likewise keep the duck, which laid one every day, he at length said that they might stay the night. And now they had themselves well served, and feasted and rioted. Early in the morning, when day was breaking, and every one was asleep, the cock awoke the hen, brought the egg, pecked it open, and they ate it together, but they threw the shell on the hearth. Then they went to the needle which was still asleep, took it by the head and stuck it into the cushion of the landlord’s chair, and put the pin in his towel, and at the last without more ado they flew away over the heath. The duck who liked to sleep in the open air and had stayed in the yard, heard them going away, made herself merry and found a stream, down which she swam, which was a much quicker way of travelling than being harnessed to a carriage. The host did not get out of bed for two hours after this; he washed himself and wanted to dry himself, then the pin went over his face and made a red streak from one ear to the other. After this he went into the kitchen and wanted to light a pipe, but when he came to the hearth the egg-shell darted into his eyes. “This morning everything attacks my head,” said he, and angrily sat down on his grandfather’s chair, but he quickly started up again and cried, “Woe is me,” for the needle had pricked him still worse than the pin, and not in the head. Now he was thoroughly angry, and suspected the guests who had come so late the night before, and when he went and looked about for them, they were gone. Then he made a vow to take no more ragamuffins into his house, for they consume much, pay for nothing, and play mischievous tricks into the bargain by way of gratitude.

Little Brother and Little Sister

Little brother took his little sister by the hand and said, “Since our mother died we have had no happiness; our step-mother beats us every day, and if we come near her she kicks us away with her foot. Our meals are the hard crusts of bread that are left over; and the little dog under the table is better off, for she often throws it a nice bit. May Heaven pity us. If our mother only knew! Come, we will go forth together into the wide world.”

They walked the whole day over meadows, fields, and stony places; and when it rained the little sister said, “Heaven and our hearts are weeping together.” In the evening they came to a large forest, and they were so weary with sorrow and hunger and the long walk, that they lay down in a hollow tree and fell asleep.

The next day when they awoke, the sun was already high in the sky, and shone down hot into the tree. Then the brother said, “Sister, I am thirsty; if I knew of a little brook I would go and just take a drink; I think I hear one running.” The brother got up and took the little sister by the hand, and they set off to find the brook.

But the wicked step-mother was a witch, and had seen how the two children had gone away, and had crept after them privily, as witches do creep, and had bewitched all the brooks in the forest.

Now when they found a little brook leaping brightly over the stones, the brother was going to drink out of it, but the sister heard how it said as it ran, “Who drinks of me will be a tiger; who drinks of me will be a tiger.” Then the sister cried, “Pray, dear brother, do not drink, or you will become a wild beast, and tear me to pieces.” The brother did not drink, although he was so thirsty, but said, “I will wait for the next spring.”

When they came to the next brook the sister heard this also say, “Who drinks of me will be a wolf; who drinks of me will be a wolf.” Then the sister cried out, “Pray, dear brother, do not drink, or you will become a wolf, and devour me.” The brother did not drink, and said, “I will wait until we come to the next spring, but then I must drink, say what you like; for my thirst is too great.”

And when they came to the third brook the sister heard how it said as it ran, “Who drinks of me will be a roebuck; who drinks of me will be a roebuck.” The sister said, “Oh, I pray you, dear brother, do not drink, or you will become a roebuck, and run away from me.” But the brother had knelt down at once by the brook, and had bent down and drunk some of the water, and as soon as the first drops touched his lips he lay there a young roebuck.

And now the sister wept over her poor bewitched brother, and the little roe wept also, and sat sorrowfully near to her. But at last the girl said, “Be quiet, dear little roe, I will never, never leave you.”

Then she untied her golden garter and put it round the roebuck’s neck, and she plucked rushes and wove them into a soft cord. With this she tied the little beast and led it on, and she walked deeper and deeper into the forest.

And when they had gone a very long way they came at last to a little house, and the girl looked in; and as it was empty, she thought, “We can stay here and live.” Then she sought for leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the roe; and every morning she went out and gathered roots and berries and nuts for herself, and brought tender grass for the roe, who ate out of her hand, and was content and played round about her. In the evening, when the sister was tired, and had said her prayer, she laid her head upon the roebuck’s back: that was her pillow, and she slept softly on it. And if only the brother had had his human form it would have been a delightful life.

For some time they were alone like this in the wilderness. But it happened that the King of the country held a great hunt in the forest. Then the blasts of the horns, the barking of dogs, and the merry shouts of the huntsmen rang through the trees, and the roebuck heard all, and was only too anxious to be there. “Oh,” said he, to his sister, “let me be off to the hunt, I cannot bear it any longer;” and he begged so much that at last she agreed. “But,” said she to him, “come back to me in the evening; I must shut my door for fear of the rough huntsmen, so knock and say, ‘My little sister, let me in!’ that I may know you; and if you do not say that, I shall not open the door.” Then the young roebuck sprang away; so happy was he and so merry in the open air.

The King and the huntsmen saw the pretty creature, and started after him, but they could not catch him, and when they thought that they surely had him, away he sprang through the bushes and could not be seen. When it was dark he ran to the cottage, knocked, and said, “My little sister, let me in.” Then the door was opened for him, and he jumped in, and rested himself the whole night through upon his soft bed.

The next day the hunt went on afresh, and when the roebuck again heard the bugle-horn, and the ho! ho! of the huntsmen, he had no peace, but said, “Sister, let me out, I must be off.” His sister opened the door for him, and said, “But you must be here again in the evening and say your pass-word.”

When the King and his huntsmen again saw the young roebuck with the golden collar, they all chased him, but he was too quick and nimble for them. This went on for the whole day, but at last by the evening the huntsmen had surrounded him, and one of them wounded him a little in the foot, so that he limped and ran slowly. Then a hunter crept after him to the cottage and heard how he said, “My little sister, let me in,” and saw that the door was opened for him, and was shut again at once. The huntsman took notice of it all, and went to the King and told him what he had seen and heard. Then the King said, “To-morrow we will hunt once more.”

The little sister, however, was dreadfully frightened when she saw that her fawn was hurt. She washed the blood off him, laid herbs on the wound, and said, “Go to your bed, dear roe, that you may get well again.” But the wound was so slight that the roebuck, next morning, did not feel it any more. And when he again heard the sport outside, he said, “I cannot bear it, I must be there; they shall not find it so easy to catch me.” The sister cried, and said, “This time they will kill you, and here am I alone in the forest and forsaken by all the world. I will not let you out.” “Then you will have me die of grief,” answered the roe; “when I hear the bugle-horns I feel as if I must jump out of my skin.” Then the sister could not do otherwise, but opened the door for him with a heavy heart, and the roebuck, full of health and joy, bounded into the forest.

When the King saw him, he said to his huntsmen, “Now chase him all day long till night-fall, but take care that no one does him any harm.”

As soon as the sun had set, the King said to the huntsman, “Now come and show me the cottage in the wood;” and when he was at the door, he knocked and called out, “Dear little sister, let me in.” Then the door opened, and the King walked in, and there stood a maiden more lovely than any he had ever seen. The maiden was frightened when she saw, not her little roe, but a man come in who wore a golden crown upon his head. But the King looked kindly at her, stretched out his hand, and said, “Will you go with me to my palace and be my dear wife?” “Yes, indeed,” answered the maiden, “but the little roe must go with me, I cannot leave him.” The King said, “It shall stay with you as long as you live, and shall want nothing.” Just then he came running in, and the sister again tied him with the cord of rushes, took it in her own hand, and went away with the King from the cottage.

The King took the lovely maiden upon his horse and carried her to his palace, where the wedding was held with great pomp. She was now the Queen, and they lived for a long time happily together; the roebuck was tended and cherished, and ran about in the palace-garden.

But the wicked step-mother, because of whom the children had gone out into the world, thought all the time that the sister had been torn to pieces by the wild beasts in the wood, and that the brother had been shot for a roebuck by the huntsmen. Now when she heard that they were so happy, and so well off, envy and hatred rose in her heart and left her no peace, and she thought of nothing but how she could bring them again to misfortune. Her own daughter, who was ugly as night, and had only one eye, grumbled at her and said, “A Queen! that ought to have been my luck.” “Only be quiet,” answered the old woman, and comforted her by saying, “when the time comes I shall be ready.”

As time went on, the Queen had a pretty little boy, and it happened that the King was out hunting; so the old witch took the form of the chamber-maid, went into the room where the Queen lay, and said to her, “Come, the bath is ready; it will do you good, and give you fresh strength; make haste before it gets cold.”

The daughter also was close by; so they carried the weakly Queen into the bath-room, and put her into the bath; then they shut the door and ran away. But in the bath-room they had made a fire of such deadly heat that the beautiful young Queen was soon suffocated.

When this was done the old woman took her daughter, put a nightcap on her head, and laid her in bed in place of the Queen. She gave her too the shape and the look of the Queen, only she could not make good the lost eye.

But in order that the King might not see it, she was to lie on the side on which she had no eye.

In the evening when he came home and heard that he had a son he was heartily glad, and was going to the bed of his dear wife to see how she was. But the old woman quickly called out, “For your life leave the curtains closed; the Queen ought not to see the light yet, and must have rest.” The King went away, and did not find out that a false Queen was lying in the bed.

But at midnight, when all slept, the nurse, who was sitting in the nursery by the cradle, and who was the only person awake, saw the door open and the true Queen walk in. She took the child out of the cradle, laid it on her arm, and suckled it. Then she shook up its pillow, laid the child down again, and covered it with the little quilt. And she did not forget the roebuck, but went into the corner where it lay, and stroked its back. Then she went quite silently out of the door again. The next morning the nurse asked the guards whether anyone had come into the palace during the night, but they answered, “No, we have seen no one.”

She came thus many nights and never spoke a word: the nurse always saw her, but she did not dare to tell anyone about it.

When some time had passed in this manner, the Queen began to speak in the night, and said —

“How fares my child, how fares my roe?
Twice shall I come, then never more.”

The nurse did not answer, but when the Queen had gone again, went to the King and told him all. The King said, “Ah, heavens! what is this? To-morrow night I will watch by the child.” In the evening he went into the nursery, and at midnight the Queen again appeared and said —

“How fares my child, how fares my roe?
Once will I come, then never more.”

And she nursed the child as she was wont to do before she disappeared. The King dared not speak to her, but on the next night he watched again. Then she said —

“How fares my child, how fares my roe?
This time I come, then never more.”

Then the King could not restrain himself; he sprang towards her, and said, “You can be none other than my dear wife.” She answered, “Yes, I am your dear wife,” and at the same moment she received life again, and by God’s grace became fresh, rosy, and full of health.

Then she told the King the evil deed which the wicked witch and her daughter had been guilty of towards her. The King ordered both to be led before the judge, and judgment was delivered against them. The daughter was taken into the forest where she was torn to pieces by wild beasts, but the witch was cast into the fire and miserably burnt. And as soon as she was burnt the roebuck changed his shape, and received his human form again, so the sister and brother lived happily together all their lives.

Rapunzel

There were once a man and a woman who had long in vain wished for a child. At length the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire. These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen, which was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to an enchantress, who had great power and was dreaded by all the world. One day the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (rapunzel), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, and had the greatest desire to eat some. This desire increased every day, and as she knew that she could not get any of it, she quite pined away, and looked pale and miserable. Then her husband was alarmed, and asked, “What aileth thee, dear wife?” “Ah,” she replied, “if I can’t get some of the rampion, which is in the garden behind our house, to eat, I shall die.” The man, who loved her, thought, “Sooner than let thy wife die, bring her some of the rampion thyself, let it cost thee what it will.” In the twilight of the evening, he clambered down over the wall into the garden of the enchantress, hastily clutched a handful of rampion, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it with much relish. She, however, liked it so much — so very much, that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening, therefore, he let himself down again; but when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the enchantress standing before him. “How canst thou dare,” said she with angry look, “to descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? Thou shalt suffer for it!” “Ah,” answered he, “let mercy take the place of justice, I only made up my mind to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not got some to eat.” Then the enchantress allowed her anger to be softened, and said to him, “If the case be as thou sayest, I will allow thee to take away with thee as much rampion as thou wilt, only I make one condition, thou must give me the child which thy wife will bring into the world; it shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother.” The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman was brought to bed, the enchantress appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child beneath the sun. When she was twelve years old, the enchantress shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door, but quite at the top was a little window. When the enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath it and cried,

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
 Let down thy hair to me.”

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress she unfastened her braided tresses, wound them round one of the hooks of the window above, and then the hair fell twenty ells down, and the enchantress climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the King’s son rode through the forest and went by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound. The King’s son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it. Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried,

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
 Let down thy hair.”

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the enchantress climbed up to her. “If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I will for once try my fortune,” said he, and the next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried,

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
 Let down thy hair.”

Immediately the hair fell down and the King’s son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her; but the King’s son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred that it had let him have no rest, and he had been forced to see her. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought, “He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does;” and she said yes, and laid her hand in his. She said, “I will willingly go away with thee, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with thee a skein of silk every time that thou comest, and I will weave a ladder with it, and when that is ready I will descend, and thou wilt take me on thy horse.” They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day. The enchantress remarked nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said to her, “Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up than the young King’s son — he is with me in a moment.” “Ah! thou wicked child,” cried the enchantress “What do I hear thee say! I thought I had separated thee from all the world, and yet thou hast deceived me.” In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day, however, that she cast out Rapunzel, the enchantress in the evening fastened the braids of hair which she had cut off, to the hook of the window, and when the King's son came and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down thy hair,"

she let the hair down. The King's son ascended, but he did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the enchantress, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks. "Aha!" she cried mockingly, "Thou wouldst fetch thy dearest, but the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest; the cat has got it, and will scratch out thy eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to thee; thou wilt never see her more." The King's son was beside himself with pain, and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell, pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did nothing but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife. Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and when he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before. He led her to his kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time afterwards, happy and contented.

The Three Little Men in the Wood

There was once a man whose wife died, and a woman whose husband died, and the man had a daughter, and the woman also had a daughter. The girls were acquainted with each other, and went out walking together, and afterwards came to the woman in her house. Then said she to the man’s daughter, “Listen, tell thy father that I would like to marry him, and then thou shalt wash thyself in milk every morning, and drink wine, but my own daughter shall wash herself in water and drink water.” The girl went home, and told her father what the woman had said. The man said, “What shall I do? Marriage is a joy and also a torment.” At length as he could come to no decision, he pulled off his boot, and said, “Take this boot, it has a hole in the sole of it. Go with it up to the loft, hang it on the big nail, and then pour water into it. If it hold the water, then I will again take a wife, but if it run through, I will not.” The girl did as she was ordered, but the water drew the hole together, and the boot became full to the top. She informed her father how it had turned out. Then he himself went up, and when he saw that she was right, he went to the widow and wooed her, and the wedding was celebrated.

The next morning, when the two girls got up, there stood before the man’s daughter milk for her to wash in and wine for her to drink, but before the woman’s daughter stood water to wash herself with and water for drinking. On the second morning, stood water for washing and water for drinking before the man’s daughter as well as before the woman’s daughter. And on the third morning stood water for washing and water for drinking before the man’s daughter, and milk for washing and wine for drinking, before the woman’s daughter, and so it continued. The woman became bitterly unkind to her step-daughter, and day by day did her best to treat her still worse. She was also envious because her step-daughter was beautiful and lovable, and her own daughter ugly and repulsive.

Once, in winter, when everything was frozen as hard as a stone, and hill and vale lay covered with snow, the woman made a frock of paper, called her step-daughter, and said, “Here, put on this dress and go out into the wood, and fetch me a little basketful of strawberries, — I have a fancy for some.” “Good heavens!” said the girl, “no strawberries grow in winter! The ground is frozen, and besides the snow has covered everything. And why am I to go in this paper frock? It is so cold outside that one’s very breath freezes! The wind will blow through the frock, and the thorns will tear it off my body.” “Wilt thou contradict me again?” said the stepmother, “See that thou goest, and do not show thy face again until thou hast the basketful of strawberries!” Then she gave her a little piece of hard bread, and said, “This will last thee the day,” and thought, “Thou wilt die of cold and hunger outside, and wilt never be seen again by me.”

Then the maiden was obedient, and put on the paper frock, and went out with the basket. Far and wide there was nothing but snow, and not a green blade to be seen. When she got into the wood she saw a small house out of which peeped three dwarfs. She wished them good day, and knocked modestly at the door. They cried, “Come in,” and she entered the room and seated herself on the bench by the stove, where she began to warm herself and eat her breakfast. The elves said, “Give us, too, some of it.” “Willingly,” she said, and divided her bit of bread in two and gave them the half. They asked, “What dost thou here in the forest in the winter time, in thy thin dress?” “Ah,” she answered, “I am to look for a basketful of strawberries, and am not to go home until I can take them with me.” When she had eaten her bread, they gave her a broom and said, “Sweep away the snow at the back door with it.” But when she was outside, the three little men said to each other, “What shall we give her as she is so good, and has shared her bread with us?” Then said the first, “My gift is, that she shall every day grow more beautiful.” The second said, “My gift is, that gold pieces shall fall out of her mouth every time she speaks.” The third said, “My gift is, that a king shall come and take her to wife.”

The girl, however, did as the little men had bidden her, swept away the snow behind the little house with the broom, and what did she find but real ripe strawberries, which came up quite dark-red out of the snow! In her joy she hastily gathered her basket full, thanked the little men, shook hands with each of them, and ran home to take her step-mother what she had longed for so much. When she went in and said good-evening, a piece of gold at once fell from her mouth. Thereupon she related what had happened to her in the wood, but with every word she spoke, gold pieces fell from her mouth, until very soon the whole room was covered with them. “Now look at her arrogance,” cried the step-sister, “to throw about gold in that way!” but she was secretly envious of it, and wanted to go into the forest also to seek strawberries. The mother said, “No, my dear little daughter, it is too cold, thou mightest die of cold.” However, as her daughter let her have no peace, the mother at last yielded, made her a magnificent dress of fur, which she was obliged to put on, and gave her bread-and-butter and cake with her.

The girl went into the forest and straight up to the little house. The three little elves peeped out again, but she did not greet them, and without looking round at them and without speaking to them, she went awkwardly into the room, seated herself by the stove, and began to eat her bread-and-butter and cake. “Give us some of it,” cried the little men; but she replied, “There is not enough for myself, so how can I give it away to other people?” When she had done eating, they said, “There is a broom for thee, sweep all clean for us outside by the back-door.” “Humph! Sweep for yourselves,” she answered, “I am not your servant.” When she saw that they were not going to give her anything, she went out by the door. Then the little men said to each other, “What shall we give her as she is so naughty, and has a wicked envious heart, that will never let her do a good turn to any one?” The first said, “I grant that she may grow uglier every day.” The second said, “I grant that at every word she says, a toad shall spring out of her mouth.” The third said, “I grant that she may die a miserable death.” The maiden looked for strawberries outside, but as she found none, she went angrily home. And when she opened her mouth, and was about to tell her mother what had happened to her in the wood, with every word she said, a toad sprang out of her mouth, so that every one was seized with horror of her.

Then the step-mother was still more enraged, and thought of nothing but how to do every possible injury to the man's daughter, whose beauty, however, grew daily greater. At length she took a cauldron, set it on the fire, and boiled yarn in it. When it was boiled, she flung it on the poor girl's shoulder, and gave her an axe in order that she might go on the frozen river, cut a hole in the ice, and rinse the yarn. She was obedient, went thither and cut a hole in the ice; and while she was in the midst of her cutting, a splendid carriage came driving up, in which sat the King. The carriage stopped, and the King asked,"My child, who are thou, and what art thou doing here?" "I am a poor girl, and I am rinsing yarn." Then the King felt compassion, and when he saw that she was so very beautiful, he said to her, "Wilt thou go away with me?" "Ah, yes, with all my heart," she answered, for she was glad to get away from the mother and sister.

So she got into the carriage and drove away with the King, and when they arrived at his palace, the wedding was celebrated with great pomp, as the little men had granted to the maiden. When a year was over, the young Queen bore a son, and as the step-mother had heard of her great good-fortune, she came with her daughter to the palace and pretended that she wanted to pay her a visit. Once, however, when the King had gone out, and no one else was present, the wicked woman seized the Queen by the head, and her daughter seized her by the feet, and they lifted her out of the bed, and threw her out of the window into the stream which flowed by. Then the ugly daughter laid herself in the bed, and the old woman covered her up over her head. When the King came home again and wanted to speak to his wife, the old woman cried, "Hush, hush, that can't be now, she is lying in a violent perspiration; you must let her rest to-day." The King suspected no evil, and did not come back again till next morning; and as he talked with his wife and she answered him, with every word a toad leaped out, whereas formerly a piece of gold had fallen out. Then he asked what that could be, but the old woman said that she had got that from the violent perspiration, and would soon lose it again. During the night, however, the scullion saw a duck come swimming up the gutter, and it said,

"King, what art thou doing now?
Sleepest thou, or wakest thou?"

And as he returned no answer, it said,
"And my guests, What may they do?"
The scullion said,
"They are sleeping soundly, too."
Then it asked again,
"What does little baby mine?"

He answered,

“Sleepeth in her cradle fine.”

Then she went upstairs in the form of the Queen, nursed the baby, shook up its little bed, covered it over, and then swam away again down the gutter in the shape of a duck. She came thus for two nights; on the third, she said to the scullion, “Go and tell the King to take his sword and swing it three times over me on the threshold.” Then the scullion ran and told this to the King, who came with his sword and swung it thrice over the spirit, and at the third time, his wife stood before him strong, living, and healthy as she had been before. Thereupon the King was full of great joy, but he kept the Queen hidden in a chamber until the Sunday, when the baby was to be christened. And when it was christened he said, “What does a person deserve who drags another out of bed and throws him in the water?” “The wretch deserves nothing better,” answered the old woman, “than to be taken and put in a barrel stuck full of nails, and rolled down hill into the water.” “Then,” said the King, “Thou hast pronounced thine own sentence;” and he ordered such a barrel to be brought, and the old woman to be put into it with her daughter, and then the top was hammered on, and the barrel rolled down hill until it went into the river.

The Three Spinners

There was once a girl who was idle and would not spin, and let her mother say what she would, she could not bring her to it. At last the mother was once so overcome with anger and impatience, that she beat her, on which the girl began to weep loudly. Now at this very moment the Queen drove by, and when she heard the weeping she stopped her carriage, went into the house and asked the mother why she was beating her daughter so that the cries could be heard out on the road? Then the woman was ashamed to reveal the laziness of her daughter and said, "I cannot get her to leave off spinning. She insists on spinning for ever and ever, and I am poor, and cannot procure the flax." Then answered the Queen, "There is nothing that I like better to hear than spinning, and I am never happier than when the wheels are humming. Let me have your daughter with me in the palace. I have flax enough, and there she shall spin as much as she likes." The mother was heartily satisfied with this, and the Queen took the girl with her. When they had arrived at the palace, she led her up into three rooms which were filled from the bottom to the top with the finest flax. "Now spin me this flax," said she, "and when thou hast done it, thou shalt have my eldest son for a husband, even if thou art poor. I care not for that, thy indefatigable industry is dowry enough." The girl was secretly terrified, for she could not have spun the flax, no, not if she had lived till she was three hundred years old, and had sat at it every day from morning till night. When therefore she was alone, she began to weep, and sat thus for three days without moving a finger. On the third day came the Queen, and when she saw that nothing had been spun yet, she was surprised; but the girl excused herself by saying that she had not been able to begin because of her great distress at leaving her mother's house. The queen was satisfied with this, but said when she was going away, "To-morrow thou must begin to work."

When the girl was alone again, she did not know what to do, and in her distress went to the window. Then she saw three women coming towards her, the first of whom had a broad flat foot, the second had such a great underlip that it hung down over her chin, and the third had a broad thumb. They remained standing before the window, looked up, and asked the girl what was amiss with her? She complained of her trouble, and then they offered her their help and said, "If thou wilt invite us to the wedding, not be ashamed of us, and wilt call us thine aunts, and likewise wilt place us at thy table, we will spin up the flax for thee, and that in a very short time." "With all my heart," she replied, "do but come in and begin the work at once." Then she let in the three strange women, and cleared a place in the first room, where they seated themselves and began their spinning. The one drew the thread and trod the wheel, the other wetted the thread, the third twisted it, and struck the table with her finger, and as often as she struck it, a skein of thread fell to the ground that was spun in the finest manner possible. The girl concealed the three spinners from the Queen, and showed her whenever she came the great quantity of spun thread, until the latter could not praise her enough. When the first room was empty she went to the second, and at last to the third, and that too was quickly cleared. Then the three women took leave and said to the girl, “Do not forget what thou hast promised us, — it will make thy fortune.”

When the maiden showed the Queen the empty rooms, and the great heap of yarn, she gave orders for the wedding, and the bridegroom rejoiced that he was to have such a clever and industrious wife, and praised her mightily. “I have three aunts,” said the girl, “and as they have been very kind to me, I should not like to forget them in my good fortune; allow me to invite them to the wedding, and let them sit with us at table.” The Queen and the bridegroom said, “Why should we not allow that?” Therefore when the feast began, the three women entered in strange apparel, and the bride said, “Welcome, dear aunts.” “Ah,” said the bridegroom, “how comest thou by these odious friends?” Thereupon he went to the one with the broad flat foot, and said, “How do you come by such a broad foot?” “By treading,” she answered, “by treading.” Then the bridegroom went to the second, and said, “How do you come by your falling lip?” “By licking,” she answered, “by licking.” Then he asked the third, “How do you come by your broad thumb?” “By twisting the thread,” she answered, “by twisting the thread.” On this the King’s son was alarmed and said, “Neither now nor ever shall my beautiful bride touch a spinning-wheel.” And thus she got rid of the hateful flax-spinning.

Hansel and Grethel

Hard by a great forest dwelt a poor wood-cutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Grethel. He had little to bite and to break, and once when great scarcity fell on the land, he could no longer procure daily bread. Now when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety, he groaned and said to his wife, “What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?” “I’ll tell you what, husband,” answered the woman, “Early to-morrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest, there we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one piece of bread more, and then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them.” “No, wife,” said the man, “I will not do that; how can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest? — the wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces.” “O, thou fool!” said she, “Then we must all four die of hunger, thou mayest as well plane the planks for our coffins,” and she left him no peace until he consented. “But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same,” said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their step-mother had said to their father. Grethel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel, “Now all is over with us.” “Be quiet, Grethel,” said Hansel, “do not distress thyself, I will soon find a way to help us.” And when the old folks had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and put as many of them in the little pocket of his coat as he could possibly get in. Then he went back and said to Grethel, “Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace, God will not forsake us,” and he lay down again in his bed. When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying “Get up, you sluggards! we are going into the forest to fetch wood.” She gave each a little piece of bread, and said, “There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else.” Grethel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the stones in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. When they had walked a short time, Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said, “Hansel, what art thou looking at there and staying behind for? Mind what thou art about, and do not forget how to use thy legs.” “Ah, father,” said Hansel, “I am looking at my little white cat, which is sitting up on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me.” The wife said, “Fool, that is not thy little cat, that is the morning sun which is shining on the chimneys.” Hansel, however, had not been looking back at the cat, but had been constantly throwing one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said, “Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold.” Hansel and Grethel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said, “Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest, we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away.”

Hansel and Grethel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread, and as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe they believed that their father was near. It was not, however, the axe, it was a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backwards and forwards. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes shut with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Grethel began to cry and said, “How are we to get out of the forest now?” But Hansel comforted her and said, “Just wait a little, until the moon has risen, and then we will soon find the way.” And when the full moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father’s house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Grethel, she said, “You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest? — we thought you were never coming back at all!” The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great scarcity in all parts, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father, “Everything is eaten again, we have one half loaf left, and after that there is an end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again; there is no other means of saving ourselves!” The man’s heart was heavy, and he thought “it would be better for thee to share the last mouthful with thy children.” The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.

The children were, however, still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folks were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said, “Do not cry, Grethel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us.”

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their bit of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground. “Hansel, why dost thou stop and look round?” said the father, “go on.” “I am looking back at my little pigeon which is sitting on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me," answered Hansel. "Simpleton!" said the woman, "that is not thy little pigeon, that is the morning sun that is shining on the chimney." Hansel, however, little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before. Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said, "Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little; we are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening when we are done, we will come and fetch you away." When it was noon, Grethel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening came and went, but no one came to the poor children. They did not awake until it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister and said, "Just wait, Grethel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn about, they will show us our way home again." When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel said to Grethel, "We shall soon find the way," but they did not find it. They walked the whole night and all the next day too from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs would carry them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

It was now three mornings since they had left their father's house. They began to walk again, but they always got deeper into the forest, and if help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness. When it was mid-day, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when it had finished its song, it spread its wings and flew away before them, and they followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted; and when they came quite up to little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar. "We will set to work on that," said Hansel, "and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and thou, Grethel, canst eat some of the window, it will taste sweet." Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Grethel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the room,

"Nibble, nibble, gnaw,
Who is nibbling at my little house?"

The children answered,

"The wind, the wind,
The heaven-born wind,"

and went on eating without disturbing themselves. Hansel, who thought the roof tasted very nice, tore down a great piece of it, and Grethel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it. Suddenly the door opened, and a very, very old woman, who supported herself on crutches, came creeping out. Hansel and Grethel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said, “Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? Do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you.” She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then good food was set before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterwards two pretty little beds were covered with clean white linen, and Hansel and Grethel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.

The old woman had only pretended to be so kind; she was in reality a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Hansel and Grethel came into her neighborhood, she laughed maliciously, and said mockingly, “I have them, they shall not escape me again!” Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up, and when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump red cheeks, she muttered to herself, “That will be a dainty mouthful!” Then she seized Hansel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and shut him in with a grated door. He might scream as he liked, that was of no use. Then she went to Grethel, shook her till she awoke, and cried, “Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for thy brother, he is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him.” Grethel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain, she was forced to do what the wicked witch ordered her.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Grethel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried, “Hansel, stretch out thy finger that I may feel if thou wilt soon be fat.” Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and thought it was Hansel’s finger, and was astonished that there was no way of fattening him. When four weeks had gone by, and Hansel still continued thin, she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer. “Hola, Grethel,” she cried to the girl, “be active, and bring some water. Let Hansel be fat or lean, to-morrow I will kill him, and cook him.” Ah, how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down over her cheeks! “Dear God, do help us,” she cried. “If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together.” “Just keep thy noise to thyself,” said the old woman, “all that won’t help thee at all.”

Early in the morning, Grethel had to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire. “We will bake first,” said the old woman, “I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough.” She pushed poor Grethel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were already darting. “Creep in,” said the witch, “and see if it is properly heated, so that we can shut the bread in.” And when once Grethel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then she would eat her, too. But Grethel saw what she had in her mind, and said, “I do not know how I am to do it; how do you get in?” “Silly goose,” said the old woman, “The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!” and she crept up and thrust her head into the oven. Then Grethel gave her a push that drove her far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh! then she began to howl quite horribly, but Grethel ran away, and the godless witch was miserably burnt to death.

Grethel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried, “Hansel, we are saved! The old witch is dead!” Then Hansel sprang out like a bird from its cage when the door is opened for it. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch’s house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels. “These are far better than pebbles!” said Hansel, and thrust into his pockets whatever could be got in, and Grethel said, “I, too, will take something home with me,” and filled her pinafore full. “But now we will go away.” said Hansel, “that we may get out of the witch’s forest.”

When they had walked for two hours, they came to a great piece of water. “We cannot get over,” said Hansel, “I see no foot-plank, and no bridge.” “And no boat crosses either,” answered Grethel, “but a white duck is swimming there; if I ask her, she will help us over.” Then she cried,

“Little duck, little duck, dost thou see,
Hansel and Grethel are waiting for thee?
There’s never a plank, or bridge in sight,

Take us across on thy back so white.”

The duck came to them, and Hansel seated himself on its back, and told his sister to sit by him. “No,” replied Grethel, “that will be too heavy for the little duck; she shall take us across, one after the other.” The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw from afar their father’s house. Then they began to run, rushed into the parlour, and threw themselves into their father’s arms. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; the woman, however, was dead. Grethel emptied her pinafore until pearls and precious stones ran about the room, and Hansel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them. Then all anxiety was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness. My tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it, may make himself a big fur cap out of it.

The Three Snake-Leaves

There was once on a time a poor man, who could no longer support his only son. Then said the son, “Dear father, things go so badly with us that I am a burden to you. I would rather go away and see how I can earn my bread.” So the father gave him his blessing, and with great sorrow took leave of him. At this time the King of a mighty empire was at war, and the youth took service with him, and with him went out to fight. And when he came before the enemy, there was a battle, and great danger, and it rained shot until his comrades fell on all sides, and when the leader also was killed, those left were about to take flight, but the youth stepped forth, spoke boldly to them, and cried, “We will not let our fatherland be ruined!” Then the others followed him, and he pressed on and conquered the enemy. When the King heard that he owed the victory to him alone, he raised him above all the others, gave him great treasures, and made him the first in the kingdom.

The King had a daughter who was very beautiful, but she was also very strange. She had made a vow to take no one as her lord and husband who did not promise to let himself be buried alive with her if she died first. “If he loves me with all his heart,” said she, “of what use will life be to him afterwards?” On her side she would do the same, and if he died first, would go down to the grave with him. This strange oath had up to this time frightened away all wooers, but the youth became so charmed with her beauty that he cared for nothing, but asked her father for her. “But dost thou know what thou must promise?” said the King. “I must be buried with her,” he replied, “if I outlive her, but my love is so great that I do not mind the danger.” Then the King consented, and the wedding was solemnized with great splendour.

They lived now for a while happy and contented with each other, and then it befell that the young Queen was attacked by a severe illness, and no physician could save her. And as she lay there dead, the young King remembered what he had been obliged to promise, and was horrified at having to lie down alive in the grave, but there was no escape. The King had placed sentries at all the gates, and it was not possible to avoid his fate. When the day came when the corpse was to be buried, he was taken down into the royal vault with it and then the door was shut and bolted.

Near the coffin stood a table on which were four candles, four loaves of bread, and four bottles of wine, and when this provision came to an end, he would have to die of hunger. And now he sat there full of pain and grief, ate every day only a little piece of bread, drank only a mouthful of wine, and nevertheless saw death daily drawing nearer. Whilst he thus gazed before him, he saw a snake creep out of a corner of the vault and approach the dead body. And as he thought it came to gnaw at it, he drew his sword and said, “As long as I live, thou shalt not touch her,” and hewed the snake in three pieces. After a time a second snake crept out of the hole, and when it saw the other lying dead and cut in pieces, it went back, but soon came again with three green leaves in its mouth. Then it took the three pieces of the snake, laid them together, as they ought to go, and placed one of the leaves on each wound. Immediately the severed parts joined themselves together, the snake moved, and became alive again, and both of them hastened away together. The leaves were left lying on the ground, and a desire came into the mind of the unhappy man who had been watching all this, to know if the wondrous power of the leaves which had brought the snake to life again, could not likewise be of service to a human being. So he picked up the leaves and laid one of them on the mouth of his dead wife, and the two others on her eyes. And hardly had he done this than the blood stirred in her veins, rose into her pale face, and coloured it again. Then she drew breath, opened her eyes, and said, “Ah, God, where am I?” “Thou art with me, dear wife,” he answered, and told her how everything had happened, and how he had brought her back again to life. Then he gave her some wine and bread, and when she had regained her strength, he raised her up and they went to the door and knocked, and called so loudly that the sentries heard it, and told the King. The King came down himself and opened the door, and there he found both strong and well, and rejoiced with them that now all sorrow was over. The young King, however, took the three snake-leaves with him, gave them to a servant and said, “Keep them for me carefully, and carry them constantly about thee; who knows in what trouble they may yet be of service to us!”

A change had, however, taken place in his wife; after she had been restored to life, it seemed as if all love for her husband had gone out of her heart. After some time, when he wanted to make a voyage over the sea, to visit his old father, and they had gone on board a ship, she forgot the great love and fidelity which he had shown her, and which had been the means of rescuing her from death, and conceived a wicked inclination for the skipper. And once when the young King lay there asleep, she called in the skipper and seized the sleeper by the head, and the skipper took him by the feet, and thus they threw him down into the sea. When the shameful deed was done, she said, “Now let us return home, and say that he died on the way. I will extol and praise thee so to my father that he will marry me to thee, and make thee the heir to his crown.” But the faithful servant who had seen all that they did, unseen by them, unfastened a little boat from the ship, got into it, sailed after his master, and let the traitors go on their way. He fished up the dead body, and by the help of the three snake-leaves which he carried about with him, and laid on the eyes and mouth, he fortunately brought the young King back to life.

They both rowed with all their strength day and night, and their little boat flew so swiftly that they reached the old King before the others did. He was astonished when he saw them come alone, and asked what had happened to them. When he learnt the wickedness of his daughter he said, “I cannot believe that she has behaved so ill, but the truth will soon come to light,” and bade both go into a secret chamber and keep themselves hidden from every one. Soon afterwards the great ship came sailing in, and the godless woman appeared before her father with a troubled countenance. He said, “Why dost thou come back alone? Where is thy husband?” “Ah, dear father,” she replied, “I come home again in great grief; during the voyage, my husband became suddenly ill and died, and if the good skipper had not given me his help, it would have gone ill with me. He was present at his death, and can tell you all.” The King said, “I will make the dead alive again,” and opened the chamber, and bade the two come out. When the woman saw her husband, she was thunderstruck, and fell on her knees and begged for mercy. The King said, “There is no mercy. He was ready to die with thee and restored thee to life again, but thou hast murdered him in his sleep, and shalt receive the reward that thou deservest.” Then she was placed with her accomplice in a ship which had been pierced with holes, and sent out to sea, where they soon sank amid the waves.

The White Snake

A long time ago there lived a king who was famed for his wisdom through all the land. Nothing was hidden from him, and it seemed as if news of the most secret things was brought to him through the air. But he had a strange custom; every day after dinner, when the table was cleared, and no one else was present, a trusty servant had to bring him one more dish. It was covered, however, and even the servant did not know what was in it, neither did anyone know, for the King never took off the cover to eat of it until he was quite alone.

This had gone on for a long time, when one day the servant, who took away the dish, was overcome with such curiosity that he could not help carrying the dish into his room. When he had carefully locked the door, he lifted up the cover, and saw a white snake lying on the dish. But when he saw it he could not deny himself the pleasure of tasting it, so he cut off a little bit and put it into his mouth. No sooner had it touched his tongue than he heard a strange whispering of little voices outside his window. He went and listened, and then noticed that it was the sparrows who were chattering together, and telling one another of all kinds of things which they had seen in the fields and woods. Eating the snake had given him power of understanding the language of animals.

Now it so happened that on this very day the Queen lost her most beautiful ring, and suspicion of having stolen it fell upon this trusty servant, who was allowed to go everywhere. The King ordered the man to be brought before him, and threatened with angry words that unless he could before the morrow point out the thief, he himself should be looked upon as guilty and executed. In vain he declared his innocence; he was dismissed with no better answer.

In his trouble and fear he went down into the courtyard and took thought how to help himself out of his trouble. Now some ducks were sitting together quietly by a brook and taking their rest; and, whilst they were making their feathers smooth with their bills, they were having a confidential conversation together. The servant stood by and listened. They were telling one another of all the places where they had been waddling about all the morning, and what good food they had found, and one said in a pitiful tone, “Something lies heavy on my stomach; as I was eating in haste I swallowed a ring which lay under the Queen’s window.” The servant at once seized her by the neck, carried her to the kitchen, and said to the cook, “Here is a fine duck; pray, kill her.” “Yes,” said the cook, and weighed her in his hand; “she has spared no trouble to fatten herself, and has been waiting to be roasted long enough.” So he cut off her head, and as she was being dressed for the spit, the Queen’s ring was found inside her.

The servant could now easily prove his innocence; and the King, to make amends for the wrong, allowed him to ask a favor, and promised him the best place in the court that he could wish for. The servant refused everything, and only asked for a horse and some money for traveling, as he had a mind to see the world and go about a little.

When his request was granted he set out on his way, and one day came to a pond, where he saw three fishes caught in the reeds and gasping for water. Now, though it is said that fishes are dumb, he heard them lamenting that they must perish so miserably, and, as he had a kind heart, he got off his horse and put the three prisoners back into the water. They quivered with delight, put out their heads, and cried to him, “We will remember you and repay you for saving us!”

He rode on, and after a while it seemed to him that he heard a voice in the sand at his feet. He listened, and heard an ant-king complain, “Why cannot folks, with their clumsy beasts, keep off our bodies? That stupid horse, with his heavy hoofs, has been treading down my people without mercy!” So he turned on to a side path and the ant-king cried out to him, “We will remember you — one good turn deserves another!”

The path led him into a wood, and here he saw two old ravens standing by their nest, and throwing out their young ones. “Out with you, you idle, good-for-nothing creatures!” cried they; “we cannot find food for you any longer; you are big enough, and can provide for yourselves.” But the poor young ravens lay upon the ground, flapping their wings, and crying, “Oh, what helpless chicks we are! We must shift for ourselves, and yet we cannot fly! What can we do, but lie here and starve?” So the good young fellow alighted and killed his horse with his sword, and gave it to them for food. Then they came hopping up to it, satisfied their hunger, and cried, “We will remember you — one good turn deserves another!”

And now he had to use his own legs, and when he had walked a long way, he came to a large city. There was a great noise and crowd in the streets, and a man rode up on horseback, crying aloud, “The King’s daughter wants a husband; but whoever sues for her hand must perform a hard task, and if he does not succeed he will forfeit his life.” Many had already made the attempt, but in vain; nevertheless when the youth saw the King’s daughter he was so overcome by her great beauty that he forgot all danger, went before the King, and declared himself a suitor.

So he was led out to the sea, and a gold ring was thrown into it, in his sight; then the King ordered him to fetch this ring up from the bottom of the sea, and added, “If you come up again without it you will be thrown in again and again until you perish amid the waves.” All the people grieved for the handsome youth; then they went away, leaving him alone by the sea.

He stood on the shore and considered what he should do, when suddenly he saw three fishes come swimming towards him, and they were the very fishes whose lives he had saved. The one in the middle held a mussel in its mouth, which it laid on the shore at the youth’s feet, and when he had taken it up and opened it, there lay the gold ring in the shell. Full of joy he took it to the King, and expected that he would grant him the promised reward.

But when the proud princess perceived that he was not her equal in birth, she scorned him, and required him first to perform another task. She went down into the garden and strewed with her own hands ten sacks-full of millet-seed on the grass; then she said, “To-morrow morning before sunrise these must be picked up, and not a single grain be wanting.”

The youth sat down in the garden and considered how it might be possible to perform this task, but he could think of nothing, and there he sat sorrowfully awaiting the break of day, when he should be led to death. But as soon as the first rays of the sun shone into the garden he saw all the ten sacks standing side by side, quite full, and not a single grain was missing. The ant-king had come in the night with thousands and thousands of ants, and the grateful creatures had by great industry picked up all the millet-seed and gathered them into the sacks.

Presently the King’s daughter herself came down into the garden, and was amazed to see that the young man had done the task she had given him. But she could not yet conquer her proud heart, and said, “Although he has performed both the tasks, he shall not be my husband until he has brought me an apple from the Tree of Life.”

The youth did not know where the Tree of Life stood, but he set out, and would have gone on for ever, as long as his legs would carry him, though he had no hope of finding it. After he had wandered through three kingdoms, he came one evening to a wood, and lay down under a tree to sleep. But he heard a rustling in the branches, and a golden apple fell into his hand. At the same time three ravens flew down to him, perched themselves upon his knee, and said, “We are the three young ravens whom you saved from starving; when we had grown big, and heard that you were seeking the Golden Apple, we flew over the sea to the end of the world, where the Tree of Life stands, and have brought you the apple.” The youth, full of joy, set out homewards, and took the Golden Apple to the King’s beautiful daughter, who had no more excuses left to make. They cut the Apple of Life in two and ate it together; and then her heart became full of love for him, and they lived in undisturbed happiness to a great age.

The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean

In a village dwelt a poor old woman, who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and that it might burn the quicker, she lighted it with a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two. Then the straw began and said, “Dear friends, from whence do you come here?” The coal replied, “I fortunately sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by main force, my death would have been certain, — I should have been burnt to ashes.” The bean said, “I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I should have been made into broth without any mercy, like my comrades.” “And would a better fate have fallen to my lot?” said the straw. “The old woman has destroyed all my brethren in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers.”

“But what are we to do now?” said the coal.

“I think,” answered the bean, “that as we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and lest a new mischance should overtake us here, we should go away together, and repair to a foreign country.”

The proposition pleased the two others, and they set out on their way in company. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge or foot-plank, they did not know how they were to get over it. The straw hit on a good idea, and said, “I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over on me as on a bridge.” The straw therefore stretched itself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of an impetuous disposition, tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was, after all, afraid, and stood still, and ventured no farther. The straw, however, began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last. The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event, was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst. It would have been all over with her, likewise, if, by good fortune, a tailor who was traveling in search of work, had not sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a compassionate heart he pulled out his needle and thread, and sewed her together. The bean thanked him most prettily, but as the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

The Fisherman and His Wife

There was once on a time a Fisherman who lived with his wife in a miserable hovel close by the sea, and every day he went out fishing. And once as he was sitting with his rod, looking at the clear water, his line suddenly went down, far down below, and when he drew it up again he brought out a large Flounder. Then the Flounder said to him, “Hark, you Fisherman, I pray you, let me live, I am no Flounder really, but an enchanted prince. What good will it do you to kill me? I should not be good to eat, put me in the water again, and let me go.” “Come,” said the Fisherman, “there is no need for so many words about it — a fish that can talk I should certainly let go, anyhow,” with that he put him back again into the clear water, and the Flounder went to the bottom, leaving a long streak of blood behind him. Then the Fisherman got up and went home to his wife in the hovel.

“Husband,” said the woman, “have you caught nothing to-day?” “No,” said the man, “I did catch a Flounder, who said he was an enchanted prince, so I let him go again.” “Did you not wish for anything first?” said the woman. “No,” said the man; “what should I wish for?” “Ah,” said the woman, “it is surely hard to have to live always in this dirty hovel; you might have wished for a small cottage for us. Go back and call him. Tell him we want to have a small cottage, he will certainly give us that.” “Ah,” said the man, “why should I go there again?” “Why,” said the woman, “you did catch him, and you let him go again; he is sure to do it. Go at once.” The man still did not quite like to go, but did not like to oppose his wife, and went to the sea.

When he got there the sea was all green and yellow, and no longer so smooth; so he stood still and said,

“Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;

For my wife, good Ilsabil,
Wills not as I’d have her will.”

Then the Flounder came swimming to him and said, “Well what does she want, then?” “Ah,” said the man, “I did catch you, and my wife says I really ought to have wished for something. She does not like to live in a wretched hovel any longer. She would like to have a cottage.” “Go, then,” said the Flounder, “she has it already.”

When the man went home, his wife was no longer in the hovel, but instead of it there stood a small cottage, and she was sitting on a bench before the door. Then she took him by the hand and said to him, “Just come inside, look, now isn’t this a great deal better?” So they went in, and there was a small porch, and a pretty little parlor and bedroom, and a kitchen and pantry, with the best of furniture, and fitted up with the most beautiful things made of tin and brass, whatsoever was wanted. And behind the cottage there was a small yard, with hens and ducks, and a little garden with flowers and fruit. “Look,” said the wife, “is not that nice!” “Yes,” said the husband, “and so we must always think it, — now we will live quite contented.” “We will think about that,” said the wife. With that they ate something and went to bed.

Everything went well for a week or a fortnight, and then the woman said, “Hark you, husband, this cottage is far too small for us, and the garden and yard are little; the Flounder might just as well have given us a larger house. I should like to live in a great stone castle; go to the Flounder, and tell him to give us a castle.” “Ah, wife,” said the man, “the cottage is quite good enough; why should we live in a castle?” “What!” said the woman; “just go there, the Flounder can always do that.” “No, wife,” said the man, “the Flounder has just given us the cottage, I do not like to go back so soon, it might make him angry.” “Go,” said the woman, “he can do it quite easily, and will be glad to do it; just you go to him.”

The man’s heart grew heavy, and he would not go. He said to himself, “It is not right,” and yet he went. And when he came to the sea the water was quite purple and dark-blue, and grey and thick, and no longer so green and yellow, but it was still quiet. And he stood there and said —

“Flounder, flounder in the sea,
 Come, I pray thee, here to me;

For my wife, good Ilsabil,
 Wills not as I’d have her will.”

“Well, what does she want, then?” said the Flounder. “Alas,” said the man, half scared, “she wants to live in a great stone castle.” “Go to it, then, she is standing before the door,” said the Flounder.

Then the man went away, intending to go home, but when he got there, he found a great stone palace, and his wife was just standing on the steps going in, and she took him by the hand and said, “Come in.” So he went in with her, and in the castle was a great hall paved with marble, and many servants, who flung wide the doors; And the walls were all bright with beautiful hangings, and in the rooms were chairs and tables of pure gold, and crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and all the rooms and bed-rooms had carpets, and food and wine of the very best were standing on all the tables, so that they nearly broke down beneath it. Behind the house, too, there was a great court-yard, with stables for horses and cows, and the very best of carriages; there was a magnificent large garden, too, with the most beautiful flowers and fruit-trees, and a park quite half a mile long, in which were stags, deer, and hares, and everything that could be desired. “Come,” said the woman, “isn’t that beautiful?” “Yes, indeed,” said the man, “now let it be; and we will live in this beautiful castle and be content.” “We will consider about that,” said the woman, “and sleep upon it;” thereupon they went to bed.

Next morning the wife awoke first, and it was just daybreak, and from her bed she saw the beautiful country lying before her. Her husband was still stretching himself, so she poked him in the side with her elbow, and said, "Get up, husband, and just peep out of the window. Look you, couldn't we be the King over all that land? Go to the Flounder, we will be the King." "Ah, wife," said the man, "why should we be King? I do not want to be King." "Well," said the wife, "if you won't be King, I will; go to the Flounder, for I will be King." "Ah, wife," said the man, "why do you want to be King? I do not like to say that to him." "Why not?" said the woman; "go to him this instant; I must be King!" So the man went, and was quite unhappy because his wife wished to be King. "It is not right; it is not right," thought he. He did not wish to go, but yet he went.

And when he came to the sea, it was quite dark-grey, and the water heaved up from below, and smelt putrid. Then he went and stood by it, and said,

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;

For my wife, good Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will"

"Well, what does she want, then?" said the Flounder. "Alas," said the man, "she wants to be King." "Go to her; she is King already."

So the man went, and when he came to the palace, the castle had become much larger, and had a great tower and magnificent ornaments, and the sentinel was standing before the door, and there were numbers of soldiers with kettle-drums and trumpets. And when he went inside the house, everything was of real marble and gold, with velvet covers and great golden tassels. Then the doors of the hall were opened, and there was the court in all its splendour, and his wife was sitting on a high throne of gold and diamonds, with a great crown of gold on her head, and a sceptre of pure gold and jewels in her hand, and on both sides of her stood her maids-in-waiting in a row, each of them always one head shorter than the last.

Then he went and stood before her, and said, "Ah, wife, and now you are King." "Yes," said the woman, "now I am King." So he stood and looked at her, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, "And now that you are King, let all else be, now we will wish for nothing more." "Nay, husband," said the woman, quite anxiously, "I find time pass very heavily, I can bear it no longer; go to the Flounder — I am King, but I must be Emperor, too." "Alas, wife, why do you wish to be Emperor?" "Husband," said she, "go to the Flounder. I will be Emperor." "Alas, wife," said the man, "he cannot make you Emperor; I may not say that to the fish. There is only one Emperor in the land. An Emperor the Flounder cannot make you! I assure you he cannot."

"What!" said the woman, "I am the King, and you are nothing but my husband; will you go this moment? go at once! If he can make a King he can make an emperor. I will be Emperor; go instantly." So he was forced to go. As the man went, however, he was troubled in mind, and thought to himself, "It will not end well; it will not end well! Emperor is too shameless! The Flounder will at last be tired out."

With that he reached the sea, and the sea was quite black and thick, and began to boil up from below, so that it threw up bubbles, and such a sharp wind blew over it that it curdled, and the man was afraid. Then he went and stood by it, and said,

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
 Come, I pray thee, here to me;

For my wife, good Ilsabil,
 Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, then?" said the Flounder. "Alas, Flounder," said he, "my wife wants to be Emperor." "Go to her," said the Flounder; "she is Emperor already."

So the man went, and when he got there the whole palace was made of polished marble with alabaster figures and golden ornaments, and soldiers were marching before the door blowing trumpets, and beating cymbals and drums; and in the house, barons, and counts, and dukes were going about as servants. Then they opened the doors to him, which were of pure gold. And when he entered, there sat his wife on a throne, which was made of one piece of gold, and was quite two miles high; and she wore a great golden crown that was three yards high, and set with diamonds and carbuncles, and in one hand she had the sceptre, and in the other the imperial orb; and on both sides of her stood the yeomen of the guard in two rows, each being smaller than the one before him, from the biggest giant, who was two miles high, to the very smallest dwarf, just as big as my little finger. And before it stood a number of princes and dukes.

Then the man went and stood among them, and said, "Wife, are you Emperor now?" "Yes," said she, "now I am Emperor." Then he stood and looked at her well, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, "Ah, wife, be content, now that you are Emperor." "Husband," said she, "why are you standing there? Now, I am Emperor, but I will be Pope too; go to the Flounder." "Alas, wife," said the man, "what will you not wish for? You cannot be Pope. There is but one in Christendom. He cannot make you Pope." "Husband," said she, "I will be Pope; go immediately, I must be Pope this very day." "No, wife," said the man, "I do not like to say that to him; that would not do, it is too much; the Flounder can't make you Pope." "Husband," said she, "what nonsense! If he can make an emperor he can make a pope. Go to him directly. I am Emperor, and you are nothing but my husband; will you go at once?"

Then he was afraid and went; but he was quite faint, and shivered and shook, and his knees and legs trembled. And a high wind blew over the land,

and the clouds flew, and towards evening all grew dark, and the leaves fell from the trees, and the water rose and roared as if it were boiling, and splashed upon the shore. And in the distance he saw ships which were firing guns in their sore need, pitching and tossing on the waves. And yet in the midst of the sky there was still a small bit of blue, though on every side it was as red as in a heavy storm. So, full of despair, he went and stood in much fear and said,

"Flounder, flounder in the sea, Come, I pray thee, here to me;" For my wife, good Ilsabil, Wills not as I'd have her will.

"Well, what does she want, then?" said the Flounder. "Alas," said the man, "she wants to be Pope." "Go to her then," said the Flounder; "she is Pope already."

So he went, and when he got there, he saw what seemed to be a large church surrounded by palaces. He pushed his way through the crowd. Inside, however, everything was lighted up with thousands and thousands of candles, and his wife was clad in gold, and she was sitting on a much higher throne, and had three great golden crowns on, and round about her there was much ecclesiastical splendour; and on both sides of her was a row of candles the largest of which was as tall as the very tallest tower, down to the very smallest kitchen candle, and all the emperors and kings were on their knees before her, kissing her shoe. "Wife," said the man, and looked attentively at her, "are you now Pope?" "Yes," said she, "I am Pope." So he stood and looked at her, and it was just as if he was looking at the bright sun. When he had stood looking at her thus for a short time, he said, "Ah, wife, if you are Pope, do let well alone!" But she looked as stiff as a post, and did not move or show any signs of life. Then said he, "Wife, now that you are Pope, be satisfied, you cannot become anything greater now." "I will consider about that," said the woman. Thereupon they both went to bed, but she was not satisfied, and greediness let her have no sleep, for she was continually thinking what there was left for her to be.

The man slept well and soundly, for he had run about a great deal during the day; but the woman could not fall asleep at all, and flung herself from one side to the other the whole night through, thinking always what more was left for her to be, but unable to call to mind anything else. At length the sun began to rise, and when the woman saw the red of dawn, she sat up in bed and looked at it. And when, through the window, she saw the sun thus rising, she said, "Cannot I, too, order the sun and moon to rise?" "Husband," she said, poking him in the ribs with her elbows, "wake up! go to the Flounder, for I wish to be even as God is." The man was still half asleep, but he was so horrified that he fell out of bed. He thought he must have heard amiss, and rubbed his eyes, and said, "Alas, wife, what are you saying?" "Husband," said she, "if I can't order the sun and moon to rise, and have to look on and see the sun and moon rising, I can't bear it. I shall not know what it is to have another happy hour, unless I can make them rise myself." Then she looked at him so terribly that a shudder ran over him, and said, "Go at once; I wish to be like unto God." "Alas, wife," said the man, falling on his knees before her, “the Flounder cannot do that; he can make an emperor and a pope; I beseech you, go on as you are, and be Pope.” Then she fell into a rage, and her hair flew wildly about her head, and she cried, “I will not endure this, I’ll not bear it any longer; wilt thou go?” Then he put on his trousers and ran away like a madman. But outside a great storm was raging, and blowing so hard that he could scarcely keep his feet; houses and trees toppled over, the mountains trembled, rocks rolled into the sea, the sky was pitch black, and it thundered and lightened, and the sea came in with black waves as high as church-towers and mountains, and all with crests of white foam at the top. Then he cried, but could not hear his own words,

“Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;

For my wife, good Ilsabil,
Wills not as I’d have her will.”

“Well, what does she want, then?” said the Flounder. “Alas,” said he, “she wants to be like unto God.” “Go to her, and you will find her back again in the dirty hovel.” And there they are living still at this very time.

The Valiant Little Tailor

One summer's morning a little tailor was sitting on his table by the window; he was in good spirits, and sewed with all his might. Then came a peasant woman down the street crying, "Good jams, cheap! Good jams, cheap!" This rang pleasantly in the tailor's ears; he stretched his delicate head out of the window, and called, "Come up here, dear woman; here you will get rid of your goods." The woman came up the three steps to the tailor with her heavy basket, and he made her unpack the whole of the pots for him. He inspected all of them, lifted them up, put his nose to them, and at length said, "The jam seems to me to be good, so weigh me out four ounces, dear woman, and if it is a quarter of a pound that is of no consequence." The woman who had hoped to find a good sale, gave him what he desired, but went away quite angry and grumbling. "Now, God bless the jam to my use," cried the little tailor, "and give me health and strength;" so he brought the bread out of the cupboard, cut himself a piece right across the loaf and spread the jam over it. "This won't taste bitter," said he, "but I will just finish the jacket before I take a bite." He laid the bread near him, sewed on, and in his joy, made bigger and bigger stitches. In the meantime the smell of the sweet jam ascended so to the wall, where the flies were sitting in great numbers, that they were attracted and descended on it in hosts. "Hola! who invited you?" said the little tailor, and drove the unbidden guests away. The flies, however, who understood no German, would not be turned away, but came back again in ever-increasing companies. The little tailor at last lost all patience, and got a bit of cloth from the hole under his work-table, and saying, "Wait, and I will give it to you," struck it mercilessly on them. When he drew it away and counted, there lay before him no fewer than seven, dead and with legs stretched out. "Art thou a fellow of that sort?" said he, and could not help admiring his own bravery. "The whole town shall know of this!" And the little tailor hastened to cut himself a girdle, stitched it, and embroidered on it in large letters, "Seven at one stroke!" "What, the town!" he continued, "The whole world shall hear of it!" and his heart wagged with joy like a lamb's tail. The tailor put on the girdle, and resolved to go forth into the world, because he thought his workshop was too small for his valour. Before he went away, he sought about in the house to see if there was anything which he could take with him; however, he found nothing but an old cheese, and that he put in his pocket. In front of the door he observed a bird which had caught itself in the thicket. It had to go into his pocket with the cheese. Now he took to the road boldly, and as he was light and nimble, he felt no fatigue. The road led him up a mountain, and when he had reached the highest point of it, there sat a powerful giant looking about him quite comfortably. The little tailor went bravely up, spoke to him, and said, "Good day, comrade, so thou art sitting there overlooking the wide-spread world! I am just on my way thither, and want to try my luck. Hast thou any inclination to go with me?" The giant looked contemptuously at the tailor, and said, "Thou ragamuffin! Thou miserable creature!”

“Oh, indeed?” answered the little tailor, and unbuttoned his coat, and showed the giant the girdle, “There mayst thou read what kind of a man I am!” The giant read, “Seven at one stroke,” and thought that they had been men whom the tailor had killed, and began to feel a little respect for the tiny fellow. Nevertheless, he wished to try him first, and took a stone in his hand and squeezed it together so that water dropped out of it. “Do that likewise,” said the giant, “if thou hast strength?” “Is that all?” said the tailor, “that is child’s play with us!” and put his hand into his pocket, brought out the soft cheese, and pressed it until the liquid ran out of it. “Faith,” said he, “that was a little better, wasn’t it?” The giant did not know what to say, and could not believe it of the little man. Then the giant picked up a stone and threw it so high that the eye could scarcely follow it. “Now, little mite of a man, do that likewise.” “Well thrown,” said the tailor, “but after all the stone came down to earth again; I will throw you one which shall never come back at all.” And he put his hand into his pocket, took out the bird, and threw it into the air. The bird, delighted with its liberty, rose, flew away and did not come back. “How does that shot please you, comrade?” asked the tailor. “Thou canst certainly throw,” said the giant, “but now we will see if thou art able to carry anything properly.” He took the little tailor to a mighty oak tree which lay there felled on the ground, and said, “If thou art strong enough, help me to carry the tree out of the forest.” “Readily,” answered the little man; “take thou the trunk on thy shoulders, and I will raise up the branches and twigs; after all, they are the heaviest.” The giant took the trunk on his shoulder, but the tailor seated himself on a branch, and the giant who could not look round, had to carry away the whole tree, and the little tailor into the bargain: he behind, was quite merry and happy, and whistled the song, “Three tailors rode forth from the gate,” as if carrying the tree were child’s play. The giant, after he had dragged the heavy burden part of the way, could go no further, and cried, “Hark you, I shall have to let the tree fall!” The tailor sprang nimbly down, seized the tree with both arms as if he had been carrying it, and said to the giant, “Thou art such a great fellow, and yet canst not even carry the tree!”

They went on together, and as they passed a cherry-tree, the giant laid hold of the top of the tree where the ripest fruit was hanging, bent it down, gave it into the tailor’s hand, and bade him eat. But the little tailor was much too weak to hold the tree, and when the giant let it go, it sprang back again, and the tailor was hurried into the air with it. When he had fallen down again without injury, the giant said, “What is this? Hast thou not strength enough to hold the weak twig?” “There is no lack of strength,” answered the little tailor. “Dost thou think that could be anything to a man who has struck down seven at one blow? I leapt over the tree because the huntsmen are shooting down there in the thicket. Jump as I did, if thou canst do it.” The giant made the attempt, but could not get over the tree, and remained hanging in the branches, so that in this also the tailor kept the upper hand.

The giant said, “If thou art such a valiant fellow, come with me into our cavern and spend the night with us.” The little tailor was willing, and followed him. When they went into the cave, other giants were sitting there by the fire, and each of them had a roasted sheep in his hand and was eating it. The little tailor looked round and thought, “It is much more spacious here than in my workshop.” The giant showed him a bed, and said he was to lie down in it and sleep. The bed, however, was too big for the little tailor; he did not lie down in it, but crept into a corner. When it was midnight, and the giant thought that the little tailor was lying in a sound sleep, he got up, took a great iron bar, cut through the bed with one blow, and thought he had given the grasshopper his finishing stroke. With the earliest dawn the giants went into the forest, and had quite forgotten the little tailor, when all at once he walked up to them quite merrily and boldly. The giants were terrified, they were afraid that he would strike them all dead, and ran away in a great hurry.

The little tailor went onwards, always following his own pointed nose. After he had walked for a long time, he came to the courtyard of a royal palace, and as he felt weary, he lay down on the grass and fell asleep. Whilst he lay there, the people came and inspected him on all sides, and read on his girdle, “Seven at one stroke.” “Ah,” said they, “What does the great warrior here in the midst of peace? He must be a mighty lord.” They went and announced him to the King, and gave it as their opinion that if war should break out, this would be a weighty and useful man who ought on no account to be allowed to depart. The counsel pleased the King, and he sent one of his courtiers to the little tailor to offer him military service when he awoke. The ambassador remained standing by the sleeper, waited until he stretched his limbs and opened his eyes, and then conveyed to him this proposal. “For this very reason have I come here,” the tailor replied, “I am ready to enter the King’s service.” He was therefore honorably received and a special dwelling was assigned him.

The soldiers, however, were set against the little tailor, and wished him a thousand miles away. “What is to be the end of this?” they said amongst themselves. “If we quarrel with him, and he strikes about him, seven of us will fall at every blow; not one of us can stand against him.” They came therefore to a decision, betook themselves in a body to the King, and begged for their dismissal. “We are not prepared,” said they, “to stay with a man who kills seven at one stroke.” The King was sorry that for the sake of one he should lose all his faithful servants, wished that he had never set eyes on the tailor, and would willingly have been rid of him again. But he did not venture to give him his dismissal, for he dreaded lest he should strike him and all his people dead, and place himself on the royal throne. He thought about it for a long time, and at last found good counsel. He sent to the little tailor and caused him to be informed that as he was such a great warrior, he had one request to make to him. In a forest of his country lived two giants who caused great mischief with their robbing, murdering, ravaging, and burning, and no one could approach them without putting himself in danger of death. If the tailor conquered and killed these two giants, he would give him his only daughter to wife, and half of his kingdom as a dowry, likewise one hundred horsemen should go with him to assist him. “That would indeed be a fine thing for a man like me!” thought the little tailor. “One is not offered a beautiful princess and half a kingdom every day of one’s life!” “Oh, yes,” he replied, “I will soon subdue the giants, and do not require the help of the hundred horsemen to do it; he who can hit seven with one blow has no need to be afraid of two.”

The little tailor went forth, and the hundred horsemen followed him. When he came to the outskirts of the forest, he said to his followers, “Just stay waiting here, I alone will soon finish off the giants.” Then he bounded into the forest and looked about right and left. After a while he perceived both giants. They lay sleeping under a tree, and snored so that the branches waved up and down. The little tailor, not idle, gathered two pocketsful of stones, and with these climbed up the tree. When he was half-way up, he slipped down by a branch, until he sat just above the sleepers, and then let one stone after another fall on the breast of one of the giants. For a long time the giant felt nothing, but at last he awoke, pushed his comrade, and said, “Why art thou knocking me?” “Thou must be dreaming,” said the other, “I am not knocking thee.” They laid themselves down to sleep again, and then the tailor threw a stone down on the second. “What is the meaning of this?” cried the other. “Why art thou pelting me?” “I am not pelting thee,” answered the first, growling. They disputed about it for a time, but as they were weary they let the matter rest, and their eyes closed once more. The little tailor began his game again, picked out the biggest stone, and threw it with all his might on the breast of the first giant. “That is too bad!” cried he, and sprang up like a madman, and pushed his companion against the tree until it shook. The other paid him back in the same coin, and they got into such a rage that they tore up trees and belabored each other so long, that at last they both fell down dead on the ground at the same time. Then the little tailor leapt down. “It is a lucky thing,” said he, “that they did not tear up the tree on which I was sitting, or I should have had to spring on to another like a squirrel; but we tailors are nimble.” He drew out his sword and gave each of them a couple of thrusts in the breast, and then went out to the horsemen and said, “The work is done; I have given both of them their finishing stroke, but it was hard work! They tore up trees in their sore need, and defended themselves with them, but all that is to no purpose when a man like myself comes, who can kill seven at one blow.” “But are you not wounded?” asked the horsemen. “You need not concern yourself about that,” answered the tailor, “They have not bent one hair of mine.” The horsemen would not believe him, and rode into the forest; there they found the giants swimming in their blood, and all round about lay the torn-up trees.

The little tailor demanded of the King the promised reward; he, however, repented of his promise, and again bethought himself how he could get rid of the hero. “Before thou receivest my daughter, and the half of my kingdom,” said he to him, “thou must perform one more heroic deed. In the forest roams a unicorn which does great harm, and thou must catch it first.”

“I fear one unicorn still less than two giants. Seven at one blow, is my kind of affair.” He took a rope and an axe with him, went forth into the forest, and again bade those who were sent with him to wait outside. He had to seek long. The unicorn soon came towards him, and rushed directly on the tailor, as if it would spit him on his horn without more ceremony. “Softly, softly; it can’t be done as quickly as that,” said he, and stood still and waited until the animal was quite close, and then sprang nimbly behind the tree. The unicorn ran against the tree with all its strength, and struck its horn so fast in the trunk that it had not strength enough to draw it out again, and thus it was caught. “Now, I have got the bird,” said the tailor, and came out from behind the tree and put the rope round its neck, and then with his axe he hewed the horn out of the tree, and when all was ready he led the beast away and took it to the King.

The King still would not give him the promised reward, and made a third demand. Before the wedding the tailor was to catch him a wild boar that made great havoc in the forest, and the huntsmen should give him their help. “Willingly,” said the tailor, “that is child’s play!” He did not take the huntsmen with him into the forest, and they were well pleased that he did not, for the wild boar had several times received them in such a manner that they had no inclination to lie in wait for him. When the boar perceived the tailor, it ran on him with foaming mouth and whetted tusks, and was about to throw him to the ground, but the active hero sprang into a chapel which was near, and up to the window at once, and in one bound out again. The boar ran in after him, but the tailor ran round outside and shut the door behind it, and then the raging beast, which was much too heavy and awkward to leap out of the window, was caught. The little tailor called the huntsmen thither that they might see the prisoner with their own eyes. The hero, however went to the King, who was now, whether he liked it or not, obliged to keep his promise, and gave him his daughter and the half of his kingdom. Had he known that it was no warlike hero, but a little tailor who was standing before him, it would have gone to his heart still more than it did. The wedding was held with great magnificence and small joy, and out of a tailor a king was made.

After some time the young Queen heard her husband say in his dreams at night, “Boy, make me the doublet, and patch the pantaloons, or else I will rap the yard-measure over thine ears.” Then she discovered in what state of life the young lord had been born, and next morning complained of her wrongs to her father, and begged him to help her to get rid of her husband, who was nothing else but a tailor. The King comforted her and said, “Leave thy bed-room door open this night, and my servants shall stand outside, and when he has fallen asleep shall go in, bind him, and take him on board a ship which shall carry him into the wide world.” The woman was satisfied with this; but the King’s armour-bearer, who had heard all, was friendly with the young lord, and informed him of the whole plot. “I’ll put a screw into that business,” said the little tailor. At night he went to bed with his wife at the usual time, and when she thought that he had fallen asleep, she got up, opened the door, and then lay down again. The little tailor, who was only pretending to be asleep, began to cry out in a clear voice, “Boy, make me the doublet and patch me the pantaloons, or I will rap the yard-measure over thine ears. I smote seven at one blow. I killed two giants, I brought away one unicorn and caught a wild boar, and am I to fear those who are standing outside the room.” When these men heard the tailor speaking thus, they were overcome by a great dread, and ran as if the wild huntsman were behind them, and none of them would venture anything further against him. So the little tailor was a king and remained one, to the end of his life.

Cinderella

The wife of a rich man fell sick, and as she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, “Dear child, be good and pious, and then the good God will always protect thee, and I will look down on thee from heaven and be near thee.” Thereupon she closed her eyes and departed. Every day the maiden went out to her mother’s grave, and wept, and she remained pious and good. When winter came the snow spread a white sheet over the grave, and when the spring sun had drawn it off again, the man had taken another wife.

The woman had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor step-child. “Is the stupid goose to sit in the parlour with us?” said they. “He who wants to eat bread must earn it; out with the kitchen-wench.” They took her pretty clothes away from her, put an old grey bedgown on her, and gave her wooden shoes. “Just look at the proud princess, how decked out she is!” they cried, and laughed, and led her into the kitchen. There she had to do hard work from morning till night, get up before daybreak, carry water, light fires, cook and wash. Besides this, the sisters did her every imaginable injury — they mocked her and emptied her peas and lentils into the ashes, so that she was forced to sit and pick them out again. In the evening when she had worked till she was weary she had no bed to go to, but had to sleep by the fireside in the ashes. And as on that account she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella. It happened that the father was once going to the fair, and he asked his two step-daughters what he should bring back for them. “Beautiful dresses,” said one, “Pearls and jewels,” said the second. “And thou, Cinderella,” said he, “what wilt thou have?” “Father, break off for me the first branch which knocks against your hat on your way home.” So he bought beautiful dresses, pearls and jewels for his two step-daughters, and on his way home, as he was riding through a green thicket, a hazel twig brushed against him and knocked off his hat. Then he broke off the branch and took it with him. When he reached home he gave his step-daughters the things which they had wished for, and to Cinderella he gave the branch from the hazel-bush. Cinderella thanked him, went to her mother’s grave and planted the branch on it, and wept so much that the tears fell down on it and watered it. And it grew, however, and became a handsome tree. Thrice a day Cinderella went and sat beneath it, and wept and prayed, and a little white bird always came on the tree, and if Cinderella expressed a wish, the bird threw down to her what she had wished for.

It happened, however, that the King appointed a festival which was to last three days, and to which all the beautiful young girls in the country were invited, in order that his son might choose himself a bride. When the two step-sisters heard that they too were to appear among the number, they were delighted, called Cinderella and said, “Comb our hair for us, brush our shoes and fasten our buckles, for we are going to the festival at the King’s palace.” Cinderella obeyed, but wept, because she too would have liked to go with them to the dance, and begged her step-mother to allow her to do so. “Thou go, Cinderella!” said she; “Thou art dusty and dirty and wouldst go to the festival? Thou hast no clothes and shoes, and yet wouldst dance!” As, however, Cinderella went on asking, the step-mother at last said, “I have emptied a dish of lentils into the ashes for thee, if thou hast picked them out again in two hours, thou shalt go with us.” The maiden went through the back-door into the garden, and called, “You tame pigeons, you turtle-doves, and all you birds beneath the sky, come and help me to pick

“The good into the pot,
 The bad into the crop.”

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterwards the turtle-doves, and at last all the birds beneath the sky, came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the pigeons nodded with their heads and began pick, pick, pick, pick, and the rest began also pick, pick, pick, pick, and gathered all the good grains into the dish. Hardly had one hour passed before they had finished, and all flew out again. Then the girl took the dish to her step-mother, and was glad, and believed that now she would be allowed to go with them to the festival. But the step-mother said, “No, Cinderella, thou hast no clothes and thou canst not dance; thou wouldst only be laughed at.” And as Cinderella wept at this, the step-mother said, “If thou canst pick two dishes of lentils out of the ashes for me in one hour, thou shalt go with us.” And she thought to herself, “That she most certainly cannot do.” When the step-mother had emptied the two dishes of lentils amongst the ashes, the maiden went through the back-door into the garden and cried, You tame pigeons, you turtle-doves, and all you birds under heaven, come and help me to pick

“The good into the pot,
 The bad into the crop.”

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterwards the turtle-doves, and at length all the birds beneath the sky, came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the doves nodded with their heads and began pick, pick, pick, pick, and the others began also pick, pick, pick, pick, and gathered all the good seeds into the dishes, and before half an hour was over they had already finished, and all flew out again. Then the maiden carried the dishes to the step-mother and was delighted, and believed that she might now go with them to the festival. But the step-mother said, “All this will not help thee; thou goest not with us, for thou hast no clothes and canst not dance; we should be ashamed of thee!” On this she turned her back on Cinderella, and hurried away with her two proud daughters.

As no one was now at home, Cinderella went to her mother's grave beneath the hazel-tree, and cried,

"Shiver and quiver, little tree,
Silver and gold throw down over me."

Then the bird threw a gold and silver dress down to her, and slippers embroidered with silk and silver. She put on the dress with all speed, and went to the festival. Her step-sisters and the step-mother however did not know her, and thought she must be a foreign princess, for she looked so beautiful in the golden dress. They never once thought of Cinderella, and believed that she was sitting at home in the dirt, picking lentils out of the ashes. The prince went to meet her, took her by the hand and danced with her. He would dance with no other maiden, and never left loose of her hand, and if any one else came to invite her, he said, "This is my partner."

She danced till it was evening, and then she wanted to go home. But the King's son said, "I will go with thee and bear thee company," for he wished to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged. She escaped from him, however, and sprang into the pigeon-house. The King's son waited until her father came, and then he told him that the stranger maiden had leapt into the pigeon-house. The old man thought, "Can it be Cinderella?" and they had to bring him an axe and a pickaxe that he might hew the pigeon-house to pieces, but no one was inside it. And when they got home Cinderella lay in her dirty clothes among the ashes, and a dim little oil-lamp was burning on the mantle-piece, for Cinderella had jumped quickly down from the back of the pigeon-house and had run to the little hazel-tree, and there she had taken off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave, and the bird had taken them away again, and then she had placed herself in the kitchen amongst the ashes in her grey gown.

Next day when the festival began afresh, and her parents and the step-sisters had gone once more, Cinderella went to the hazel-tree and said —

"Shiver and quiver, my little tree,
Silver and gold throw down over me."

Then the bird threw down a much more beautiful dress than on the preceding day. And when Cinderella appeared at the festival in this dress, every one was astonished at her beauty. The King's son had waited until she came, and instantly took her by the hand and danced with no one but her. When others came and invited her, he said, "She is my partner." When evening came she wished to leave, and the King's son followed her and wanted to see into which house she went. But she sprang away from him, and into the garden behind the house. Therein stood a beautiful tall tree on which hung the most magnificent pears. She clambered so nimbly between the branches like a squirrel that the King's son did not know where she was gone. He waited until her father came, and said to him, "The stranger-maiden has escaped from me, and I believe she has climbed up the pear-tree." The father thought, "Can it be Cinderella?" and had an axe brought and cut the tree down, but no one was on it. And when they got into the kitchen, Cinderella lay there amongst the ashes, as usual, for she had jumped down on the other side of the tree, had taken the beautiful dress to the bird on the little hazel-tree, and put on her grey gown.

On the third day, when the parents and sisters had gone away, Cinderella went once more to her mother's grave and said to the little tree —

"Shiver and quiver, my little tree,
Silver and gold throw down over me."

And now the bird threw down to her a dress which was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and the slippers were golden. And when she went to the festival in the dress, no one knew how to speak for astonishment. The King's son danced with her only, and if any one invited her to dance, he said, "She is my partner."

When evening came, Cinderella wished to leave, and the King's son was anxious to go with her, but she escaped from him so quickly that he could not follow her. The King's son had, however, used a strategem, and had caused the whole staircase to be smeared with pitch, and there, when she ran down, had the maiden's left slipper remained sticking. The King's son picked it up, and it was small and dainty, and all golden. Next morning, he went with it to the father, and said to him, "No one shall be my wife but she whose foot this golden slipper fits." Then were the two sisters glad, for they had pretty feet. The eldest went with the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her big toe into it, and the shoe was too small for her. Then her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut the toe off; when thou art Queen thou wilt have no more need to go on foot." The maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son. Then he took her on his his horse as his bride and rode away with her. They were, however, obliged to pass the grave, and there, on the hazel-tree, sat the two pigeons and cried,

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,
There's blood within the shoe,

The shoe it is too small for her,
The true bride waits for you."

Then he looked at her foot and saw how the blood was streaming from it. He turned his horse round and took the false bride home again, and said she was not the true one, and that the other sister was to put the shoe on. Then this one went into her chamber and got her toes safely into the shoe, but her heel was too large. So her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut a bit off thy heel; when thou art Queen thou wilt have no more need to go on foot." The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son. He took her on his horse as his bride, and rode away with her, but when they passed by the hazel-tree, two little pigeons sat on it and cried,

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,
There's blood within the shoe

The shoe it is too small for her,
The true bride waits for you."

He looked down at her foot and saw how the blood was running out of her shoe, and how it had stained her white stocking. Then he turned his horse and took the false bride home again. "This also is not the right one," said he, "have you no other daughter?" "No," said the man, "There is still a little stunted kitchen-wench which my late wife left behind her, but she cannot possibly be the bride." The King's son said he was to send her up to him; but the mother answered, "Oh, no, she is much too dirty, she cannot show herself!" He absolutely insisted on it, and Cinderella had to be called. She first washed her hands and face clean, and then went and bowed down before the King's son, who gave her the golden shoe. Then she seated herself on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe, and put it into the slipper, which fitted like a glove. And when she rose up and the King's son looked at her face he recognized the beautiful maiden who had danced with him and cried, "That is the true bride!" The step-mother and the two sisters were terrified and became pale with rage; he, however, took Cinderella on his horse and rode away with her. As they passed by the hazel-tree, the two white doves cried —

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,
No blood is in the shoe,
The shoe is not too small for her,
The true bride rides with you,"

and when they had cried that, the two came flying down and placed themselves on Cinderella's shoulders, one on the right, the other on the left, and remained sitting there.

When the wedding with the King's son had to be celebrated, the two false sisters came and wanted to get into favour with Cinderella and share her good fortune. When the betrothed couple went to church, the elder was at the right side and the younger at the left, and the pigeons pecked out one eye of each of them. Afterwards as they came back, the elder was at the left, and the younger at the right, and then the pigeons pecked out the other eye of each. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.

The Riddle

There was once a King’s son who was seized with a desire to travel about the world, and took no one with him but a faithful servant. One day he came to a great forest, and when darkness overtook him he could find no shelter, and knew not where to pass the night. Then he saw a girl who was going towards a small house, and when he came nearer, he saw that the maiden was young and beautiful. He spoke to her, and said, “Dear child, can I and my servant find shelter for the night in the little house?” “Oh, yes,” said the girl in a sad voice, “that you certainly can, but I do not advise you to venture it. Do not go in.” “Why not?” asked the King’s son. The maiden sighed and said, “My step-mother practises wicked arts; she is ill-disposed toward strangers.” Then he saw very well that he had come to the house of a witch, but as it was dark, and he could not go farther, and also was not afraid, he entered. The old woman was sitting in an armchair by the fire, and looked at the stranger with her red eyes. “Good evening,” growled she, and pretended to be quite friendly. “Take a seat and rest yourselves.” She blew up the fire on which she was cooking something in a small pot. The daughter warned the two to be prudent, to eat nothing, and drink nothing, for the old woman brewed evil drinks. They slept quietly until early morning. When they were making ready for their departure, and the King’s son was already seated on his horse, the old woman said, “Stop a moment, I will first hand you a parting draught.” Whilst she fetched it, the King’s son rode away, and the servant who had to buckle his saddle tight, was the only one present when the wicked witch came with the drink. “Take that to your master,” said she. But at that instant the glass broke and the poison spirted on the horse, and it was so strong that the animal immediately fell down dead. The servant ran after his master and told him what had happened, but would not leave his saddle behind him, and ran back to fetch it. When, however, he came to the dead horse a raven was already sitting on it devouring it. “Who knows whether we shall find anything better to-day?” said the servant; so he killed the raven, and took it with him. And now they journeyed onwards into the forest the whole day, but could not get out of it. By nightfall they found an inn and entered it. The servant gave the raven to the innkeeper to make ready for supper. They had, however, stumbled on a den of murderers, and during the darkness twelve of these came, intending to kill the strangers and rob them. Before they set about this work, they sat down to supper, and the innkeeper and the witch sat down with them, and together they ate a dish of soup in which was cut up the flesh of the raven. Hardly, however, had they swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, before they all fell down dead, for the raven had communicated to them the poison from the horse-flesh. There was no no one else left in the house but the innkeeper’s daughter, who was honest, and had taken no part in their godless deeds. She opened all doors to the stranger and showed him the heaped-up treasures. But the King’s son said she might keep everything, he would have none of it, and rode onwards with his servant.

After they had traveled about for a long time, they came to a town in which was a beautiful but proud princess, who had caused it to be proclaimed that whosoever should set her a riddle which she could not guess, that man should be her husband; but if she guessed it, his head must be cut off. She had three days to guess it in, but was so clever that she always found the answer to the riddle given her, before the appointed time. Nine suitors had already perished in this manner, when the King's son arrived, and blinded by her great beauty, was willing to stake his life for it. Then he went to her and laid his riddle before her. "What is this?" said he, "One slew none, and yet slew twelve." She did not know what that was, she thought and thought, but she could not find out, she opened her riddle-books, but it was not in them — in short, her wisdom was at an end. As she did not know how to help herself, she ordered her maid to creep into the lord's sleeping-chamber, and listen to his dreams, and thought that he would perhaps speak in his sleep and discover the riddle. But the clever servant had placed himself in the bed instead of his master, and when the maid came there, he tore off from her the mantle in which she had wrapped herself, and chased her out with rods. The second night the King's daughter sent her maid-in-waiting, who was to see if she could succeed better in listening, but the servant took her mantle also away from her, and hunted her out with rods. Now the master believed himself safe for the third night, and lay down in his own bed. Then came the princess herself, and she had put on a misty-grey mantle, and she seated herself near him. And when she thought that he was asleep and dreaming, she spoke to him, and hoped that he would answer in his sleep, as many do, but he was awake, and understood and heard everything quite well. Then she asked, "One slew none, what is that?" He replied, "A raven, which ate of a dead and poisoned horse, and died of it." She inquired further, "And yet slew twelve, what is that?" He answered, "That means twelve murderers, who ate the raven and died of it."

When she knew the answer to the riddle she wanted to steal away, but he held her mantle so fast that she was forced to leave it behind her. Next morning, the King's daughter announced that she had guessed the riddle, and sent for the twelve judges and expounded it before them. But the youth begged for a hearing, and said, "She stole into my room in the night and questioned me, otherwise she could not have discovered it." The judges said, "Bring us a proof of this." Then were the three mantles brought thither by the servant, and when the judges saw the misty-grey one which the King's daughter usually wore, they said, "Let the mantle be embroidered with gold and silver, and then it will be your wedding-mantle.

The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage

Once on a time a mouse, a bird, and a sausage became companions, kept house together, lived well and happily with each other, and wonderfully increased their possessions. The bird’s work was to fly every day into the forest and bring back wood. The mouse had to carry water, light the fire, and lay the table, but the sausage had to cook.

He who is too well off is always longing for something new. One day, therefore, the bird met with another bird, on the way, to whom it related its excellent circumstances and boasted of them. The other bird, however, called it a poor simpleton for his hard work, but said that the two at home had good times. For when the mouse had made her fire and carried her water, she went into her little room to rest until they called her to lay the table. The sausage stayed by the pot, saw that the food was cooking well, and, when it was nearly time for dinner, it rolled itself once or twice through the broth or vegetables and then they were buttered, salted, and ready. When the bird came home and laid his burden down, they sat down to dinner, and after they had had their meal, they slept their fill till next morning, and that was a splendid life.

Next day the bird, prompted by the other bird, would go no more into the wood, saying that he had been servant long enough, and had been made a fool of by them, and that they must change about for once, and try to arrange it in another way. And, though the mouse and the sausage also begged most earnestly, the bird would have his way, and said it must be tried. They cast lots about it, and the lot fell on the sausage who was to carry wood, the mouse became cook, and the bird was to fetch water.

What happened? The little sausage went out towards the wood, the little bird lighted the fire, the mouse stayed by the pot and waited alone until little sausage came home and brought wood for next day. But the little sausage stayed so long on the road that they both feared something was amiss, and the bird flew out a little way in the air to meet it. Not far off, however, it met a dog on the road who had fallen on the poor sausage as lawful booty, and had seized and swallowed it. The bird charged the dog with an act of barefaced robbery, but it was in vain to speak, for the dog said he had found forged letters on the sausage, on which account its life was forfeited to him.

The bird sadly took up the wood, flew home, and related what he had seen and heard. They were much troubled, but agreed to do their best and remain together. The bird therefore laid the cloth, and the mouse made ready the food, and wanted to dress it, and to get into the pot as the sausage used to do, and roll and creep amongst the vegetables to mix them; but before she got into the midst of them she was stopped, and lost her skin and hair and life in the attempt.

When the bird came to carry up the dinner, no cook was there. In its distress the bird threw the wood here and there, called and searched, but no cook was to be found! Owing to his carelessness the wood caught fire, so that a conflagration ensued, the bird hastened to fetch water, and then the bucket dropped from his claws into the well, and he fell down with it, and could not recover himself, but had to drown there.

Mother Holle

There was once a widow who had two daughters — one of whom was pretty and industrious, whilst the other was ugly and idle. But she was much fonder of the ugly and idle one, because she was her own daughter; and the other, who was a step-daughter, was obliged to do all the work, and be the Cinderella of the house. Every day the poor girl had to sit by a well, in the highway, and spin and spin till her fingers bled.

Now it happened that one day the shuttle was marked with her blood, so she dipped it in the well, to wash the mark off; but it dropped out of her hand and fell to the bottom. She began to weep, and ran to her step-mother and told her of the mishap. But she scolded her sharply, and was so merciless as to say, “Since you have let the shuttle fall in, you must fetch it out again.”

So the girl went back to the well, and did not know what to do; and in the sorrow of her heart she jumped into the well to get the shuttle. She lost her senses; and when she awoke and came to herself again, she was in a lovely meadow where the sun was shining and many thousands of flowers were growing. Along this meadow she went, and at last came to a baker’s oven full of bread, and the bread cried out, “Oh, take me out! take me out! or I shall burn; I have been baked a long time!” So she went up to it, and took out all the loaves one after another with the bread-shovel. After that she went on till she came to a tree covered with apples, which called out to her, “Oh, shake me! shake me! we apples are all ripe!” So she shook the tree till the apples fell like rain, and went on shaking till they were all down, and when she had gathered them into a heap, she went on her way.

At last she came to a little house, out of which an old woman peeped; but she had such large teeth that the girl was frightened, and was about to run away.

But the old woman called out to her, “What are you afraid of, dear child? Stay with me; if you will do all the work in the house properly, you shall be the better for it. Only you must take care to make my bed well, and shake it thoroughly till the feathers fly — for then there is snow on the earth. I am Mother Holle.

As the old woman spoke so kindly to her, the girl took courage and agreed to enter her service. She attended to everything to the satisfaction of her mistress, and always shook her bed so vigorously that the feathers flew about like snow-flakes. So she had a pleasant life with her; never an angry word; and boiled or roast meat every day.

She stayed some time with Mother Holle, and then she became sad. At first she did not know what was the matter with her, but found at length that it was home-sickness: although she was many thousand times better off here than at home, still she had a longing to be there. At last she said to the old woman, “I have a longing for home; and however well off I am down here, I cannot stay any longer; I must go up again to my own people.” Mother Holle said, “I am pleased that you long for your home again, and as you have served me so truly, I myself will take you up again.” Thereupon she took her by the hand, and led her to a large door. The door was opened, and just as the maiden was standing beneath the doorway, a heavy shower of golden rain fell, and all the gold remained sticking to her, so that she was completely covered over with it.

“You shall have that because you have been so industrious,” said Mother Holle, and at the same time she gave her back the shuttle which she had let fall into the well. Thereupon the door closed, and the maiden found herself up above upon the earth, not far from her mother’s house.

And as she went into the yard the cock was standing by the well-side, and cried —

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your golden girl’s come back to you!”

So she went in to her mother, and as she arrived thus covered with gold, she was well received, both by her and her sister.

The girl told all that had happened to her; and as soon as the mother heard how she had come by so much wealth, she was very anxious to obtain the same good luck for the ugly and lazy daughter. She had to seat herself by the well and spin; and in order that her shuttle might be stained with blood, she stuck her hand into a thorn bush and pricked her finger. Then she threw her shuttle into the well, and jumped in after it.

She came, like the other, to the beautiful meadow and walked along the very same path. When she got to the oven the bread again cried, “Oh, take me out! take me out! or I shall burn; I have been baked a long time!” But the lazy thing answered, “As if I had any wish to make myself dirty?” and on she went. Soon she came to the apple-tree, which cried, “Oh, shake me! shake me! we apples are all ripe!” But she answered, “I like that! one of you might fall on my head,” and so went on.

When she came to Mother Holle’s house she was not afraid, for she had already heard of her big teeth, and she hired herself to her immediately.

The first day she forced herself to work diligently, and obeyed Mother Holle when she told her to do anything, for she was thinking of all the gold that she would give her. But on the second day she began to be lazy, and on the third day still more so, and then she would not get up in the morning at all. Neither did she make Mother Holle’s bed as she ought, and did not shake it so as to make the feathers fly up. Mother Holle was soon tired of this, and gave her notice to leave. The lazy girl was willing enough to go, and thought that now the golden rain would come. Mother Holle led her also to the great door; but while she was standing beneath it, instead of the gold a big kettleful of pitch was emptied over her. “That is the reward for your service,” said Mother Holle, and shut the door.

So the lazy girl went home; but she was quite covered with pitch, and the cock by the well-side, as soon as he saw her, cried out —

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your pitchy girl’s come back to you!”

But the pitch stuck fast to her, and could not be got off as long as she lived.

The Seven Ravens

There was once a man who had seven sons, and still he had no daughter, however much he wished for one. At length his wife again gave him hope of a child, and when it came into the world it was a girl. The joy was great, but the child was sickly and small, and had to be privately baptized on account of its weakness. The father sent one of the boys in haste to the spring to fetch water for the baptism. The other six went with him, and as each of them wanted to be first to fill it, the jug fell into the well. There they stood and did not know what to do, and none of them dared to go home. As they still did not return, the father grew impatient, and said, “They have certainly forgotten it for some game, the wicked boys!” He became afraid that the girl would have to die without being baptized, and in his anger cried, “I wish the boys were all turned into ravens.” Hardly was the word spoken before he heard a whirring of wings over his head in the air, looked up and saw seven coal-black ravens flying away. The parents could not recall the curse, and however sad they were at the loss of their seven sons, they still to some extent comforted themselves with their dear little daughter, who soon grew strong and every day became more beautiful. For a long time she did not know that she had had brothers, for her parents were careful not to mention them before her, but one day she accidentally heard some people saying of herself, “that the girl was certainly beautiful, but that in reality she was to blame for the misfortune which had befallen her seven brothers.” Then she was much troubled, and went to her father and mother and asked if it was true that she had had brothers, and what had become of them? The parents now dared keep the secret no longer, but said that what had befallen her brothers was the will of Heaven, and that her birth had only been the innocent cause. But the maiden took it to heart daily, and thought she must deliver her brothers. She had no rest or peace until she set out secretly, and went forth into the wide world to trace out her brothers and set them free, let it cost what it might. She took nothing with her but a little ring belonging to her parents as a keepsake, a loaf of bread against hunger, a little pitcher of water against thirst, and a little chair as a provision against weariness.

And now she went continually onwards, far, far to the very end of the world. Then she came to the sun, but it was too hot and terrible, and devoured little children. Hastily she ran away, and ran to the moon, but it was far too cold, and also awful and malicious, and when it saw the child, it said, “I smell, I smell the flesh of men.” On this she ran swiftly away, and came to the stars, which were kind and good to her, and each of them sat on its own particular little chair. But the morning star arose, and gave her the drumstick of a chicken, and said, “If you thou hast not that drumstick thou canst not open the Glass mountain, and in the Glass mountain are thy brothers.”

The maiden took the drumstick, wrapped it carefully in a cloth, and went onwards again until she came to the Glass mountain. The door was shut, and she thought she would take out the drumstick; but when she undid the cloth, it was empty, and she had lost the good star’s present. What was she now to do? She wished to rescue her brothers, and had no key to the Glass mountain. The good sister took a knife, cut off one of her little fingers, put it in the door, and succeeded in opening it. When she had gone inside, a little dwarf came to meet her, who said, “My child, what are you looking for?” “I am looking for my brothers, the seven ravens,” she replied. The dwarf said, “The lord ravens are not at home, but if you will wait here until they come, step in.” Thereupon the little dwarf carried the ravens’ dinner in, on seven little plates, and in seven little glasses, and the little sister ate a morsel from each plate, and from each little glass she took a sip, but in the last little glass she dropped the ring which she had brought away with her.

Suddenly she heard a whirring of wings and a rushing through the air, and then the little dwarf said, “Now the lord ravens are flying home.” Then they came, and wanted to eat and drink, and looked for their little plates and glasses. Then said one after the other, “Who has eaten something from my plate? Who has drunk out of my little glass? It was a human mouth.” And when the seventh came to the bottom of the glass, the ring rolled against his mouth. Then he looked at it, and saw that it was a ring belonging to his father and mother, and said, “God grant that our sister may be here, and then we shall be free.” When the maiden, who was standing behind the door watching, heard that wish, she came forth, and on this all the ravens were restored to their human form again. And they embraced and kissed each other, and went joyfully home.

Little Red-Cap

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by every one who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called “Little Red-Cap.”

One day her mother said to her, “Come, Little Red-Cap, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing; and when you go into her room, don’t forget to say, ‘Good-morning,’ and don’t peep into every corner before you do it.”

“I will take great care,” said Little Red-Cap to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red-Cap entered the wood, a wolf met her. Red-Cap did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

“Good-day, Little Red-Cap,” said he.

“Thank you kindly, wolf.”

“Whither away so early, Little Red-Cap?”

“To my grandmother’s.”

“What have you got in your apron?”

“Cake and wine; yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger.”

“Where does your grandmother live, Little Red-Cap?”

“A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood; her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below; you surely must know it,” replied Little Red-Cap.

The wolf thought to himself, “What a tender young creature! what a nice plump mouthful — she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both.” So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red-Cap, and then he said, “See Little Red-Cap, how pretty the flowers are about here — why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry.”

Little Red-Cap raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, “Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time;” and so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother’s house and knocked at the door.

“Who is there?”

“Little Red-Cap,” replied the wolf. “She is bringing cake and wine; open the door.”

“Lift the latch,” called out the grandmother, “I am too weak, and cannot get up.”

The wolf lifted the latch, the door flew open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother’s bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red-Cap, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself, “Oh dear! how uneasy I feel to-day, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.” She called out, “Good morning,” but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

“Oh! grandmother,” she said, “what big ears you have!”

“The better to hear you with, my child,” was the reply.

“But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!” she said.

“The better to see you with, my dear.”

“But, grandmother, what large hands you have!”

“The better to hug you with.”

“Oh! but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!”

“The better to eat you with!”

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Red-Cap.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, “How the old woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.” So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. “Do I find thee here, thou old sinner!” said he. “I have long sought thee!” Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf. When he had made two snips, he saw the little Red-Cap shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, “Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf;” and after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Red-Cap, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf’s body, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he fell down at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf’s skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Red-Cap had brought, and revived, but Red-Cap thought to herself, “As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.”

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It is also related that once when Red-Cap was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Red-Cap, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said “good-morning” to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. “Well,” said the grandmother, “we will shut the door, that he may not come in.” Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried, “Open the door, grandmother, I am little Red-Cap, and am fetching you some cakes.” But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Red-Cap went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child, “Take the pail, Red-Cap; I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough.” Red-Cap carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. But Red-Cap went joyously home, and never did anything to harm any one.

The Bremen Town-Musicians

A certain man had a donkey, which had carried the corn-sacks to the mill indefatigably for many a long year; but his strength was going, and he was growing more and more unfit for work. Then his master began to consider how he might best save his keep; but the donkey, seeing that no good wind was blowing, ran away and set out on the road to Bremen. “There,” he thought, “I can surely be town-musician.” When he had walked some distance, he found a hound lying on the road, gasping like one who had run till he was tired. “What are you gasping so for, you big fellow?” asked the donkey.

“Ah,” replied the hound, “as I am old, and daily grow weaker, and no longer can hunt, my master wanted to kill me, so I took to flight; but now how am I to earn my bread?”

“I tell you what,” said the donkey, “I am going to Bremen, and shall be town-musician there; go with me and engage yourself also as a musician. I will play the lute, and you shall beat the kettledrum.”

The hound agreed, and on they went.

Before long they came to a cat, sitting on the path, with a face like three rainy days! “Now then, old shaver, what has gone askew with you?” asked the donkey.

“Who can be merry when his neck is in danger?” answered the cat. “Because I am now getting old, and my teeth are worn to stumps, and I prefer to sit by the fire and spin, rather than hunt about after mice, my mistress wanted to drown me, so I ran away. But now good advice is scarce. Where am I to go?”

“Go with us to Bremen. You understand night-music, you can be a town-musician.”

The cat thought well of it, and went with them. After this the three fugitives came to a farm-yard, where the cock was sitting upon the gate, crowing with all his might. “Your crow goes through and through one,” said the donkey. “What is the matter?”

“I have been foretelling fine weather, because it is the day on which Our Lady washes the Christ-child’s little shirts, and wants to dry them,” said the cock; “but guests are coming for Sunday, so the housewife has no pity, and has told the cook that she intends to eat me in the soup to-morrow, and this evening I am to have my head cut off. Now I am crowing at full pitch while I can.”

“Ah, but red-comb,” said the donkey, “you had better come away with us. We are going to Bremen; you can find something better than death everywhere: you have a good voice, and if we make music together it must have some quality!”

The cock agreed to this plan, and all four went on together. They could not, however, reach the city of Bremen in one day, and in the evening they came to a forest where they meant to pass the night. The donkey and the hound laid themselves down under a large tree, the cat and the cock settled themselves in the branches; but the cock flew right to the top, where he was most safe. Before he went to sleep he looked round on all four sides, and thought he saw in the distance a little spark burning; so he called out to his companions that there must be a house not far off, for he saw a light. The donkey said, “If so, we had better get up and go on, for the shelter here is bad.” The hound thought that a few bones with some meat on would do him good too!

So they made their way to the place where the light was, and soon saw it shine brighter and grow larger, until they came to a well-lighted robber’s house. The donkey, as the biggest, went to the window and looked in.

“What do you see, my grey-horse?” asked the cock. “What do I see?” answered the donkey; “a table covered with good things to eat and drink, and robbers sitting at it enjoying themselves.” “That would be the sort of thing for us,” said the cock. “Yes, yes; ah, how I wish we were there!” said the donkey.

Then the animals took counsel together how they should manage to drive away the robbers, and at last they thought of a plan. The donkey was to place himself with his fore-feet upon the window-ledge, the hound was to jump on the donkey’s back, the cat was to climb upon the dog, and lastly the cock was to fly up and perch upon the head of the cat.

When this was done, at a given signal, they began to perform their music together: the donkey brayed, the hound barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed; then they burst through the window into the room, so that the glass clattered! At this horrible din, the robbers sprang up, thinking no otherwise than that a ghost had come in, and fled in a great fright out into the forest. The four companions now sat down at the table, well content with what was left, and ate as if they were going to fast for a month.

As soon as the four minstrels had done, they put out the light, and each sought for himself a sleeping-place according to his nature and to what suited him. The donkey laid himself down upon some straw in the yard, the hound behind the door, the cat upon the hearth near the warm ashes, and the cock perched himself upon a beam of the roof; and being tired from their long walk, they soon went to sleep.

When it was past midnight, and the robbers saw from afar that the light was no longer burning in their house, and all appeared quiet, the captain said, “We ought not to have let ourselves be frightened out of our wits;” and ordered one of them to go and examine the house.

The messenger finding all still, went into the kitchen to light a candle, and, taking the glistening fiery eyes of the cat for live coals, he held a lucifer-match to them to light it. But the cat did not understand the joke, and flew in his face, spitting and scratching. He was dreadfully frightened, and ran to the back-door, but the dog, who lay there sprang up and bit his leg; and as he ran across the yard by the straw-heap, the donkey gave him a smart kick with its hind foot. The cock, too, who had been awakened by the noise, and had become lively, cried down from the beam, “Cock-a-doodle-doo!”

Then the robber ran back as fast as he could to his captain, and said, “Ah, there is a horrible witch sitting in the house, who spat on me and scratched my face with her long claws; and by the door stands a man with a knife, who stabbed me in the leg; and in the yard there lies a black monster, who beat me with a wooden club; and above, upon the roof, sits the judge, who called out, ‘Bring the rogue here to me!’ so I got away as well as I could.”

After this the robbers did not trust themselves in the house again; but it suited the four musicians of Bremen so well that they did not care to leave it any more. And the mouth of him who last told this story is still warm.

The Singing Bone

In a certain country there was once great lamentation over a wild boar that laid waste the farmer’s fields, killed the cattle, and ripped up people’s bodies with his tusks. The King promised a large reward to anyone who would free the land from this plague; but the beast was so big and strong that no one dared to go near the forest in which it lived. At last the King gave notice that whosoever should capture or kill the wild boar should have his only daughter to wife.

Now there lived in the country two brothers, sons of a poor man, who declared themselves willing to undertake the hazardous enterprise; the elder, who was crafty and shrewd, out of pride; the younger, who was innocent and simple, from a kind heart. The King said, “In order that you may be the more sure of finding the beast, you must go into the forest from opposite sides.” So the elder went in on the west side, and the younger on the east.

When the younger had gone a short way, a little man stepped up to him. He held in his hand a black spear and said, “I give you this spear because your heart is pure and good; with this you can boldly attack the wild boar, and it will do you no harm.”

He thanked the little man, shouldered the spear, and went on fearlessly.

Before long he saw the beast, which rushed at him; but he held the spear towards it, and in its blind fury it ran so swiftly against it that its heart was cloven in twain. Then he took the monster on his back and went homewards with it to the King.

As he came out at the other side of the wood, there stood at the entrance a house where people were making merry with wine and dancing. His elder brother had gone in here, and, thinking that after all the boar would not run away from him, was going to drink until he felt brave. But when he saw his young brother coming out of the wood laden with his booty, his envious, evil heart gave him no peace. He called out to him, “Come in, dear brother, rest and refresh yourself with a cup of wine.”

The youth, who suspected no evil, went in and told him about the good little man who had given him the spear wherewith he had slain the boar.

The elder brother kept him there until the evening, and then they went away together, and when in the darkness they came to a bridge over a brook, the elder brother let the other go first; and when he was half-way across he gave him such a blow from behind that he fell down dead. He buried him beneath the bridge, took the boar, and carried it to the King, pretending that he had killed it; whereupon he obtained the King’s daughter in marriage. And when his younger brother did not come back he said, “The boar must have killed him,” and every one believed it.

But as nothing remains hidden from God, so this black deed also was to come to light.

Years afterwards a shepherd was driving his herd across the bridge, and saw lying in the sand beneath, a snow-white little bone. He thought that it would make a good mouth-piece, so he clambered down, picked it up, and cut out of it a mouth-piece for his horn. But when he blew through it for the first time, to his great astonishment, the bone began of its own accord to sing:

“Ah, friend, thou blowest upon my bone!
Long have I lain beside the water;
My brother slew me for the boar,
And took for his wife the King’s young daughter.”

“What a wonderful horn!” said the shepherd; “it sings by itself; I must take it to my lord the King.” And when he came with it to the King the horn again began to sing its little song. The King understood it all, and caused the ground below the bridge to be dug up, and then the whole skeleton of the murdered man came to light. The wicked brother could not deny the deed, and was sewn up in a sack and drowned. But the bones of the murdered man were laid to rest in a beautiful tomb in the churchyard.

The Devil With the Three Golden Hairs

There was once a poor woman who gave birth to a little son; and as he came into the world with a caul on, it was predicted that in his fourteenth year he would have the King’s daughter for his wife. It happened that soon afterwards the King came into the village, and no one knew that he was the King, and when he asked the people what news there was, they answered, “A child has just been born with a caul on; whatever any one so born undertakes turns out well. It is prophesied, too, that in his fourteenth year he will have the King’s daughter for his wife.”

The King, who had a bad heart, and was angry about the prophecy, went to the parents, and, seeming quite friendly, said, “You poor people, let me have your child, and I will take care of it.” At first they refused, but when the stranger offered them a large amount of gold for it, and they thought, “It is a luck-child, and everything must turn out well for it,” they at last consented, and gave him the child.

The King put it in a box and rode away with it until he came to a deep piece of water; then he threw the box into it and thought, “I have freed my daughter from her unlooked-for suitor.”

The box, however, did not sink, but floated like a boat, and not a drop of water made its way into it. And it floated to within two miles of the King’s chief city, where there was a mill, and it came to a stand-still at the mill-dam. A miller’s boy, who by good luck was standing there, noticed it and pulled it out with a hook, thinking that he had found a great treasure, but when he opened it there lay a pretty boy inside, quite fresh and lively. He took him to the miller and his wife, and as they had no children they were glad, and said, “God has given him to us.” They took great care of the foundling, and he grew up in all goodness.

It happened that once in a storm, the King went into the mill, and he asked the mill-folk if the tall youth was their son. “No,” answered they, “he’s a foundling. Fourteen years ago he floated down to the mill-dam in a box, and the mill-boy pulled him out of the water.”

Then the King knew that it was none other than the luck-child which he had thrown into the water, and he said, “My good people, could not the youth take a letter to the Queen; I will give him two gold pieces as a reward?” “Just as the King commands,” answered they, and they told the boy to hold himself in readiness. Then the King wrote a letter to the Queen, wherein he said, “As soon as the boy arrives with this letter, let him be killed and buried, and all must be done before I come home.”

The boy set out with this letter; but he lost his way, and in the evening came to a large forest. In the darkness he saw a small light; he went towards it and reached a cottage. When he went in, an old woman was sitting by the fire quite alone. She started when she saw the boy, and said, “Whence do you come, and whither are you going?” “I come from the mill,” he answered, “and wish to go to the Queen, to whom I am taking a letter; but as

I have lost my way in the forest I should like to stay here over night.” “You poor boy,” said the woman, “you have come into a den of thieves, and when they come home they will kill you.” “Let them come,” said the boy, “I am not afraid; but I am so tired that I cannot go any farther:” and he stretched himself upon a bench and fell asleep.

Soon afterwards the robbers came, and angrily asked what strange boy was lying there? “Ah,” said the old woman, “it is an innocent child who has lost himself in the forest, and out of pity I have let him come in; he has to take a letter to the Queen.” The robbers opened the letter and read it, and in it was written that the boy as soon as he arrived should be put to death. Then the hard-hearted robbers felt pity, and their leader tore up the letter and wrote another, saying, that as soon as the boy came, he should be married at once to the King’s daughter. Then they let him lie quietly on the bench until the next morning, and when he awoke they gave him the letter, and showed him the right way.

And the Queen, when she had received the letter and read it, did as was written in it, and had a splendid wedding-feast prepared, and the King’s daughter was married to the luck-child, and as the youth was handsome and agreeable she lived with him in joy and contentment.

After some time the King returned to his palace and saw that the prophecy was fulfilled, and the luck-child married to his daughter. “How has that come to pass?” said he; “I gave quite another order in my letter.”

So the Queen gave him the letter, and said that he might see for himself what was written in it. The King read the letter and saw quite well that it had been exchanged for the other. He asked the youth what had become of the letter entrusted to him, and why he had brought another instead of it. “I know nothing about it,” answered he; “it must have been changed in the night, when I slept in the forest.” The King said in a passion, “You shall not have everything quite so much your own way; whosoever marries my daughter must fetch me from hell three golden hairs from the head of the devil; bring me what I want, and you shall keep my daughter.” In this way the King hoped to be rid of him for ever. But the luck-child answered, “I will fetch the golden hairs, I am not afraid of the Devil;” thereupon he took leave of them and began his journey.

The road led him to a large town, where the watchman by the gates asked him what his trade was, and what he knew. “I know everything,” answered the luck-child. “Then you can do us a favour,” said the watchman, “if you will tell us why our market-fountain, which once flowed with wine has become dry, and no longer gives even water?” “That you shall know,” answered he; “only wait until I come back.”

Then he went farther and came to another town, and there also the gatekeeper asked him what was his trade, and what he knew. “I know everything,” answered he. “Then you can do us a favour and tell us why a tree in our town which once bore golden apples now does not even put forth leaves?” “You shall know that,” answered he; “only wait until I come back.”

Then he went on and came to a wide river over which he must go. The ferryman asked him what his trade was, and what he knew. "I know everything," answered he. "Then you can do me a favour," said the ferryman, "and tell me why I must always be rowing backwards and forwards, and am never set free?" "You shall know that," answered he; "only wait until I come back."

When he had crossed the water he found the entrance to Hell. It was black and sooty within, and the Devil was not at home, but his grandmother was sitting in a large arm-chair. "What do you want?" said she to him, but she did not look so very wicked. "I should like to have three golden hairs from the devil's head," answered he, "else I cannot keep my wife." "That is a good deal to ask for," said she; "if the devil comes home and finds you, it will cost you your life; but as I pity you, I will see if I cannot help you."

She changed him into an ant and said, "Creep into the folds of my dress, you will be safe there." "Yes," answered he, "so far, so good; but there are three things besides that I want to know: why a fountain which once flowed with wine has become dry, and no longer gives even water; why a tree which once bore golden apples does not even put forth leaves; and why a ferry-man must always be going backwards and forwards, and is never set free?"

"Those are difficult questions," answered she, "but only be silent and quiet and pay attention to what the devil says when I pull out the three golden hairs."

As the evening came on, the devil returned home. No sooner had he entered than he noticed that the air was not pure. "I smell man's flesh," said he; "all is not right here." Then he pried into every corner, and searched, but could not find anything. His grandmother scolded him. "It has just been swept," said she, "and everything put in order, and now you are upsetting it again; you have always got man's flesh in your nose. Sit down and eat your supper."

When he had eaten and drunk he was tired, and laid his head in his grandmother's lap, and before long he was fast asleep, snoring and breathing heavily. Then the old woman took hold of a golden hair, pulled it out, and laid it down near her. "Oh!" cried the devil, "what are you doing?" "I have had a bad dream," answered the grandmother, "so I seized hold of your hair." "What did you dream then?" said the devil. "I dreamed that a fountain in a market-place from which wine once flowed was dried up, and not even water would flow out of it; what is the cause of it?" "Oh, ho! if they did but know it," answered the devil; "there is a toad sitting under a stone in the well; if they killed it, the wine would flow again."

He went to sleep again and snored until the windows shook. Then she pulled the second hair out. "Ha! what are you doing?" cried the devil angrily. "Do not take it ill," said she, "I did it in a dream." "What have you dreamt this time?" asked he. "I dreamt that in a certain kingdom there stood an apple-tree which had once borne golden apples, but now would not even bear leaves. What, think you, was the reason?" "Oh! if they did but know," answered the devil. "A mouse is gnawing at the root; if they killed this they would have golden apples again, but if it gnaws much longer the tree will wither altogether. But leave me alone with your dreams: if you disturb me in my sleep again you will get a box on the ear."

The grandmother spoke gently to him until he fell asleep again and snored. Then she took hold of the third golden hair and pulled it out. The devil jumped up, roared out, and would have treated her ill if she had not quieted him once more and said, "Who can help bad dreams?" "What was the dream, then?" asked he, and was quite curious. "I dreamt of a ferry-man who complained that he must always ferry from one side to the other, and was never released. What is the cause of it?" "Ah! the fool," answered the devil; "when any one comes and wants to go across he must put the oar in his hand, and the other man will have to ferry and he will be free." As the grandmother had plucked out the three golden hairs, and the three questions were answered, she let the old serpent alone, and he slept until daybreak.

When the devil had gone out again the old woman took the ant out of the folds of her dress, and gave the luck-child his human shape again. "There are the three golden hairs for you," said she. "What the Devil said to your three questions, I suppose you heard?" "Yes," answered he, "I heard, and will take care to remember." "You have what you want," said she, "and now you can go your way." He thanked the old woman for helping him in his need, and left hell well content that everything had turned out so fortunately.

When he came to the ferry-man he was expected to give the promised answer. "Ferry me across first," said the luck-child, "and then I will tell you how you can be set free," and when he reached the opposite shore he gave him the devil's advice: "Next time any one comes, who wants to be ferried over, just put the oar in his hand."

He went on and came to the town wherein stood the unfruitful tree, and there too the watchman wanted an answer. So he told him what he had heard from the devil: "Kill the mouse which is gnawing at its root, and it will again bear golden apples." Then the watchman thanked him, and gave him as a reward two asses laden with gold, which followed him.

At last he came to the town whose well was dry. He told the watchman what the devil had said: "A toad is in the well beneath a stone; you must find it and kill it, and the well will again give wine in plenty." The watchman thanked him, and also gave him two asses laden with gold.

At last the luck-child got home to his wife, who was heartily glad to see him again, and to hear how well he had prospered in everything. To the King he took what he had asked for, the devil's three golden hairs, and when the King saw the four asses laden with gold he was quite content, and said, "Now all the conditions are fulfilled, and you can keep my daughter. But tell me, dear son-in-law, where did all that gold come from? this is tremendous wealth!" "I was rowed across a river," answered he, "and got it there; it lies on the shore instead of sand." "Can I too fetch some of it?" said the King; and he was quite eager about it. "As much as you like," answered he. "There is a ferry-man on the river; let him ferry you over, and you can fill your sacks on the other side." The greedy King set out in all haste, and when he came to the river he beckoned to the ferry-man to put him across. The ferry-man came and bade him get in, and when they got to the other shore he put the oar in his hand and sprang out. But from this time forth the King had to ferry, as a punishment for his sins. Perhaps he is ferrying still? If he is, it is because no one has taken the oar from him.

The Louse and the Flea

A louse and a flea kept house together and were brewing beer in an egg-shell. Then the little louse fell in and burnt herself. On this the little flea began to scream loudly. Then said the little room-door, “Little flea, why art thou screaming?” “Because the louse has burnt herself.”

Then the little door began to creak. On this a little broom in the corner said, “Why art thou creaking, little door?” “Have I not reason to creak?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping.”

So the little broom began to sweep frantically. Then a little cart passed by and said, “Why art thou sweeping, little broom?” “Have I not reason to sweep?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping,

The little door is creaking.”

So the little cart said, “Then I will run,” and began to run wildly. Then said the ash-heap by which it ran, “Why art thou running so, little cart?” “Have I not reason to run?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping,

The little door is creaking,
The little broom is sweeping.”

The ash-heap said, “Then I will burn furiously,” and began to burn in clear flames. A little tree stood near the ash-heap and said, “Ash-heap, why art thou burning?” “Have I not reason to burn?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping,

The little door is creaking,
The little broom is sweeping,

The little cart is running.”

The little tree said, “Then I will shake myself,” and began to shake herself so that all her leaves fell off; a girl who came up with her water-pitcher saw that, and said, “Little tree, why art thou shaking thyself?” “Have I not reason to shake myself?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping,

The little door is creaking,
The little broom is sweeping,

The little cart is running,
The little ash-heap is burning.”

On this the girl said, “Then I will break my little water-pitcher,” and she broke her little water-pitcher. Then said the little spring from which ran the water, “Girl, why art thou breaking thy water-jug?” “Have I not reason to break my water-jug?”

“The little louse has burnt herself,
The little flea is weeping,

The little door is creaking,
The little broom is sweeping,

The little cart is running,
The little ash-heap is burning,

The little tree is shaking itself.”

“Oh, ho!” said the spring, “then I will begin to flow,” and began to flow violently. And in the water everything was drowned, the girl, the little tree, the little ash-heap, the little cart, the broom, the little door, the little flea, the little louse, all together.

The Girl Without Hands

A certain miller had little by little fallen into poverty, and had nothing left but his mill and a large apple-tree behind it. Once when he had gone into the forest to fetch wood, an old man stepped up to him whom he had never seen before, and said, “Why dost thou plague thyself with cutting wood, I will make thee rich, if thou wilt promise me what is standing behind thy mill?” “What can that be but my apple-tree?” thought the miller, and said, “Yes,” and gave a written promise to the stranger. He, however, laughed mockingly and said, “When three years have passed, I will come and carry away what belongs to me,” and then he went. When the miller got home, his wife came to meet him and said, “Tell me, miller, from whence comes this sudden wealth into our house? All at once every box and chest was filled; no one brought it in, and I know not how it happened.” He answered, “It comes from a stranger who met me in the forest, and promised me great treasure. I, in return, have promised him what stands behind the mill; we can very well give him the big apple-tree for it.” “Ah, husband,” said the terrified wife, “that must have been the devil! He did not mean the apple-tree, but our daughter, who was standing behind the mill sweeping the yard.”

The miller’s daughter was a beautiful, pious girl, and lived through the three years in the fear of God and without sin. When therefore the time was over, and the day came when the Evil-one was to fetch her, she washed herself clean, and made a circle round herself with chalk. The devil appeared quite early, but he could not come near to her. Angrily, he said to the miller, “Take all water away from her, that she may no longer be able to wash herself, for otherwise I have no power over her.” The miller was afraid, and did so. The next morning the devil came again, but she had wept on her hands, and they were quite clean. Again he could not get near her, and furiously said to the miller, “Cut her hands off, or else I cannot get the better of her.” The miller was shocked and answered, “How could I cut off my own child’s hands?” Then the Evil-one threatened him and said, “If thou dost not do it thou art mine, and I will take thee thyself.” The father became alarmed, and promised to obey him. So he went to the girl and said, “My child, if I do not cut off both thine hands, the devil will carry me away, and in my terror I have promised to do it. Help me in my need, and forgive me the harm I do thee.” She replied, “Dear father, do with me what you will, I am your child.” Thereupon she laid down both her hands, and let them be cut off. The devil came for the third time, but she had wept so long and so much on the stumps, that after all they were quite clean. Then he had to give in, and had lost all right over her.

The miller said to her, “I have by means of thee received such great wealth that I will keep thee most delicately as long as thou livest.” But she replied, “Here I cannot stay, I will go forth, compassionate people will give me as much as I require.” Thereupon she caused her maimed arms to be bound to her back, and by sunrise she set out on her way, and walked the whole day until night fell. Then she came to a royal garden, and by the shimmering of the moon she saw that trees covered with beautiful fruits grew in it, but she could not enter, for there was much water round about it. And as she had walked the whole day and not eaten one mouthful, and hunger tormented her, she thought, “Ah, if I were but inside, that I might eat of the fruit, else must I die of hunger!” Then she knelt down, called on God the Lord, and prayed. And suddenly an angel came towards her, who made a dam in the water, so that the moat became dry and she could walk through it. And now she went into the garden and the angel went with her. She saw a tree covered with beautiful pears, but they were all counted. Then she went to them, and to still her hunger, ate one with her mouth from the tree, but no more. The gardener was watching; but as the angel was standing by, he was afraid and thought the maiden was a spirit, and was silent, neither did he dare to cry out, or to speak to the spirit. When she had eaten the pear, she was satisfied, and went and concealed herself among the bushes. The King to whom the garden belonged, came down to it next morning, and counted, and saw that one of the pears was missing, and asked the gardener what had become of it, as it was not lying beneath the tree, but was gone. Then answered the gardener, “Last night, a spirit came in, who had no hands, and ate off one of the pears with its mouth.” The King said, “How did the spirit get over the water, and where did it go after it had eaten the pear?” The gardener answered, “Some one came in a snow-white garment from heaven who made a dam, and kept back the water, that the spirit might walk through the moat. And as it must have been an angel, I was afraid, and asked no questions, and did not cry out. When the spirit had eaten the pear, it went back again.” The King said, “If it be as thou sayest, I will watch with thee to-night.”

When it grew dark the King came into the garden and brought a priest with him, who was to speak to the spirit. All three seated themselves beneath the tree and watched. At midnight the maiden came creeping out of the thicket, went to the tree, and again ate one pear off it with her mouth, and beside her stood the angel in white garments. Then the priest went out to them and said, “Comest thou from heaven or from earth? Art thou a spirit, or a human being?” She replied, “I am no spirit, but an unhappy mortal deserted by all but God.” The King said, “If thou art forsaken by all the world, yet will I not forsake thee.” He took her with him into his royal palace, and as she was so beautiful and good, he loved her with all his heart, had silver hands made for her, and took her to wife.

After a year the King had to take the field, so he commended his young Queen to the care of his mother and said, “If she is brought to bed take care of her, nurse her well, and tell me of it at once in a letter.” Then she gave birth to a fine boy. So the old mother made haste to write and announce the joyful news to him. But the messenger rested by a brook on the way, and as he was fatigued by the great distance, he fell asleep. Then came the Devil, who was always seeking to injure the good Queen, and exchanged the letter for another, in which was written that the Queen had brought a monster into the world. When the King read the letter he was shocked and much troubled, but he wrote in answer that they were to take great care of the Queen and nurse her well until his arrival. The messenger went back with the letter, but rested at the same place and again fell asleep. Then came the Devil once more, and put a different letter in his pocket, in which it was written that they were to put the Queen and her child to death. The old mother was terribly shocked when she received the letter, and could not believe it. She wrote back again to the King, but received no other answer, because each time the Devil substituted a false letter, and in the last letter it was also written that she was to preserve the Queen's tongue and eyes as a token that she had obeyed.

But the old mother wept to think such innocent blood was to be shed, and had a hind brought by night and cut out her tongue and eyes, and kept them. Then said she to the Queen, "I cannot have thee killed as the King commands, but here thou mayst stay no longer. Go forth into the wide world with thy child, and never come here again." The poor woman tied her child on her back, and went away with eyes full of tears. She came into a great wild forest, and then she fell on her knees and prayed to God, and the angel of the Lord appeared to her and led her to a little house on which was a sign with the words, "Here all dwell free." A snow-white maiden came out of the little house and said, "Welcome, Lady Queen," and conducted her inside. Then they unbound the little boy from her back, and held him to her breast that he might feed, and laid him in a beautifully-made little bed. Then said the poor woman, "From whence knowest thou that I was a queen?" The white maiden answered, "I am an angel sent by God, to watch over thee and thy child." The Queen stayed seven years in the little house, and was well cared for, and by God's grace, because of her piety, her hands which had been cut off, grew once more.

At last the King came home again from the war, and his first wish was to see his wife and the child. Then his aged mother began to weep and said, "Thou wicked man, why didst thou write to me that I was to take those two innocent lives?" and she showed him the two letters which the Evil-one had forged, and then continued, "I did as thou badest me," and she showed the tokens, the tongue and eyes. Then the King began to weep for his poor wife and his little son so much more bitterly than she was doing, that the aged mother had compassion on him and said, "Be at peace, she still lives; I secretly caused a hind to be killed, and took these tokens from it; but I bound the child to thy wife's back and bade her go forth into the wide world, and made her promise never to come back here again, because thou wert so angry with her." Then spoke the King, "I will go as far as the sky is blue, and will neither eat nor drink until I have found again my dear wife and my child, if in the meantime they have not been killed, or died of hunger."

Thereupon the King travelled about for seven long years, and sought her in every cleft of the rocks and in every cave, but he found her not, and thought she had died of want. During the whole of this time he neither ate nor drank, but God supported him. At length he came into a great forest, and found therein the little house whose sign was, “Here all dwell free.” Then forth came the white maiden, took him by the hand, led him in, and said, “Welcome, Lord King,” and asked him from whence he came. He answered, “Soon shall I have travelled about for the space of seven years, and I seek my wife and her child, but cannot find them.” The angel offered him meat and drink, but he did not take anything, and only wished to rest a little. Then he lay down to sleep, and put a handkerchief over his face.

Thereupon the angel went into the chamber where the Queen sat with her son, whom she usually called “Sorrowful,” and said to her, “Go out with thy child, thy husband hath come.” So she went to the place where he lay, and the handkerchief fell from his face. Then said she, “Sorrowful, pick up thy father’s handkerchief, and cover his face again.” The child picked it up, and put it over his face again. The King in his sleep heard what passed, and had pleasure in letting the handkerchief fall once more. But the child grew impatient, and said, “Dear mother, how can I cover my father’s face when I have no father in this world? I have learnt to say the prayer, ‘Our Father, which art in Heaven,’ thou hast told me that my father was in Heaven, and was the good God, and how can I know a wild man like this? He is not my father.” When the King heard that, he got up, and asked who they were. Then said she, “I am thy wife, and that is thy son, Sorrowful.” And he saw her living hands, and said, “My wife had silver hands.” She answered, “The good God has caused my natural hands to grow again;” and the angel went into the inner room, and brought the silver hands, and showed them to him. Hereupon he knew for a certainty that it was his dear wife and his dear child, and he kissed them, and was glad, and said, “A heavy stone has fallen from off mine heart.” Then the angel of God gave them one meal with her, and after that they went home to the King’s aged mother. There were great rejoicings everywhere, and the King and Queen were married again, and lived contentedly to their happy end.

Clever Hans

The mother of Hans said, “Whither away, Hans?” Hans answered, “To Grethel.” “Behave well, Hans.” “Oh, I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.” Hans comes to Grethel, “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans. What dost thou bring that is good?” “I bring nothing, I want to have something given me.” Grethel presents Hans with a needle. Hans says, “Good-bye, Grethel.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans takes the needle, sticks it into a hay-cart, and follows the cart home. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans. Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “Took nothing; had something given me.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “Gave me a needle.” “Where is the needle, Hans?” “Stuck it in the hay-cart.” “That was ill done, Hans. Thou shouldst have stuck the needle in thy sleeve.” “Never mind, I’ll do better next time.”

“Whither away, Hans?” “To Grethel, mother.” “Behave well, Hans.” “Oh, I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans comes to Grethel. “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans. What dost thou bring that is good?” “I bring nothing; I want to have something given to me.” Grethel presents Hans with a knife. “Good-bye, Grethel.” “Good-bye Hans.” Hans takes the knife, sticks it in his sleeve, and goes home. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans. Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “Took her nothing, she gave me something.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “Gave me a knife.” “Where is the knife, Hans?” “Stuck in my sleeve.” “That’s ill done, Hans, thou shouldst have put the knife in thy pocket.” “Never mind, will do better next time.” “Whither away, Hans?” “To Grethel, mother.” “Behave well, Hans.” “Oh, I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans comes to Grethel. “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans. What good thing dost thou bring?” “I bring nothing, I want something given me.” Grethel presents Hans with a young goat. “Good-bye, Grethel.” “Good-bye, Hans.” Hans takes the goat, ties its legs, and puts it in his pocket. When he gets home it is suffocated. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans. Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “Took nothing, she gave me something.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “She gave me a goat.” “Where is the goat, Hans?” “Put it in my pocket.” “That was ill done, Hans, thou shouldst have put a rope round the goat’s neck.” “Never mind, will do better next time.”

“Whither away, Hans?” “To Grethel, mother.” “Behave well, Hans.” “Oh, I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.” Hans comes to Grethel. “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans. What good thing dost thou bring?” “I bring nothing, I want something given me.” Grethel presents Hans with a piece of bacon. “Good-bye, Grethel.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans takes the bacon, ties it to a rope, and drags it away behind him. The dogs come and devour the bacon. When he gets home, he has the rope in his hand, and there is no longer anything hanging to it. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans.” “Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “I took her nothing, she gave me something.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “Gave me a bit of bacon.” “Where is the bacon, Hans?” “I tied it to a rope, brought it home, dogs took it.” “That was ill done, Hans, thou shouldst have carried the bacon on thy head.” “Never mind, will do better next time.” “Whither away, Hans?” “To Grethel, mother.” “Behave well, Hans.” “I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans comes to Grethel. “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans.” “What good thing dost thou bring?” “I bring nothing, but would have something given.” Grethel presents Hans with a calf. “Good-bye, Grethel.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans takes the calf, puts it on his head, and the calf kicks his face. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans. Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “I took nothing, but had something given me.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “A calf.” “Where hast thou the calf, Hans?” “I set it on my head and it kicked my face.” “That was ill done, Hans, thou shouldst have led the calf, and put it in the stall.” “Never mind, will do better next time.”

“Whither away, Hans?” “To Grethel, mother.” “Behave well, Hans.” “I’ll behave well. Good-bye, mother.” “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans comes to Grethel. “Good day, Grethel.” “Good day, Hans. What good thing dost thou bring?” “I bring nothing, but would have something given.” Grethel says to Hans, “I will go with thee.”

Hans takes Grethel, ties her to a rope, leads her to the rack and binds her fast. Then Hans goes to his mother. “Good evening, mother.” “Good evening, Hans. Where hast thou been?” “With Grethel.” “What didst thou take her?” “I took her nothing.” “What did Grethel give thee?” “She gave me nothing, she came with me.” “Where hast thou left Grethel?” “I led her by the rope, tied her to the rack, and scattered some grass for her.” “That was ill done, Hans, thou shouldst have cast friendly eyes on her.” “Never mind, will do better.”

Hans went into the stable, cut out all the calves’ and sheep’s eyes, and threw them in Grethel’s face. Then Grethel became angry, tore herself loose and ran away, and became the bride of Hans.

The Three Languages

An aged count once lived in Switzerland, who had an only son, but he was stupid, and could learn nothing. Then said the father, “Hark thee, my son, I can get nothing into thy head, let me try as I will. Thou must go from hence, I will give thee into the care of a celebrated master, who shall see what he can do with thee.” The youth was sent into a strange town, and remained a whole year with the master. At the end of this time, he came home again, and his father asked, “Now, my son, what hast thou learnt?” “Father, I have learnt what the dogs say when they bark.” “Lord have mercy on us!” cried the father; “is that all thou hast learnt? I will send thee into another town, to another master.” The youth was taken thither, and stayed a year with this master likewise. When he came back the father again asked, “My son, what hast thou learnt?” He answered, “Father, I have learnt what the birds say.” Then the father fell into a rage and said, “Oh, thou lost man, thou hast spent the precious time and learnt nothing; art thou not ashamed to appear before mine eyes? I will send thee to a third master, but if thou learnest nothing this time also, I will no longer be thy father.” The youth remained a whole year with the third master also, and when he came home again, and his father inquired, “My son, what hast thou learnt?” he answered, “Dear father, I have this year learnt what the frogs croak.” Then the father fell into the most furious anger, sprang up, called his people thither, and said, “This man is no longer my son, I drive him forth, and command you to take him out into the forest, and kill him.” They took him forth, but when they should have killed him, they could not do it for pity, and let him go, and they cut the eyes and the tongue out of a deer that they might carry them to the old man as a token.

The youth wandered on, and after some time came to a fortress where he begged for a night’s lodging. “Yes,” said the lord of the castle, “if thou wilt pass the night down there in the old tower, go thither; but I warn thee, it is at the peril of thy life, for it is full of wild dogs, which bark and howl without stopping, and at certain hours a man has to be given to them, whom they at once devour.” The whole district was in sorrow and dismay because of them, and yet no one could do anything to stop this. The youth, however, was without fear, and said, “Just let me go down to the barking dogs, and give me something that I can throw to them; they will do nothing to harm me.” As he himself would have it so, they gave him some food for the wild animals, and led him down to the tower. When he went inside, the dogs did not bark at him, but wagged their tails quite amicably around him, ate what he set before them, and did not hurt one hair of his head. Next morning, to the astonishment of everyone, he came out again safe and unharmed, and said to the lord of the castle, “The dogs have revealed to me, in their own language, why they dwell there, and bring evil on the land. They are bewitched, and are obliged to watch over a great treasure which is below in the tower, and they can have no rest until it is taken away, and I have likewise learnt, from their discourse, how that is to be done.” Then all who heard this rejoiced, and the lord of the castle said he would adopt him as a son if he accomplished it successfully. He went down again, and as he knew what he had to do, he did it thoroughly, and brought a chest full of gold out with him. The howling of the wild dogs was henceforth heard no more; they had disappeared, and the country was freed from the trouble.

After some time he took it into his head that he would travel to Rome. On the way he passed by a marsh, in which a number of frogs were sitting croaking. He listened to them, and when he became aware of what they were saying, he grew very thoughtful and sad. At last he arrived in Rome, where the Pope had just died, and there was great difficulty as to whom they should appoint as his successor. They at length agreed that the person should be chosen as pope who should be distinguished by some divine and miraculous token. And just as that was decided on, the young count entered into the church, and suddenly two snow-white doves flew on his shoulders and remained sitting there. The ecclesiastics recognized therein the token from above, and asked him on the spot if he would be pope. He was undecided, and knew not if he were worthy of this, but the doves counselled him to do it, and at length he said yes. Then was he anointed and consecrated, and thus was fulfilled what he had heard from the frogs on his way, which had so affected him, that he was to be his Holiness the Pope. Then he had to sing a mass, and did not know one word of it, but the two doves sat continually on his shoulders, and said it all in his ear.

Clever Elsie

There was once a man who had a daughter who was called Clever Elsie. And when she had grown up her father said, “We will get her married.” “Yes,” said the mother; “if only any one would come who would have her.” At length a man came from a distance and wooed her, who was called Hans; but he stipulated that Clever Elsie should be really wise. “Oh,” said the father, “she’s sharp enough;” and the mother said, “Oh, she can see the wind coming up the street, and hear the flies coughing.” “Well,” said Hans, “if she is not really wise, I won’t have her.” When they were sitting at dinner and had eaten, the mother said, “Elsie, go into the cellar and fetch some beer.” Then Clever Elsie took the pitcher from the wall, went into the cellar, and tapped the lid briskly as she went, so that the time might not appear long. When she was below she fetched herself a chair, and set it before the barrel so that she had no need to stoop, and did not hurt her back or do herself any unexpected injury. Then she placed the can before her, and turned the tap, and while the beer was running she would not let her eyes be idle, but looked up at the wall, and after much peering here and there, saw a pick-axe exactly above her, which the masons had accidentally left there.

Then Clever Elsie began to weep, and said, “If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and we send him into the cellar here to draw beer, then the pick-axe will fall on his head and kill him.” Then she sat and wept and screamed with all the strength of her body, over the misfortune which lay before her. Those upstairs waited for the drink, but Clever Elsie still did not come. Then the woman said to the servant, “Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is.” The maid went and found her sitting in front of the barrel, screaming loudly. “Elsie, why weepest thou?” asked the maid. “Ah,” she answered, “have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pick-axe will perhaps fall on his head, and kill him.” Then said the maid, “What a clever Elsie we have!” and sat down beside her and began loudly to weep over the misfortune. After a while, as the maid did not come back, those upstairs were thirsty for the beer, the man said to the boy, “Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie and the girl are.” The boy went down, and there sat Clever Elsie and the girl both weeping together. Then he asked, “Why are ye weeping?” “Ah,” said Elsie, “have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pick-axe will fall on his head and kill him.” Then said the boy, “What a clever Elsie we have!” and sat down by her, and likewise began to howl loudly. Upstairs they waited for the boy, but as he still did not return, the man said to the woman, “Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is!” The woman went down, and found all three in the midst of their lamentations, and inquired what was the cause; then Elsie told her also that her future child was to be killed by the pick-axe, when it grew big and had to draw beer, and the pick-axe fell down. Then said the mother likewise, “What a clever Elsie we have!” and sat down and wept with them. The man upstairs waited a short time, but as his wife did not come back and his thirst grew ever greater, he said, “I must go into the cellar myself and see where Elsie is.” But when he got into the cellar, and they were all sitting together crying, and he heard the reason, and that Elsie’s child was the cause, and that Elsie might perhaps bring one into the world some day, and that it might be killed by the pick-axe, if it should happen to be sitting beneath it, drawing beer just at the very time when it fell down, he cried, “Oh, what a clever Elsie!” and sat down, and likewise wept with them. The bridegroom stayed upstairs alone for a long time; then as no one would come back he thought, “They must be waiting for me below; I too must go there and see what they are about.” When he got down, five of them were sitting screaming and lamenting quite piteously, each out-doing the other. “What misfortune has happened then?” he asked. “Ah, dear Hans,” said Elsie, “if we marry each other and have a child, and he is big, and we perhaps send him here to draw something to drink, then the pick-axe which has been left up there might dash his brains out if it were to fall down, so have we not reason to weep?” “Come,” said Hans, “more understanding than that is not needed for my household, as thou art such a clever Elsie, I will have thee,” and he seized her hand, took her upstairs with him, and married her.

After Hans had had her some time, he said, “Wife, I am going out to work and earn some money for us; go into the field and cut the corn that we may have some bread.” “Yes, dear Hans, I will do that.” After Hans had gone away, she cooked herself some good broth and took it into the field with her. When she came to the field she said to herself, “What shall I do; shall I shear first, or shall I eat first? Oh, I will eat first.” Then she emptied her basin of broth, and when she was fully satisfied, she once more said, “What shall I do? Shall I shear first, or shall I sleep first? I will sleep first.” Then she lay down among the corn and fell asleep. Hans had been at home for a long time, but Elsie did not come; then said he, “What a clever Elsie I have; she is so industrious that she does not even come home to eat.” As, however, she still stayed away, and it was evening, Hans went out to see what she had cut, but nothing was cut, and she was lying among the corn asleep. Then Hans hastened home and brought a fowler’s net with little bells and hung it round about her, and she still went on sleeping. Then he ran home, shut the house-door, and sat down in his chair and worked. At length, when it was quite dark, Clever Elsie awoke and when she got up there was a jingling all round about her, and the bells rang at each step which she took. Then she was alarmed, and became uncertain whether she really was Clever Elsie or not, and said, “Is it I, or is it not I?” But she knew not what answer to make to this, and stood for a time in doubt; at length she thought, “I will go home and ask if it be I, or if it be not I, they will be sure to know.” She ran to the door of her own house, but it was shut; then she knocked at the window and cried, “Hans, is Elsie within?” “Yes,” answered Hans, “she is within.” Hereupon she was terrified, and said, “Ah, heavens! Then it is not I,” and went to another door; but when the people heard the jingling of the bells they would not open it, and she could get in nowhere. Then she ran out of the village, and no one has seen her since.

The Tailor in Heaven

One very fine day it came to pass that the good God wished to enjoy himself in the heavenly garden, and took all the apostles and saints with him, so that no one stayed in heaven but Saint Peter. The Lord had commanded him to let no one in during his absence, so Peter stood by the door and kept watch. Before long some one knocked. Peter asked who was there, and what he wanted? “I am a poor, honest tailor who prays for admission,” replied a smooth voice. “Honest indeed,” said Peter, “like the thief on the gallows! Thou hast been light-fingered and hast snipped folks’ clothes away. Thou wilt not get into heaven. The Lord hath forbidden me to let any one in while he is out.” “Come, do be merciful,” cried the tailor. “Little scraps which fall off the table of their own accord are not stolen, and are not worth speaking about. Look, I am lame, and have blisters on my feet with walking here, I cannot possibly turn back again. Only let me in, and I will do all the rough work. I will carry the children, and wash their clothes, and wash and clean the benches on which they have been playing, and patch all their torn clothes.” Saint Peter let himself be moved by pity, and opened the door of heaven just wide enough for the lame tailor to slip his lean body in. He was forced to sit down in a corner behind the door, and was to stay quietly and peaceably there, in order that the Lord, when he returned, might not observe him and be angry. The tailor obeyed, but once when Saint Peter went outside the door, he got up, and full of curiosity, went round about into every corner of heaven, and inspected the arrangement of every place. At length he came to a spot where many beautiful and delightful chairs were standing, and in the midst was a seat all of gold which was set with shining jewels, likewise it was much higher than the other chairs, and a footstool of gold was before it. It was, however, the seat on which the Lord sat when he was at home, and from which he could see everything which happened on earth. The tailor stood still, and looked at the seat for a long time, for it pleased him better than all else. At last he could master his curiosity no longer, and climbed up and seated himself in the chair. Then he saw everything which was happening on earth, and observed an ugly old woman who was standing washing by the side of a stream, secretly laying two veils on one side for herself. The sight of this made the tailor so angry that he laid hold of the golden footstool, and threw it down to earth through heaven, at the old thief. As, however, he could not bring the stool back again, he slipped quietly out of the chair, seated himself in his place behind the door, and behaved as if he had never stirred from the spot.

When the Lord and master came back again with his heavenly companions, he did not see the tailor behind the door, but when he seated himself on his chair the footstool was missing. He asked Saint Peter what had become of the stool, but he did not know. Then he asked if he had let anyone come in. “I know of no one who has been here,” answered Peter, “but a lame tailor, who is still sitting behind the door.” Then the Lord had the tailor brought before him, and asked him if he had taken away the stool, and where he had put it? "Oh, Lord," answered the tailor joyously, "I threw it in my anger down to earth at an old woman whom I saw stealing two veils at the washing." "Oh, thou knave," said the Lord, "were I to judge as thou judgest, how dost thou think thou couldst have escaped so long? I should long ago have had no chairs, benches, seats, nay, not even an oven-fork, but should have thrown everything down at the sinners. Henceforth thou canst stay no longer in heaven, but must go outside the door again. Then go where thou wilt. No one shall give punishment here, but I alone, the Lord."

Peter was obliged to take the tailor out of heaven again, and as he had torn shoes, and feet covered with blisters, he took a stick in his hand, and went to "Wait-a-bit," where the good soldiers sit and make merry.

The Wishing-Table, the Gold-Ass, and the Cudgel in the Sack

There was once upon a time a tailor who had three sons, and only one goat. But as the goat supported the whole of them with her milk, she was obliged to have good food, and to be taken every day to pasture. The sons, therefore, did this, in turn. Once the eldest took her to the churchyard, where the finest herbs were to be found, and let her eat and run about there. At night when it was time to go home he asked, “Goat, hast thou had enough?” The goat answered,

“I have eaten so much,
Not a leaf more I’ll touch, meh! meh!”

“Come home, then,” said the youth, and took hold of the cord round her neck, led her into the stable and tied her up securely. “Well,” said the old tailor, “has the goat had as much food as she ought?” “Oh,” answered the son, “she has eaten so much, not a leaf more she’ll touch.” But the father wished to satisfy himself, and went down to the stable, stroked the dear animal and asked, “Goat, art thou satisfied?” The goat answered,

“Wherewithal should I be satisfied?
Among the graves I leapt about,
And found no food, so went without, meh! meh!”

“What do I hear?” cried the tailor, and ran upstairs and said to the youth, “Hollo, thou liar: thou saidest the goat had had enough, and hast let her hunger!” and in his anger he took the yard-measure from the wall, and drove him out with blows.

Next day it was the turn of the second son, who looked out for a place in the fence of the garden, where nothing but good herbs grew, and the goat cleared them all off. At night when he wanted to go home, he asked, “Goat, art thou satisfied?” The goat answered,

“I have eaten so much,
Not a leaf more I’ll touch, meh! meh!”

“Come home, then,” said the youth, and led her home, and tied her up in the stable. “Well,” said the old tailor, “has the goat had as much food as she ought?” “Oh,” answered the son, “she has eaten so much, not a leaf more she’ll touch.” The tailor would not rely on this, but went down to the stable and said, “Goat, hast thou had enough?” The goat answered,

“Wherewithal should I be satisfied?
Among the graves I leapt about,
And found no food, so went without, meh! meh!”

“The godless wretch!” cried the tailor, “to let such a good animal hunger,” and he ran up and drove the youth out of doors with the yard-measure.

Now came the turn of the third son, who wanted to do the thing well, and sought out some bushes with the finest leaves, and let the goat devour them. In the evening when he wanted to go home, he asked, “Goat, hast thou had enough?” The goat answered,

“I have eaten so much,
Not a leaf more I’ll touch, meh! meh!”

“Come home, then,” said the youth, and led her into the stable, and tied her up. “Well,” said the old tailor, “has the goat had a proper amount of food?” “She has eaten so much, not a leaf more she’ll touch.” The tailor did not trust to that, but went down and asked, “Goat, hast thou had enough?” The wicked beast answered,

“Wherewithal should I be satisfied?
Among the graves I leapt about,
And found no leaves, so went without, meh! meh!”

“Oh, the brood of liars!” cried the tailor, “each as wicked and forgetful of his duty as the other! Ye shall no longer make a fool of me,” and quite beside himself with anger, he ran upstairs and belabored the poor young fellow so vigorously with the yard-measure that he sprang out of the house.

The old tailor was now alone with his goat. Next morning he went down into the stable, caressed the goat and said, “Come, my dear little animal, I will take thee to feed myself.” He took her by the rope and conducted her to green hedges, and amongst milfoil, and whatever else goats like to eat. “There thou mayest for once eat to thy heart’s content,” said he to her, and let her browse till evening. Then he asked, “Goat, art thou satisfied?” She replied,

“I have eaten so much,
Not a leaf more I’ll touch, meh! meh!”

“Come home, then,” said the tailor, and led her into the stable, and tied her fast. When he was going away, he turned round again and said, “Well, art thou satisfied for once?” But the goat did not behave the better to him, and cried,

“Wherewithal should I be satisfied?
Among the graves I leapt about,
And found no leaves, so went without, meh! meh!”

When the tailor heard that, he was shocked, and saw clearly that he had driven away his three sons without cause. “Wait, thou ungrateful creature,” cried he, “it is not enough to drive thee forth, I will mark thee so that thou wilt no more dare to show thyself amongst honest tailors.” In great haste he ran upstairs, fetched his razor, lathered the goat’s head, and shaved her as clean as the palm of his hand. And as the yard-measure would have been too good for her, he brought the horsewhip, and gave her such cuts with it that she ran away in violent haste.

When the tailor was thus left quite alone in his house he fell into great grief, and would gladly have had his sons back again, but no one knew whither they were gone. The eldest had apprenticed himself to a joiner, and learnt industriously and indefatigably, and when the time came for him to go travelling, his master presented him with a little table which had no particular appearance, and was made of common wood, but it had one good property; if anyone set it out, and said, “Little table, spread thyself,” the good little table was at once covered with a clean little cloth, and a plate was there, and a knife and fork beside it, and dishes with boiled meats and roasted meats, as many as there was room for, and a great glass of red wine shone so that it made the heart glad. The young journeyman thought, “With this thou hast enough for thy whole life,” and went joyously about the world and never troubled himself at all whether an inn was good or bad, or if anything was to be found in it or not. When it suited him he did not enter an inn at all, but either on the plain, in a wood, a meadow, or wherever he fancied, he took his little table off his back, set it down before him, and said, “Cover thyself,” and then everything appeared that his heart desired. At length he took it into his head to go back to his father, whose anger would now be appeased, and who would now willingly receive him with his wishing-table. It came to pass that on his way home, he came one evening to an inn which was filled with guests. They bade him welcome, and invited him to sit and eat with them, for otherwise he would have difficulty in getting anything. “No,” answered the joiner, “I will not take the few bites out of your mouths; rather than that, you shall be my guests.” They laughed, and thought he was jesting with them; he, however, placed his wooden table in the middle of the room, and said, “Little table, cover thyself.” Instantly it was covered with food, so good that the host could never have procured it, and the smell of it ascended pleasantly to the nostrils of the guests. “Fall to, dear friends,” said the joiner; and the guests when they saw that he meant it, did not need to be asked twice, but drew near, pulled out their knives and attacked it valiantly. And what surprised them the most was that when a dish became empty, a full one instantly took its place of its own accord. The innkeeper stood in one corner and watched the affair; he did not at all know what to say, but thought, “Thou couldst easily find a use for such a cook as that in thy kitchen.” The joiner and his comrades made merry until late into the night; at length they lay down to sleep, and the young apprentice also went to bed, and set his magic table against the wall. The host’s thoughts, however, let him have no rest; it occurred to him that there was a little old table in his lumber-room which looked just like the apprentice’s and he brought it out quite softly, and exchanged it for the wishing-table. Next morning, the joiner paid for his bed, took up his table, never thinking that he had got a false one, and went his way. At mid-day he reached his father, who received him with great joy. “Well, my dear son, what hast thou learnt?” said he to him. “Father, I have become a joiner.”

“A good trade,” replied the old man; “but what hast thou brought back with thee from thy apprenticeship?” “Father, the best thing which I have brought back with me is this little table.” The tailor inspected it on all sides and said, “Thou didst not make a masterpiece when thou mad’st that; it is a bad old table.” “But it is a table which furnishes itself,” replied the son. “When I set it out, and tell it to cover itself, the most beautiful dishes stand on it, and a wine also, which gladdens the heart. Just invite all our relations and friends, they shall refresh and enjoy themselves for once, for the table will give them all they require.” When the company was assembled, he put his table in the middle of the room and said, “Little table, cover thyself,” but the little table did not bestir itself, and remained just as bare as any other table which did not understand language. Then the poor apprentice became aware that his table had been changed, and was ashamed at having to stand there like a liar. The relations, however, mocked him, and were forced to go home without having eaten or drunk. The father brought out his patches again, and went on tailoring, but the son went to a master in the craft.

The second son had gone to a miller and had apprenticed himself to him. When his years were over, the master said, “As thou hast conducted thyself so well, I give thee an ass of a peculiar kind, which neither draws a cart nor carries a sack.” “To what use is he put, then?” asked the young apprentice. “He lets gold drop from his mouth,” answered the miller. “If thou settest him on a cloth and sayest ‘Bricklebrit,’ the good animal will drop gold pieces for thee.” “That is a fine thing,” said the apprentice, and thanked the master, and went out into the world. When he had need of gold, he had only to say “Bricklebrit” to his ass, and it rained gold pieces, and he had nothing to do but pick them off the ground. Wheresoever he went, the best of everything was good enough for him, and the dearer the better, for he had always a full purse. When he had looked about the world for some time, he thought, “Thou must seek out thy father; if thou goest to him with the gold-ass he will forget his anger, and receive thee well.” It came to pass that he came to the same public-house in which his brother’s table had been exchanged. He led his ass by the bridle, and the host was about to take the animal from him and tie him up, but the young apprentice said, “Don’t trouble yourself, I will take my grey horse into the stable, and tie him up myself too, for I must know where he stands.” This struck the host as odd, and he thought that a man who was forced to look after his ass himself, could not have much to spend; but when the stranger put his hand in his pocket and brought out two gold pieces, and said he was to provide something good for him, the host opened his eyes wide, and ran and sought out the best he could muster. After dinner the guest asked what he owed. The host did not see why he should not double the reckoning, and said the apprentice must give two more gold pieces. He felt in his pocket, but his gold was just at an end. “Wait an instant, sir host," said he, "I will go and fetch some money;" but he took the table-cloth with him. The host could not imagine what this could mean, and being curious, stole after him, and as the guest bolted the stable-door, he peeped through a hole left by a knot in the wood. The stranger spread out the cloth under the animal and cried, "Bricklebrit," and immediately the beast began to let gold pieces fall, so that it fairly rained down money on the ground. "Eh, my word," said the host, "ducats are quickly coined there! A purse like that is not amiss." The guest paid his score, and went to bed, but in the night the host stole down into the stable, led away the master of the mint, and tied up another ass in his place. Early next morning the apprentice travelled away with his ass, and thought that he had his gold-ass. At mid-day he reached his father, who rejoiced to see him again, and gladly took him in. "What hast thou made of thyself, my son?" asked the old man. "A miller," dear father, he answered. "What hast thou brought back with thee from thy travels?" "Nothing else but an ass." "There are asses enough here," said the father, "I would rather have had a good goat." "Yes," replied the son, "but it is no common ass, but a gold-ass, when I say 'Bricklebrit,' the good beast opens its mouth and drops a whole sheetful of gold pieces. Just summon all our relations hither, and I will make them rich folks." "That suits me well," said the tailor, "for then I shall have no need to torment myself any longer with the needle," and ran out himself and called the relations together. As soon as they were assembled, the miller bade them make way, spread out his cloth, and brought the ass into the room. "Now watch," said he, and cried, "Bricklebrit," but no gold pieces fell, and it was clear that the animal knew nothing of the art, for every ass does not attain such perfection. Then the poor miller pulled a long face, saw that he was betrayed, and begged pardon of the relatives, who went home as poor as they came. There was no help for it, the old man had to betake him to his needle once more, and the youth hired himself to a miller.

The third brother had apprenticed himself to a turner, and as that is skilled labour, he was the longest in learning. His brothers, however, told him in a letter how badly things had gone with them, and how the innkeeper had cheated them of their beautiful wishing-gifts on the last evening before they reached home. When the turner had served his time, and had to set out on his travels, as he had conducted himself so well, his master presented him with a sack and said, "There is a cudgel in it." "I can put on the sack," said he, "and it may be of good service to me, but why should the cudgel be in it? It only makes it heavy." "I will tell thee why," replied the master; "if any one has done anything to injure thee, do but say, 'Out of the sack, Cudgel!' and the cudgel will leap forth among the people, and play such a dance on their backs that they will not be able to stir or move for a week, and it will not leave off until thou sayest, 'Into the sack, Cudgel!'" The apprentice thanked him, and put the sack on his back, and when any one came too near him, and wished to attack him, he said, "Out of the sack, Cudgel!" and instantly the cudgel sprang out, and dusted the coat or jacket of one after the other on their backs, and never stopped until it had stripped it off them, and it was done so quickly, that before anyone was aware, it was already his own turn. In the evening the young turner reached the inn where his brothers had been cheated. He laid his sack on the table before him, and began to talk of all the wonderful things which he had seen in the world. “Yes,” said he, “people may easily find a table which will cover itself, a gold-ass, and things of that kind — extremely good things which I by no means despise — but these are nothing in comparison with the treasure which I have won for myself, and am carrying about with me in my sack there.” The inn-keeper pricked up his ears, “What in the world can that be?” thought he; “the sack must be filled with nothing but jewels; I ought to get them cheap too, for all good things go in threes.” When it was time for sleep, the guest stretched himself on the bench, and laid his sack beneath him for a pillow. When the inn-keeper thought his guest was lying in a sound sleep, he went to him and pushed and pulled quite gently and carefully at the sack to see if he could possibly draw it away and lay another in its place. The turner had, however, been waiting for this for a long time, and now just as the inn-keeper was about to give a hearty tug, he cried, “Out of the sack, Cudgel!” Instantly the little cudgel came forth, and fell on the inn-keeper and gave him a sound thrashing.

The host cried for mercy; but the louder he cried, so much more heavily the cudgel beat the time on his back, until at length he fell to the ground exhausted. Then the turner said, “If thou dost not give back the table which covers itself, and the gold-ass, the dance shall begin afresh.” “Oh, no,” cried the host, quite humbly, “I will gladly produce everything, only make the accursed kobold creep back into the sack.” Then said the apprentice, “I will let mercy take the place of justice, but beware of getting into mischief again!” So he cried, “Into the sack, Cudgel!” and let him have rest.

Next morning the turner went home to his father with the wishing-table, and the gold-ass. The tailor rejoiced when he saw him once more, and asked him likewise what he had learned in foreign parts. “Dear father,” said he, “I have become a turner.” “A skilled trade,” said the father. “What hast thou brought back with thee from thy travels?”

“A precious thing, dear father,” replied the son, “a cudgel in the sack.”

“What!” cried the father, “a cudgel! That’s worth thy trouble, indeed! From every tree thou can cut thyself one.” “But not one like this, dear father. If I say, ‘Out of the sack, Cudgel!’ the cudgel springs out and leads any one who means ill with me a weary dance, and never stops until he lies on the ground and prays for fair weather. Look you, with this cudgel have I got back the wishing-table and the gold-ass which the thievish inn-keeper took away from my brothers. Now let them both be sent for, and invite all our kinsmen. I will give them to eat and to drink, and will fill their pockets with gold into the bargain.” The old tailor would not quite believe, but nevertheless got the relatives together. Then the turner spread a cloth in the room and led in the gold-ass, and said to his brother, “Now, dear brother, speak to him.” The miller said, “Bricklebrit,” and instantly the gold pieces fell down on the cloth like a thunder-shower, and the ass did not stop until every one of them had so much that he could carry no more. (I can see in thy face that thou also wouldst like to be there.)

Then the turner brought the little table, and said, “Now dear brother, speak to it.” And scarcely had the carpenter said, “Table, cover thyself,” than it was spread and amply covered with the most exquisite dishes. Then such a meal took place as the good tailor had never yet known in his house, and the whole party of kinsmen stayed together till far in the night, and were all merry and glad. The tailor locked away needle and thread, yard-measure and goose, in a press, and lived with his three sons in joy and splendour. (What, however, has become of the goat who was to blame for the tailor driving out his three sons? That I will tell thee. She was ashamed that she had a bald head, and ran to a fox’s hole and crept into it. When the fox came home, he was met by two great eyes shining out of the darkness, and was terrified and ran away. A bear met him, and as the fox looked quite disturbed, he said, “What is the matter with thee, brother Fox, why dost thou look like that?” “Ah,” answered Redskin, “a fierce beast is in my cave and stared at me with its fiery eyes.” “We will soon drive him out,” said the bear, and went with him to the cave and looked in, but when he saw the fiery eyes, fear seized on him likewise; he would have nothing to do with the furious beast, and took to his heels. The bee met him, and as she saw that he was ill at ease, she said, “Bear, thou art really pulling a very pitiful face; what has become of all thy gaiety?” “It is all very well for thee to talk,” replied the bear, “a furious beast with staring eyes is in Redskin’s house, and we can’t drive him out.” The bee said, “Bear I pity thee, I am a poor weak creature whom thou wouldst not turn aside to look at, but still, I believe, I can help thee.” She flew into the fox’s cave, lighted on the goat’s smoothly-shorn head, and stung her so violently, that she sprang up, crying “Meh, meh,” and ran forth into the world as if mad, and to this hour no one knows where she has gone.)

Thumbling

There was once a poor peasant who sat in the evening by the hearth and poked the fire, and his wife sat and span. Then said he, "How sad it is that we have no children! With us all is so quiet, and in other houses it is noisy and lively."

"Yes," replied the wife, and sighed, "even if we had only one, and it were quite small, and only as big as a thumb, I should be quite satisfied, and we would still love it with all our hearts." Now it so happened that the woman fell ill, and after seven months gave birth to a child, that was perfect in all its limbs, but no longer than a thumb. Then said they, "It is as we wished it to be, and it shall be our dear child;" and because of its size, they called it Thumbling. They did not let it want for food, but the child did not grow taller, but remained as it had been at the first, nevertheless it looked sensibly out of its eyes, and soon showed itself to be a wise and nimble creature, for everything it did turned out well.

One day the peasant was getting ready to go into the forest to cut wood, when he said as if to himself, "How I wish that there was any one who would bring the cart to me!" "Oh father," cried Thumbling, "I will soon bring the cart, rely on that; it shall be in the forest at the appointed time." The man smiled and said, "How can that be done, thou art far too small to lead the horse by the reins?" "That's of no consequence, father, if my mother will only harness it, I shall sit in the horse's ear and call out to him how he is to go." "Well," answered the man, "for once we will try it."

When the time came, the mother harnessed the horse, and placed Thumbling in its ear, and then the little creature cried, "Gee up, gee up!"

Then it went quite properly as if with its master, and the cart went the right way into the forest. It so happened that just as he was turning a corner, and the little one was crying, "Gee up," two strange men came towards him. "My word!" said one of them, "What is this? There is a cart coming, and a driver is calling to the horse and still he is not to be seen!" "That can't be right," said the other, "we will follow the cart and see where it stops." The cart, however, drove right into the forest, and exactly to the place where the wood had been cut. When Thumbling saw his father, he cried to him, "Seest thou, father, here I am with the cart; now take me down." The father got hold of the horse with his left hand and with the right took his little son out of the ear. Thumbling sat down quite merrily on a straw, but when the two strange men saw him, they did not know what to say for astonishment. Then one of them took the other aside and said, "Hark, the little fellow would make our fortune if we exhibited him in a large town, for money. We will buy him." They went to the peasant and said, "Sell us the little man. He shall be well treated with us." "No," replied the father, "he is the apple of my eye, and all the money in the world cannot buy him from me." Thumbling, however, when he heard of the bargain, had crept up the folds of his father's coat, placed himself on his shoulder, and whispered in his ear, "Father do give me away, I will soon come back again.” Then the father parted with him to the two men for a handsome bit of money. “Where wilt thou sit?” they said to him. “Oh just set me on the rim of your hat, and then I can walk backwards and forwards and look at the country, and still not fall down.” They did as he wished, and when Thumbling had taken leave of his father, they went away with him. They walked until it was dusk, and then the little fellow said, “Do take me down, I want to come down.” The man took his hat off, and put the little fellow on the ground by the wayside, and he leapt and crept about a little between the sods, and then he suddenly slipped into a mouse-hole which he had sought out. “Good evening, gentlemen, just go home without me,” he cried to them, and mocked them. They ran thither and stuck their sticks into the mouse-hole, but it was all lost labour. Thumbling crept still farther in, and as it soon became quite dark, they were forced to go home with their vexation and their empty purses.

When Thumbling saw that they were gone, he crept back out of the subterranean passage. “It is so dangerous to walk on the ground in the dark,” said he; “how easily a neck or a leg is broken!” Fortunately he knocked against an empty snail-shell. “Thank God!” said he. “In that I can pass the night in safety,” and got into it. Not long afterwards, when he was just going to sleep, he heard two men go by, and one of them was saying, “How shall we contrive to get hold of the rich pastor’s silver and gold?” “I could tell thee that,” cried Thumbling, interrupting them. “What was that?” said one of the thieves in fright, “I heard some one speaking.” They stood still listening, and Thumbling spoke again, and said, “Take me with you, and I’ll help you.”

“But where art thou?” “Just look on the ground, and observe from whence my voice comes,” he replied. There the thieves at length found him, and lifted him up. “Thou little imp, how wilt thou help us?” they said. “A great deal,” said he, “I will creep into the pastor’s room through the iron bars, and will reach out to you whatever you want to have.” “Come then,” they said, “and we will see what thou canst do.” When they got to the pastor’s house, Thumbling crept into the room, but instantly cried out with all his might, “Do you want to have everything that is here?” The thieves were alarmed, and said, “But do speak softly, so as not to waken any one!” Thumbling however, behaved as if he had not understood this, and cried again, “What do you want? Do you want to have everything that is here?” The cook, who slept in the next room, heard this and sat up in bed, and listened. The thieves, however, had in their fright run some distance away, but at last they took courage, and thought, “The little rascal wants to mock us.” They came back and whispered to him, “Come, be serious, and reach something out to us.” Then Thumbling again cried as loudly as he could, “I really will give you everything, just put your hands in.” The maid who was listening, heard this quite distinctly, and jumped out of bed and rushed to the door. The thieves took flight, and ran as if the Wild Huntsman were behind them, but as the maid could not see anything, she went to strike a light. When she came to the place with it, Thumbling, unperceived, betook himself to the granary, and the maid, after she had examined every corner and found nothing, lay down in her bed again, and believed that, after all, she had only been dreaming with open eyes and ears.

Thumbling had climbed up among the hay and found a beautiful place to sleep in; there he intended to rest until day, and then go home again to his parents. But he had other things to go through. Truly, there is much affliction and misery in this world! When day dawned, the maid arose from her bed to feed the cows. Her first walk was into the barn, where she laid hold of an armful of hay, and precisely that very one in which poor Thumbling was lying asleep. He, however, was sleeping so soundly that he was aware of nothing, and did not awake until he was in the mouth of the cow, who had picked him up with the hay. “Ah, heavens!” cried he, “how have I got into the fulling mill?” but he soon discovered where he was. Then it was necessary to be careful not to let himself go between the teeth and be dismembered, but he was nevertheless forced to slip down into the stomach with the hay. “In this little room the windows are forgotten,” said he, “and no sun shines in, neither will a candle be brought.” His quarters were especially unpleasing to him, and the worst was, more and more hay was always coming in by the door, and the space grew less and less. Then at length in his anguish, he cried as loud as he could, “Bring me no more fodder, bring me no more fodder.” The maid was just milking the cow, and when she heard some one speaking, and saw no one, and perceived that it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so terrified that she slipped off her stool, and spilt the milk. She ran in great haste to her master, and said, “Oh heavens, pastor, the cow has been speaking!” “Thou art mad,” replied the pastor; but he went himself to the byre to see what was there. Hardly, however had he set his foot inside when Thumbling again cried, “Bring me no more fodder, bring me no more fodder.” Then the pastor himself was alarmed, and thought that an evil spirit had gone into the cow, and ordered her to be killed. She was killed, but the stomach, in which Thumbling was, was thrown on the midden. Thumbling had great difficulty in working his way; however, he succeeded so far as to get some room, but just as he was going to thrust his head out, a new misfortune occurred. A hungry wolf ran thither, and swallowed the whole stomach at one gulp. Thumbling did not lose courage. “Perhaps,” thought he, “the wolf will listen to what I have got to say,” and he called to him from out of his stomach, “Dear wolf, I know of a magnificent feast for you.”

“Where is it to be had?” said the wolf.

“In such and such a house; thou must creep into it through the kitchen-sink, and wilt find cakes, and bacon, and sausages, and as much of them as thou canst eat,” and he described to him exactly his father’s house. The wolf did not require to be told this twice, squeezed himself in at night through the sink, and ate to his heart’s content in the larder. When he had eaten his fill, he wanted to go out again, but he had become so big that he could not go out by the same way. Thumbling had reckoned on this, and now began to make a violent noise in the wolf’s body, and raged and screamed as loudly as he could. “Wilt thou be quiet,” said the wolf, “thou wilt waken up the people!” “Eh, what,” replied the little fellow, “thou hast eaten thy fill, and I will make merry likewise,” and began once more to scream with all his strength. At last his father and mother were aroused by it, and ran to the room and looked in through the opening in the door. When they saw that a wolf was inside, they ran away, and the husband fetched his axe, and the wife the scythe. “Stay behind,” said the man, when they entered the room. “When I have given him a blow, if he is not killed by it, thou must cut him down and hew his body to pieces.” Then Thumbling heard his parents, voices and cried, “Dear father, I am here; I am in the wolf’s body.” Said the father, full of joy, “Thank God, our dear child has found us again,” and bade the woman take away her scythe, that Thumbling might not be hurt with it. After that he raised his arm, and struck the wolf such a blow on his head that he fell down dead, and then they got knives and scissors and cut his body open and drew the little fellow forth. “Ah,” said the father, “what sorrow we have gone through for thy sake.” “Yes father, I have gone about the world a great deal. Thank heaven, I breathe fresh air again!” “Where hast thou been, then?” “Ah, father, I have been in a mouse’s hole, in a cow’s stomach, and then in a wolf’s; now I will stay with you.” “And we will not sell thee again, no, not for all the riches in the world,” said his parents, and they embraced and kissed their dear Thumbling. They gave him to eat and to drink, and had some new clothes made for him, for his own had been spoiled on his journey.

The Wedding of Mrs. Fox

FIRST STORY

There was once on a time an old fox with nine tails, who believed that his wife was not faithful to him, and wished to try her. He stretched himself out under the bench, did not move a limb, and behaved as if he were stone dead. Mrs. Fox went up to her room, shut herself in, and her maid, Miss Cat, sat by the fire, and did the cooking. When it became known that the old fox was dead, wooers presented themselves. The maid heard some one standing at the house-door, knocking. She went and opened it, and it was a young fox, who said,

“What may you be about, Miss Cat?
Do you sleep or do you wake?”

She answered,

“I am not sleeping, I am waking,
Wouldst thou know what I am making?
I am boiling warm beer with butter so nice,
Will the gentleman enter and drink some likewise?”

“No, thank you, miss,” said the fox, “what is Mrs. Fox doing?” The maid replied,

“She sits all alone,
And makes her moan,
Weeping her little eyes quite red,
Because old Mr. Fox is dead.”

“Do just tell her, miss, that a young fox is here, who would like to woo her.” “Certainly, young sir.”

The cat goes up the stairs trip, trap,
The door she knocks at tap, tap, tap,
“Mistress Fox, are you inside?”
“Oh yes, my little cat,” she cried.
“A wooer he stands at the door out there.”

“Tell me what he is like, my dear?”

“But has he nine as beautiful tails as the late Mr. Fox?” “Oh, no,” answered the cat, “he has only one.”

“Then I will not have him.” Miss Cat went downstairs and sent the wooer away. Soon afterwards there was another knock, and another fox was at the door who wished to woo Mrs. Fox. He had two tails, but he did not fare better than the first. After this still more came, each with one tail more than the other, but they were all turned away, until at last one came who had nine tails, like old Mr. Fox. When the widow heard that, she said joyfully to the cat,

“Now open the gates and doors all wide,
And carry old Mr. Fox outside.”

But just as the wedding was going to be solemnized, old Mr. Fox stirred under the bench, and cudgelled all the rabble, and drove them and Mrs. Fox out of the house.

SECOND STORY

When old Mr. Fox was dead, the wolf came as a wooer, and knocked at the door, and the cat who was servant to Mrs. Fox, opened it for him. The wolf greeted her, and said,

"Good day, Mrs. Cat of Kehrewit,
"How comes it that alone you sit?
What are you making good?"

The cat replied,

"In milk I'm breaking bread so sweet,
Will the gentleman please come in and eat?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Cat," answered the wolf. "Is Mrs. Fox not at home?"

The cat said,

"She sits upstairs in her room,
Bewailing her sorrowful doom,

Bewailing her trouble so sore,
For old Mr. Fox is no more."

The wolf answered,

"If she's in want of a husband now,
Then will it please her to step below?"
The cat runs quickly up the stair,
And lets her tail fly here and there,
Until she comes to the parlour door.

With her five gold rings at the door she knocks,
"Are you within, good Mistress Fox?
If you're in want of a husband now,

Then will it please you to step below?

Mrs. Fox asked, "Has the gentleman red stockings on' and has he a pointed mouth?" "No," answered the cat. "Then he won't do for me."

When the wolf was gone, came a dog, a stag, a hare, a bear, a lion, and all the beasts of the forest, one after the other. But one of the good points which old Mr. Fox had possessed, was always lacking, and the cat had continually to send the wooers away. At length came a young fox. Then Mrs. Fox said, "Has the gentleman red stockings on, and has he a little pointed mouth?" "Yes," said the cat, "he has." "Then let him come upstairs," said Mrs. Fox, and ordered the servant to prepare the wedding-feast.

“Sweep me the room as clean as you can,
Up with the window, fling out my old man!
For many a fine fat mouse he brought,
Yet of his wife he never thought,
But ate up every one he caught.”

Then the wedding was solemnized with young Mr. Fox, and there was much rejoicing and dancing; and if they have not left off, they are dancing still.

The Elves

FIRST STORY

A shoemaker, by no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had nothing left but leather for one pair of shoes. So in the evening, he cut out the shoes which he wished to begin to make the next morning, and as he had a good conscience, he lay down quietly in his bed, commended himself to God, and fell asleep. In the morning, after he had said his prayers, and was just going to sit down to work, the two shoes stood quite finished on his table. He was astounded, and knew not what to say to it. He took the shoes in his hands to observe them closer, and they were so neatly made that there was not one bad stitch in them, just as if they were intended as a masterpiece. Soon after, a buyer came in, and as the shoes pleased him so well, he paid more for them than was customary, and, with the money, the shoemaker was able to purchase leather for two pairs of shoes. He cut them out at night, and next morning was about to set to work with fresh courage; but he had no need to do so, for, when he got up, they were already made, and buyers also were not wanting, who gave him money enough to buy leather for four pairs of shoes. The following morning, too, he found the four pairs made; and so it went on constantly, what he cut out in the evening was finished by the morning, so that he soon had his honest independence again, and at last became a wealthy man. Now it befell that one evening not long before Christmas, when the man had been cutting out, he said to his wife, before going to bed, “What think you if we were to stay up to-night to see who it is that lends us this helping hand?” The woman liked the idea, and lighted a candle, and then they hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind some clothes which were hanging up there, and watched. When it was midnight, two pretty little naked men came, sat down by the shoemaker’s table, took all the work which was cut out before them and began to stitch, and sew, and hammer so skilfully and so quickly with their little fingers that the shoemaker could not turn away his eyes for astonishment. They did not stop until all was done, and stood finished on the table, and they ran quickly away.

Next morning the woman said, “The little men have made us rich, and we really must show that we are grateful for it. They run about so, and have nothing on, and must be cold. I’ll tell thee what I’ll do: I will make them little shirts, and coats, and vests, and trousers, and knit both of them a pair of stockings, and do thou, too, make them two little pairs of shoes.” The man said, “I shall be very glad to do it;” and one night, when everything was ready, they laid their presents all together on the table instead of the cut-out work, and then concealed themselves to see how the little men would behave. At midnight they came bounding in, and wanted to get to work at once, but as they did not find any leather cut out, but only the pretty little articles of clothing, they were at first astonished, and then they showed intense delight. They dressed themselves with the greatest rapidity, putting the pretty clothes on, and singing,

“Now we are boys so fine to see,
Why should we longer cobblers be?”

Then they danced and skipped and leapt over chairs and benches. At last they danced out of doors. From that time forth they came no more, but as long as the shoemaker lived all went well with him, and all his undertakings prospered.

SECOND STORY

There was once a poor servant-girl, who was industrious and cleanly, and swept the house every day, and emptied her sweepings on the great heap in front of the door. One morning when she was just going back to her work, she found a letter on this heap, and as she could not read, she put her broom in the corner, and took the letter to her master and mistress, and behold it was an invitation from the elves, who asked the girl to hold a child for them at its christening. The girl did not know what to do, but at length, after much persuasion, and as they told her that it was not right to refuse an invitation of this kind, she consented. Then three elves came and conducted her to a hollow mountain, where the little folks lived. Everything there was small, but more elegant and beautiful than can be described. The baby's mother lay in a bed of black ebony ornamented with pearls, the coverlids were embroidered with gold, the cradle was of ivory, the bath of gold. The girl stood as godmother, and then wanted to go home again, but the little elves urgently entreated her to stay three days with them. So she stayed, and passed the time in pleasure and gaiety, and the little folks did all they could to make her happy. At last she set out on her way home. Then first they filled her pockets quite full of money, and after that they led her out of the mountain again. When she got home, she wanted to begin her work, and took the broom, which was still standing in the corner, in her hand and began to sweep. Then some strangers came out of the house, who asked her who she was, and what business she had there? And she had not, as she thought, been three days with the little men in the mountains, but seven years, and in the meantime her former masters had died.

THIRD STORY

A certain mother’s child had been taken away out of its cradle by the elves, and a changeling with a large head and staring eyes, which would do nothing but eat and drink, laid in its place. In her trouble she went to her neighbour, and asked her advice. The neighbour said that she was to carry the changeling into the kitchen, set it down on the hearth, light a fire, and boil some water in two egg-shells, which would make the changeling laugh, and if he laughed, all would be over with him. The woman did everything that her neighbour bade her. When she put the egg-shells with water on the fire, the imp said, “I am as old now as the Wester forest, but never yet have I seen any one boil anything in an egg-shell!” And he began to laugh at it. Whilst he was laughing, suddenly came a host of little elves, who brought the right child, set it down on the hearth, and took the changeling away with them.

The Robber Bridegroom

There was once on a time a miller, who had a beautiful daughter, and as she was grown up, he wished that she was provided for, and well married. He thought, “If any good suitor comes and asks for her, I will give her to him.” Not long afterwards, a suitor came, who appeared to be very rich, and as the miller had no fault to find with him, he promised his daughter to him. The maiden, however, did not like him quite so much as a girl should like the man to whom she is engaged, and had no confidence in him. Whenever she saw, or thought of him, she felt a secret horror. Once he said to her, “Thou art my betrothed, and yet thou hast never once paid me a visit.” The maiden replied, “I know not where thy house is.” Then said the bridegroom, “My house is out there in the dark forest.” She tried to excuse herself and said she could not find the way there. The bridegroom said, “Next Sunday thou must come out there to me; I have already invited the guests, and I will strew ashes in order that thou mayst find thy way through the forest.” When Sunday came, and the maiden had to set out on her way, she became very uneasy, she herself knew not exactly why, and to mark her way she filled both her pockets full of peas and lentils. Ashes were strewn at the entrance of the forest, and these she followed, but at every step she threw a couple of peas on the ground. She walked almost the whole day until she reached the middle of the forest, where it was the darkest, and there stood a solitary house, which she did not like, for it looked so dark and dismal. She went inside it, but no one was within, and the most absolute stillness reigned. Suddenly a voice cried,

“Turn back, turn back, young maiden dear,
’Tis a murderer’s house you enter here.”

The maiden looked up, and saw that the voice came from a bird, which was hanging in a cage on the wall. Again it cried,

“Turn back, turn back, young maiden dear,
’Tis a murderer’s house you enter here.”

Then the young maiden went on farther from one room to another, and walked through the whole house, but it was entirely empty and not one human being was to be found. At last she came to the the cellar, and there sat an extremely aged woman, whose head shook constantly. “Can you not tell me,” said the maiden, “if my betrothed lives here?”

“Alas, poor child,” replied the old woman, “whither hast thou come? Thou art in a murderer’s den. Thou thinkest thou art a bride soon to be married, but thou wilt keep thy wedding with death. Look, I have been forced to put a great kettle on there, with water in it, and when they have thee in their power, they will cut thee to pieces without mercy, will cook thee, and eat thee, for they are eaters of human flesh. If I do not have compassion on thee, and save thee, thou art lost.”

Thereupon the old woman led her behind a great hogshead where she could not be seen. “Be as still as a mouse,” said she, “do not make a sound, or move, or all will be over with thee. At night, when the robbers are asleep, we will escape; I have long waited for an opportunity.” Hardly was this done, than the godless crew came home. They dragged with them another young girl. They were drunk, and paid no heed to her screams and lamentations. They gave her wine to drink, three glasses full, one glass of white wine, one glass of red, and a glass of yellow, and with this her heart burst in twain. Thereupon they tore off her delicate raiment, laid her on a table, cut her beautiful body in pieces and strewed salt thereon. The poor bride behind the cask trembled and shook, for she saw right well what fate the robbers had destined for her. One of them noticed a gold ring on the little finger of the murdered girl, and as it would not come off at once, he took an axe and cut the finger off, but it sprang up in the air, away over the cask and fell straight into the bride’s bosom. The robber took a candle and wanted to look for it, but could not find it. Then another of them said, “Hast thou looked behind the great hogshead?” But the old woman cried, “Come and get something to eat, and leave off looking till the morning, the finger won’t run away from you.”

Then the robbers said, “The old woman is right,” and gave up their search, and sat down to eat, and the old woman poured a sleeping-draught in their wine, so that they soon lay down in the cellar, and slept and snored. When the bride heard that, she came out from behind the hogshead, and had to step over the sleepers, for they lay in rows on the ground, and great was her terror lest she should waken one of them. But God helped her, and she got safely over. The old woman went up with her, opened the doors, and they hurried out of the murderers’ den with all the speed in their power. The wind had blown away the strewn ashes, but the peas and lentils had sprouted and grown up, and showed them the way in the moonlight. They walked the whole night, until in the morning they arrived at the mill, and then the maiden told her father everything exactly as it had happened.

When the day came when the wedding was to be celebrated, the bridegroom appeared, and the Miller had invited all his relations and friends. As they sat at table, each was bidden to relate something. The bride sat still, and said nothing. Then said the bridegroom to the bride, “Come, my darling, dost thou know nothing? Relate something to us like the rest.” She replied, “Then I will relate a dream. I was walking alone through a wood, and at last I came to a house, in which no living soul was, but on the wall there was a bird in a cage which cried,

“Turn back, turn back, young maiden dear,
’Tis a murderer’s house you enter here.”

And this it cried once more. ‘My darling, I only dreamt this. Then I went through all the rooms, and they were all empty, and there was something so horrible about them! At last I went down into the cellar, and there sat a very very old woman, whose head shook; I asked her, ‘Does my bridegroom live in this house? She answered, ‘Alas poor child, thou hast got into a murderer’s den, thy bridegroom does live here, but he will hew thee in pieces, and kill thee, and then he will cook thee, and eat thee.’ My darling, I only dreamt this. But the old woman hid me behind a great hogshead, and, scarcely was I hidden, when the robbers came home, dragging a maiden with them, to whom they gave three kinds of wine to drink, white, red, and yellow, with which her heart broke in twain. My darling, I only dreamt this. Thereupon they pulled off her pretty clothes, and hewed her fair body in pieces on a table, and sprinkled them with salt. My darling, I only dreamt this. And one of the robbers saw that there was still a ring on her little finger, and as it was hard to draw off, he took an axe and cut it off, but the finger sprang up in the air, and sprang behind the great hogshead, and fell in my bosom. And there is the finger with the ring!” And with these words she drew it forth, and showed it to those present.

The robber, who had during this story become as pale as ashes, leapt up and wanted to escape, but the guests held him fast, and delivered him over to justice. Then he and his whole troop were executed for their infamous deeds.

Herr Korbes

There were once a cock and a hen who wanted to take a journey together. So the cock built a beautiful carriage, which had four red wheels, and harnessed four mice to it. The hen seated herself in it with the cock, and they drove away together. Not long afterwards they met a cat who said, “Where are you going?” The cock replied, “We are going to the house of Herr Korbes.” “Take me with you,” said the cat. The cock answered, “Most willingly, get up behind, lest you fall off in front. Take great care not to dirty my little red wheels. And you little wheels, roll on, and you little mice pipe out, as we go forth on our way to the house of Herr Korbes.”

After this came a millstone, then an egg, then a duck, then a pin, and at last a needle, who all seated themselves in the carriage, and drove with them. When, however, they reached the house of Herr Korbes, Herr Korbes was not there. The mice drew the carriage into the barn, the hen flew with the cock upon a perch. The cat sat down by the hearth, the duck on the well-pole. The egg rolled itself into a towel, the pin stuck itself into the chair-cushion, the needle jumped on to the bed in the middle of the pillow, and the millstone laid itself over the door. Then Herr Korbes came home, went to the hearth, and was about to light the fire, when the cat threw a quantity of ashes in his face. He ran into the kitchen in a great hurry to wash it off, and the duck splashed some water in his face. He wanted to dry it with the towel, but the egg rolled up against him, broke, and glued up his eyes. He wanted to rest, and sat down in the chair, and then the pin pricked him. He fell in a passion, and threw himself on his bed, but as soon as he laid his head on the pillow, the needle pricked him, so that he screamed aloud, and was just going to run out into the wide world in his rage, but when he came to the house-door, the millstone leapt down and struck him dead. Herr Korbes must have been a very wicked man!

The Godfather

A poor man had so many children that he had already asked every one in the world to be godfather, and when still another child was born, no one else was left whom he could invite. He knew not what to do, and, in his perplexity, he lay down and fell asleep. Then he dreamt that he was to go outside the gate, and ask the first person who met him to be godfather. When he awoke, he determined to obey his dream, and went outside the gate, and asked the first person who came up to him to be godfather. The stranger presented him with a little glass of water, and said, “This is a wonderful water, with it thou canst heal the sick, only thou must see where Death is standing. If he is standing by the patient’s head, give the patient some of the water and he will be healed, but if Death is standing by his feet, all trouble will be in vain, for the sick man must die.” From this time forth, the man could always say whether a patient could be saved or not, and became famous for his skill, and earned a great deal of money. Once he was called in to the child of the King, and when he entered, he saw death standing by the child’s head and cured it with the water, and he did the same a second time, but the third time Death was standing by its feet, and then he knew the child was forced to die.

Once the man thought he would visit the godfather, and tell him how he had succeeded with the water. But when he entered the house, it was such a strange establishment! On the first flight of stairs, the broom and shovel were disputing, and knocking each other about violently. He asked them, “Where does the godfather live?” The broom replied, “One flight of stairs higher up.” When he came to the second flight, he saw a heap of dead fingers lying. He asked, “Where does the godfather live?” One of the fingers replied, “One flight of stairs higher.” On the third flight lay a heap of dead heads, which again directed him to the flight beyond. On the fourth flight, he saw fishes on the fire, which frizzled in the pans and baked themselves. They, too, said, “One flight of stairs higher.” And when he had ascended the fifth, he came to the door of a room and peeped through the keyhole, and there he saw the godfather who had a pair of long horns. When he opened the door and went in, the godfather got into bed in a great hurry and covered himself up. Then said the man, “Sir godfather, what a strange household you have! When I came to your first flight of stairs, the shovel and broom were quarreling, and beating each other violently.”

“How stupid you are!” said the godfather. “That was the boy and the maid talking to each other.” “But on the second flight I saw dead fingers lying.” “Oh, how silly you are! Those were some roots of scorzonera.” “On the third flight lay a heap of dead men’s heads.” “Foolish man, those were cabbages.” “On the fourth flight, I saw fishes in a pan, which were hissing and baking themselves.” When he had said that, the fishes came and served themselves up. “And when I got to the fifth flight, I peeped through the keyhole of a door, and there, godfather, I saw you, and you had long, long horns.” “Oh, that is a lie!” The man became alarmed, and ran out, and if he had not, who knows what the godfather would have done to him.

Frau Trude

There was once a little girl who was obstinate and inquisitive, and when her parents told her to do anything, she did not obey them, so how could she fare well? One day she said to her parents, “I have heard so much of Frau Trude, I will go to her some day. People say that everything about her does look so strange, and that there are such odd things in her house, that I have become quite curious!” Her parents absolutely forbade her, and said, “Frau Trude is a bad woman, who does wicked things, and if thou goest to her; thou art no longer our child.” But the maiden did not let herself be turned aside by her parent’s prohibition, and still went to Frau Trude. And when she got to her, Frau Trude said, “Why art thou so pale?” “Ah,” she replied, and her whole body trembled, “I have been so terrified at what I have seen.” “What hast thou seen?” “I saw a black man on your steps.” “That was a collier.” “Then I saw a green man.” “That was a huntsman.” “After that I saw a blood-red man.” “That was a butcher.” “Ah, Frau Trude, I was terrified; I looked through the window and saw not you, but, as I verily believe, the devil himself with a head of fire.” “Oho!” said she, “then thou hast seen the witch in her proper costume. I have been waiting for thee, and wanting thee a long time already; thou shalt give me some light.” Then she changed the girl into a block of wood, and threw it into the fire. And when it was in full blaze she sat down close to it, and warmed herself by it, and said, “That shines bright for once in a way.”

Godfather Death

A poor man had twelve children and was forced to work night and day to give them even bread. When therefore the thirteenth came into the world, he knew not what to do in his trouble, but ran out into the great highway, and resolved to ask the first person whom he met to be godfather. The first to meet him was the good God who already knew what filled his heart, and said to him, "Poor man, I pity thee. I will hold thy child at its christening, and will take charge of it and make it happy on earth." The man said, "Who art thou?" "I am God." "Then I do not desire to have thee for a godfather," said the man; "thou givest to the rich, and leavest the poor to hunger." Thus spoke the man, for he did not know how wisely God apportions riches and poverty. He turned therefore away from the Lord, and went farther. Then the Devil came to him and said, "What seekest thou? If thou wilt take me as a godfather for thy child, I will give him gold in plenty and all the joys of the world as well." The man asked, "Who art thou?" "I am the Devil." "Then I do not desire to have thee for godfather," said the man; "thou deceivest men and leadest them astray." He went onwards, and then came Death striding up to him with withered legs, and said, "Take me as godfather." The man asked, "Who art thou?" "I am Death, and I make all equal." Then said the man, "Thou art the right one, thou takest the rich as well as the poor, without distinction; thou shalt be godfather." Death answered, "I will make thy child rich and famous, for he who has me for a friend can lack nothing." The man said, "Next Sunday is the christening; be there at the right time." Death appeared as he had promised, and stood godfather quite in the usual way.

When the boy had grown up, his godfather one day appeared and bade him go with him. He led him forth into a forest, and showed him a herb which grew there, and said, "Now shalt thou receive thy godfather's present. I make thee a celebrated physician. When thou art called to a patient, I will always appear to thee. If I stand by the head of the sick man, thou mayst say with confidence that thou wilt make him well again, and if thou givest him of this herb he will recover; but if I stand by the patient's feet, he is mine, and thou must say that all remedies are in vain, and that no physician in the world could save him. But beware of using the herb against my will, or it might fare ill with thee."

It was not long before the youth was the most famous physician in the whole world. "He had only to look at the patient and he knew his condition at once, and if he would recover, or must needs die." So they said of him, and from far and wide people came to him, sent for him when they had any one ill, and gave him so much money that he soon became a rich man. Now it so befell that the King became ill, and the physician was summoned, and was to say if recovery were possible. But when he came to the bed, Death was standing by the feet of the sick man, and the herb did not grow which could save him. "If I could but cheat Death for once," thought the physician, "he is sure to take it ill if I do, but, as I am his godson, he will shut one eye;

I will risk it.” He therefore took up the sick man, and laid him the other way, so that now Death was standing by his head. Then he gave the King some of the herb, and he recovered and grew healthy again. But Death came to the physician, looking very black and angry, threatened him with his finger, and said, “Thou hast overreached me; this time I will pardon it, as thou art my godson; but if thou venturest it again, it will cost thee thy neck, for I will take thee thyself away with me.”

Soon afterwards the King’s daughter fell into a severe illness. She was his only child, and he wept day and night, so that he began to lose the sight of his eyes, and he caused it to be made known that whosoever rescued her from death should be her husband and inherit the crown. When the physician came to the sick girl’s bed, he saw Death by her feet. He ought to have remembered the warning given by his godfather, but he was so infatuated by the great beauty of the King’s daughter, and the happiness of becoming her husband, that he flung all thought to the winds. He did not see that Death was casting angry glances on him, that he was raising his hand in the air, and threatening him with his withered fist. He raised up the sick girl, and placed her head where her feet had lain. Then he gave her some of the herb, and instantly her cheeks flushed red, and life stirred afresh in her.

When Death saw that for a second time he was defrauded of his own property, he walked up to the physician with long strides, and said, “All is over with thee, and now the lot falls on thee,” and seized him so firmly with his ice-cold hand, that he could not resist, and led him into a cave below the earth. There he saw how thousands and thousands of candles were burning in countless rows, some large, others half-sized, others small. Every instant some were extinguished, and others again burnt up, so that the flames seemed to leap hither and thither in perpetual change. “See,” said Death, “these are the lights of men’s lives. The large ones belong to children, the half-sized ones to married people in their prime, the little ones belong to old people; but children and young folks likewise have often only a tiny candle.” “Show me the light of my life,” said the physician, and he thought that it would be still very tall. Death pointed to a little end which was just threatening to go out, and said, “Behold, it is there.” “Ah, dear godfather,” said the horrified physician, “light a new one for me, do it for love of me, that I may enjoy my life, be King, and the husband of the King’s beautiful daughter.” “I cannot,” answered Death, “one must go out before a new one is lighted.” “Then place the old one on a new one, that will go on burning at once when the old one has come to an end,” pleaded the physician. Death behaved as if he were going to fulfill his wish, and took hold of a tall new candle; but as he desired to revenge himself, he purposely made a mistake in fixing it, and the little piece fell down and was extinguished. Immediately the physician fell on the ground, and now he himself was in the hands of Death.

Thumbling as Journeyman

A certain tailor had a son, who happened to be small, and no bigger than a Thumb, and on this account he was always called Thumbling. He had, however, some courage in him, and said to his father, “Father, I must and will go out into the world.” “That’s right, my son,” said the old man, and took a long darning-needle and made a knob of sealing-wax on it at the candle, “and there is a sword for thee to take with thee on the way.” Then the little tailor wanted to have one more meal with them, and hopped into the kitchen to see what his lady mother had cooked for the last time. It was, however, just dished up, and the dish stood on the hearth. Then he said, “Mother, what is there to eat to-day?” “See for thyself,” said his mother. So Thumbling jumped on to the hearth, and peeped into the dish, but as he stretched his neck in too far the steam from the food caught hold of him, and carried him up the chimney. He rode about in the air on the steam for a while, until at length he sank down to the ground again. Now the little tailor was outside in the wide world, and he travelled about, and went to a master in his craft, but the food was not good enough for him. “Mistress, if you give us no better food,” said Thumbling, “I will go away, and early to-morrow morning I will write with chalk on the door of your house, ‘Too many potatoes, too little meat! Farewell, Mr. Potato-King.’” “What wouldst thou have forsooth, grasshopper?” said the mistress, and grew angry, and seized a dishcloth, and was just going to strike him; but my little tailor crept nimbly under a thimble, peeped out from beneath it, and put his tongue out at the mistress. She took up the thimble, and wanted to get hold of him, but little Thumbling hopped into the cloth, and while the mistress was opening it out and looking for him, he got into a crevice in the table. “Ho, ho, lady mistress,” cried he, and thrust his head out, and when she began to strike him he leapt down into the drawer. At last, however, she caught him and drove him out of the house.

The little tailor journeyed on and came to a great forest, and there he fell in with a band of robbers who had a design to steal the King’s treasure. When they saw the little tailor, they thought, “A little fellow like that can creep through a key-hole and serve as picklock to us.” “Hollo,” cried one of them, “thou giant Goliath, wilt thou go to the treasure-chamber with us? Thou canst slip thyself in and throw out the money.” Thumbling reflected a while, and at length he said, “yes,” and went with them to the treasure-chamber. Then he looked at the doors above and below, to see if there was any crack in them. It was not long before he espied one which was broad enough to let him in. He was therefore about to get in at once, but one of the two sentries who stood before the door, observed him, and said to the other, “What an ugly spider is creeping there; I will kill it.” “Let the poor creature alone,” said the other; “it has done thee no harm.” Then Thumbling got safely through the crevice into the treasure-chamber, opened the window beneath which the robbers were standing, and threw out to them one thaler after another. When the little tailor was in the full swing of his work, he heard the King coming to inspect his treasure-chamber, and crept hastily into a hiding-place. The King noticed that several solid thalers were missing, but could not conceive who could have stolen them, for locks and bolts were in good condition, and all seemed well guarded. Then he went away again, and said to the sentries, “Be on the watch, some one is after the money.” When therefore Thumbling recommenced his labours, they heard the money moving, and a sound of klink, klink, klink. They ran swiftly in to seize the thief, but the little tailor, who heard them coming, was still swifter, and leapt into a corner and covered himself with a thaler, so that nothing could be seen of him, and at the same time he mocked the sentries and cried, “Here am I!” The sentries ran thither, but as they got there, he had already hopped into another corner under a thaler, and was crying, “Ho, ho, here am I!” The watchmen sprang there in haste, but Thumbling had long ago got into a third corner, and was crying, “Ho, ho, here am I!” And thus he made fools of them, and drove them so long round about the treasure-chamber that they were weary and went away. Then by degrees he threw all the thalers out, dispatching the last with all his might, then hopped nimbly upon it, and flew down with it through the window. The robbers paid him great compliments. “Thou art a valiant hero,” said they; “wilt thou be our captain?”

Thumbling, however, declined, and said he wanted to see the world first. They now divided the booty, but the little tailor only asked for a kreuzer because he could not carry more.

Then he once more buckled on his sword, bade the robbers goodbye, and took to the road. First, he went to work with some masters, but he had no liking for that, and at last he hired himself as man-servant in an inn. The maids, however, could not endure him, for he saw all they did secretly, without their seeing him, and he told their master and mistress what they had taken off the plates, and carried away out of the cellar, for themselves. Then said they, “Wait, and we will pay thee off!” and arranged with each other to play him a trick. Soon afterwards when one of the maids was mowing in the garden, and saw Thumbling jumping about and creeping up and down the plants, she mowed him up quickly with the grass, tied all in a great cloth, and secretly threw it to the cows. Now amongst them there was a great black one, who swallowed him down without hurting him. Down below, however, it pleased him ill, for it was quite dark, neither was any candle burning. When the cow was being milked he cried,

“Strip, strap, strull,
 Will the pail soon be full?”

But the noise of the milking prevented his being understood. After this the master of the house came into the cow-byre and said, “That cow shall be killed to-morrow.” Then Thumbling was so alarmed that he cried out in a clear voice, “Let me out first, for I am shut up inside her.” The master heard that quite well, but did not know from whence the voice came. “Where art thou?" asked he. "In the black one," answered Thumbling, but the master did not understand what that meant, and went out.

Next morning the cow was killed. Happily Thumbling did not meet with one blow at the cutting up and chopping; he got among the sausage-meat. And when the butcher came in and began his work, he cried out with all his might, "Don't chop too deep, don't chop too deep, I am amongst it." No one heard this because of the noise of the chopping-knife. Now poor Thumbling was in trouble, but trouble sharpens the wits, and he sprang out so adroitly between the blows that none of them touched him, and he escaped with a whole skin. But still he could not get away, there was nothing for it but to let himself be thrust into a black-pudding with the bits of bacon. His quarters there were rather confined, and besides that he was hung up in the chimney to be smoked, and there time did hang terribly heavy on his hands.

At length in winter he was taken down again, as the black-pudding had to be set before a guest. When the hostess was cutting it in slices, he took care not to stretch out his head too far lest a bit of it should be cut off; at last he saw his opportunity, cleared a passage for himself, and jumped out.

The little tailor, however, would not stay any longer in a house where he fared so ill, so at once set out on his journey again. But his liberty did not last long. In the open country he met with a fox who snapped him up in a fit of absence. "Hollo, Mr. Fox," cried the little tailor, "it is I who am sticking in your throat, set me at liberty again." "Thou art right," answered the fox. "Thou art next to nothing for me, but if thou wilt promise me the fowls in thy father's yard I will let thee go." "With all my heart," replied Thumbling. "Thou shalt have all the cocks and hens, that I promise thee." Then the fox let him go again, and himself carried him home. When the father once more saw his dear son, he willingly gave the fox all the fowls which he had. "For this I likewise bring thee a handsome bit of money," said Thumbling, and gave his father the kreuzer which he earned on his travels.

"But why did the fox get the poor chickens to eat?" "Oh, you goose, your father would surely love his child far more than the fowls in the yard!"

Fitcher's Bird

There was once a wizard who used to take the form of a poor man, and went to houses and begged, and caught pretty girls. No one knew whither he carried them, for they were never seen more. One day he appeared before the door of a man who had three pretty daughters; he looked like a poor weak beggar, and carried a basket on his back, as if he meant to collect charitable gifts in it. He begged for a little food, and when the eldest daughter came out and was just reaching him a piece of bread, he did but touch her, and she was forced to jump into his basket. Thereupon he hurried away with long strides, and carried her away into a dark forest to his house, which stood in the midst of it. Everything in the house was magnificent; he gave her whatsoever she could possibly desire, and said, "My darling, thou wilt certainly be happy with me, for thou hast everything thy heart can wish for." This lasted a few days, and then he said, "I must journey forth, and leave thee alone for a short time; there are the keys of the house; thou mayst go everywhere and look at everything except into one room, which this little key here opens, and there I forbid thee to go on pain of death." He likewise gave her an egg and said, "Preserve the egg carefully for me, and carry it continually about with thee, for a great misfortune would arise from the loss of it."

She took the keys and the egg, and promised to obey him in everything. When he was gone, she went all round the house from the bottom to the top, and examined everything. The rooms shone with silver and gold, and she thought she had never seen such great splendour. At length she came to the forbidden door; she wished to pass it by, but curiosity let her have no rest. She examined the key, it looked just like any other; she put it in the keyhole and turned it a little, and the door sprang open. But what did she see when she went in? A great bloody basin stood in the middle of the room, and therein lay human beings, dead and hewn to pieces, and hard by was a block of wood, and a gleaming axe lay upon it. She was so terribly alarmed that the egg which she held in her hand fell into the basin. She got it out and washed the blood off, but in vain, it appeared again in a moment. She washed and scrubbed, but she could not get it out.

It was not long before the man came back from his journey, and the first things which he asked for were the key and the egg. She gave them to him, but she trembled as she did so, and he saw at once by the red spots that she had been in the bloody chamber. "Since thou hast gone into the room against my will," said he, "thou shalt go back into it against thine own. Thy life is ended." He threw her down, dragged her thither by her hair, cut her head off on the block, and hewed her in pieces so that her blood ran on the ground. Then he threw her into the basin with the rest.

"Now I will fetch myself the second," said the wizard, and again he went to the house in the shape of a poor man, and begged. Then the second daughter brought him a piece of bread; he caught her like the first, by simply touching her, and carried her away. She did not fare better than her sister. She allowed herself to be led away by her curiosity, opened the door of the bloody chamber, looked in, and had to atone for it with her life on the wizard's return. Then he went and brought the third sister, but she was clever and crafty. When he had given her the keys and the egg, and had left her, she first put the egg away with great care, and then she examined the house, and at last went into the forbidden room. Alas, what did she behold! Both her sisters lay there in the basin, cruelly murdered, and cut in pieces. But she began to gather their limbs together and put them in order, head, body, arms and legs. And when nothing further was wanting the limbs began to move and unite themselves together, and both the maidens opened their eyes and were once more alive. Then they rejoiced and kissed and caressed each other.

On his arrival, the man at once demanded the keys and the egg, and as he could perceive no trace of any blood on it, he said, "Thou hast stood the test, thou shalt be my bride." He now had no longer any power over her, and was forced to do whatsoever she desired. "Oh, very well," said she, "thou shalt first take a basketful of gold to my father and mother, and carry it thyself on thy back; in the meantime I will prepare for the wedding." Then she ran to her sisters, whom she had hidden in a little chamber, and said, "The moment has come when I can save you. The wretch shall himself carry you home again, but as soon as you are at home send help to me." She put both of them in a basket and covered them quite over with gold, so that nothing of them was to be seen, then she called in the wizard and said to him, "Now carry the basket away, but I shall look through my little window and watch to see if thou stoppest on the way to stand or to rest."

The wizard raised the basket on his back and went away with it, but it weighed him down so heavily that the perspiration streamed from his face. Then he sat down and wanted to rest awhile, but immediately one of the girls in the basket cried, "I am looking through my little window, and I see that thou art resting. Wilt thou go on at once?" He thought it was his bride who was calling that to him; and got up on his legs again. Once more he was going to sit down, but instantly she cried, "I am looking through my little window, and I see that thou art resting. Wilt thou go on directly?" And whenever he stood still, she cried this, and then he was forced to go onwards, until at last, groaning and out of breath, he took the basket with the gold and the two maidens into their parents' house. At home, however, the bride prepared the marriage-feast, and sent invitations to the friends of the wizard. Then she took a skull with grinning teeth, put some ornaments on it and a wreath of flowers, carried it upstairs to the garret-window, and let it look out from thence. When all was ready, she got into a barrel of honey, and then cut the feather-bed open and rolled herself in it, until she looked like a wondrous bird, and no one could recognize her. Then she went out of the house, and on her way she met some of the wedding-guests, who asked,

"O, Fitcher's bird, how com'st thou here?"
"I come from Fitcher's house quite near."
"And what may the young bride be doing?"
"From cellar to garret she's swept all clean,
And now from the window she's peeping, I ween."

At last she met the bridegroom, who was coming slowly back. He, like the others, asked,

"O, Fitcher's bird, how com'st thou here?"
"I come from Fitcher's house quite near."
"And what may the young bride be doing?

"From cellar to garret she's swept all clean,
And now from the window she's peeping, I ween."

The bridegroom looked up, saw the decked-out skull, thought it was his bride, and nodded to her, greeting her kindly. But when he and his guests had all gone into the house, the brothers and kinsmen of the bride, who had been sent to rescue her, arrived. They locked all the doors of the house, that no one might escape, set fire to it, and the wizard and all his crew had to burn.

The Juniper-Tree

It is now long ago, quite two thousand years, since there was a rich man who had a beautiful and pious wife, and they loved each other dearly. They had, however, no children, though they wished for them very much, and the woman prayed for them day and night, but still they had none. Now there was a court-yard in front of their house in which was a juniper-tree, and one day in winter the woman was standing beneath it, paring herself an apple, and while she was paring herself the apple she cut her finger, and the blood fell on the snow. “Ah,” said the woman, and sighed right heavily, and looked at the blood before her, and was most unhappy, “ah, if I had but a child as red as blood and as white as snow!” And while she thus spake, she became quite happy in her mind, and felt just as if that were going to happen. Then she went into the house and a month went by and the snow was gone, and two months, and then everything was green, and three months, and then all the flowers came out of the earth, and four months, and then all the trees in the wood grew thicker, and the green branches were all closely entwined, and the birds sang until the wood resounded and the blossoms fell from the trees, then the fifth month passed away and she stood under the juniper-tree, which smelt so sweetly that her heart leapt, and she fell on her knees and was beside herself with joy, and when the sixth month was over the fruit was large and fine, and then she was quite still, and the seventh month she snatched at the juniper-berries and ate them greedily, then she grew sick and sorrowful, then the eighth month passed, and she called her husband to her, and wept and said, “If I die then bury me beneath the juniper-tree.” Then she was quite comforted and happy until the next month was over, and then she had a child as white as snow and as red as blood, and when she beheld it she was so delighted that she died.

Then her husband buried her beneath the juniper-tree, and he began to weep sore; after some time he was more at ease, and though he still wept he could bear it, and after some time longer he took another wife.

By the second wife he had a daughter, but the first wife’s child was a little son, and he was as red as blood and as white as snow. When the woman looked at her daughter she loved her very much, but then she looked at the little boy and it seemed to cut her to the heart, for the thought came into her mind that he would always stand in her way, and she was for ever thinking how she could get all the fortune for her daughter, and the Evil One filled her mind with this till she was quite wroth with the little boy, and slapped him here and cuffed him there, until the unhappy child was in continual terror, for when he came out of school he had no peace in any place.

One day the woman had gone upstairs to her room, and her little daughter went up too, and said, “Mother, give me an apple.” “Yes, my child,” said the woman, and gave her a fine apple out of the chest, but the chest had a great heavy lid with a great sharp iron lock. “Mother,” said the little daughter, “is brother not to have one too?” This made the woman angry, but she said, "Yes, when he comes out of school." And when she saw from the window that he was coming, it was just as if the Devil entered into her, and she snatched at the apple and took it away again from her daughter, and said, "Thou shalt not have one before thy brother." Then she threw the apple into the chest, and shut it. Then the little boy came in at the door, and the Devil made her say to him kindly, "My son, wilt thou have an apple?" and she looked wickedly at him. "Mother," said the little boy, "how dreadful you look! Yes, give me an apple." Then it seemed to her as if she were forced to say to him, "Come with me," and she opened the lid of the chest and said, "Take out an apple for thyself," and while the little boy was stooping inside, the Devil prompted her, and crash! she shut the lid down, and his head flew off and fell among the red apples. Then she was overwhelmed with terror, and thought, "If I could but make them think that it was not done by me!" So she went upstairs to her room to her chest of drawers, and took a white handkerchief out of the top drawer, and set the head on the neck again, and folded the handkerchief so that nothing could be seen, and she set him on a chair in front of the door, and put the apple in his hand.

After this Marlinchen came into the kitchen to her mother, who was standing by the fire with a pan of hot water before her which she was constantly stirring round. "Mother," said Marlinchen, "brother is sitting at the door, and he looks quite white and has an apple in his hand. I asked him to give me the apple, but he did not answer me, and I was quite frightened." "Go back to him," said her mother, "and if he will not answer thee, give him a box on the ear." So Marlinchen went to him and said, "Brother, give me the apple." But he was silent, and she gave him a box on the ear, on which his head fell down. Marlinchen was terrified, and began crying and screaming, and ran to her mother, and said, "Alas, mother, I have knocked my brother's head off!" and she wept and wept and could not be comforted. "Marlinchen," said the mother, "what hast thou done? but be quiet and let no one know it; it cannot be helped now, we will make him into black-puddings." Then the mother took the little boy and chopped him in pieces, put him into the pan and made him into black puddings; but Marlinchen stood by weeping and weeping, and all her tears fell into the pan and there was no need of any salt.

Then the father came home, and sat down to dinner and said, "But where is my son?" And the mother served up a great dish of black-puddings, and Marlinchen wept and could not leave off. Then the father again said, "But where is my son?" "Ah," said the mother, "he has gone across the country to his mother's great uncle; he will stay there awhile." "And what is he going to do there? He did not even say good-bye to me."

"Oh, he wanted to go, and asked me if he might stay six weeks, he is well taken care of there." "Ah," said the man, "I feel so unhappy lest all should not be right. He ought to have said good-bye to me." With that he began to eat and said, "Marlinchen, why art thou crying? Thy brother will certainly come back." Then he said, "Ah, wife, how delicious this food is, give me some more." And the more he ate the more he wanted to have, and he said, "Give me some more, you shall have none of it. It seems to me as if it were all mine." And he ate and ate and threw all the bones under the table, until he had finished the whole. But Marlinchen went away to her chest of drawers, and took her best silk handkerchief out of the bottom drawer, and got all the bones from beneath the table, and tied them up in her silk handkerchief, and carried them outside the door, weeping tears of blood. Then the juniper-tree began to stir itself, and the branches parted asunder, and moved together again, just as if some one was rejoicing and clapping his hands. At the same time a mist seemed to arise from the tree, and in the centre of this mist it burned like a fire, and a beautiful bird flew out of the fire singing magnificently, and he flew high up in the air, and when he was gone, the juniper-tree was just as it had been before, and the handkerchief with the bones was no longer there. Marlinchen, however, was as gay and happy as if her brother were still alive. And she went merrily into the house, and sat down to dinner and ate.

But the bird flew away and lighted on a goldsmith's house, and began to sing,

"My mother she killed me,
My father he ate me,
My sister, little Marlinchen,
Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!"

The goldsmith was sitting in his workshop making a gold chain, when he heard the bird which was sitting singing on his roof, and very beautiful the song seemed to him. He stood up, but as he crossed the threshold he lost one of his slippers. But he went away right up the middle of the street with one shoe on and one sock; he had his apron on, and in one hand he had the gold chain and in the other the pincers, and the sun was shining brightly on the street. Then he went right on and stood still, and said to the bird, "Bird," said he then, "how beautifully thou canst sing! Sing me that piece again." "No," said the bird, "I'll not sing it twice for nothing! Give me the golden chain, and then I will sing it again for thee." "There," said the goldsmith, "there is the golden chain for thee, now sing me that song again." Then the bird came and took the golden chain in his right claw, and went and sat in front of the goldsmith, and sang,

"My mother she killed me,
My father he ate me,
My sister, little Marlinchen,
Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!”

Then the bird flew away to a shoemaker, and lighted on his roof and sang,

“My mother she killed me,
My father he ate me,
My sister, little Marlinchen,
Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!”

The shoemaker heard that and ran out of doors in his shirt sleeves, and looked up at his roof, and was forced to hold his hand before his eyes lest the sun should blind him. “Bird,” said he, “how beautifully thou canst sing!” Then he called in at his door, “Wife, just come outside, there is a bird, look at that bird, he just can sing well.” Then he called his daughter and children, and apprentices, boys and girls, and they all came up the street and looked at the bird and saw how beautiful he was, and what fine red and green feathers he had, and how like real gold his neck was, and how the eyes in his head shone like stars. “Bird,” said the shoemaker, “now sing me that song again.” “Nay,” said the bird, “I do not sing twice for nothing; thou must give me something.” “Wife,” said the man, “go to the garret, upon the top shelf there stands a pair of red shoes, bring them down.” Then the wife went and brought the shoes. “There, bird,” said the man, “now sing me that piece again.” Then the bird came and took the shoes in his left claw, and flew back on the roof, and sang,

“My mother she killed me,
My father he ate me,
My sister, little Marlinchen,
Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!”

And when he had sung the whole he flew away. In his right claw he had the chain and the shoes in his left, and he flew far away to a mill, and the mill went, “klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp,” and in the mill sat twenty miller’s men hewing a stone, and cutting, hick hack, hick hack, hick hack, and the mill went klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp. Then the bird went and sat on a lime-tree which stood in front of the mill, and sang,

“My mother she killed me,”

Then one of them stopped working,

“My father he ate me.”

Then two more stopped working and listened to that,

“My sister, little Marlinchen,”

Then four more stopped,

“Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,”

Now eight only were hewing,

“Laid them beneath”

Now only five,

“The juniper-tree,”

And now only one,

“Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!”

Then the last stopped also, and heard the last words. “Bird,” said he, “how beautifully thou singest! Let me, too, hear that. Sing that once more for me.”

“Nay,” said the bird, “I will not sing twice for nothing. Give me the millstone, and then I will sing it again.”

“Yes,” said he, “if it belonged to me only, thou shouldst have it.”

“Yes,” said the others, “if he sings again he shall have it.” Then the bird came down, and the twenty millers all set to work with a beam and raised the stone up. And the bird stuck his neck through the hole, and put the stone on as if it were a collar, and flew on to the tree again, and sang,

“My mother she killed me,
My father he ate me,
My sister, little Marlinchen,
Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!”

And when he had done singing, he spread his wings, and in his right claw he had the chain, and in his left the shoes, and round his neck the millstone, and he flew far away to his father’s house.

In the room sat the father, the mother, and Marlinchen at dinner, and the father said, “How light-hearted I feel, how happy I am!” “Nay,” said the mother, “I feel so uneasy, just as if a heavy storm were coming.” Marlinchen, however, sat weeping and weeping, and then came the bird flying, and as it seated itself on the roof the father said, “Ah, I feel so truly happy, and the sun is shining so beautifully outside, I feel just as if I were about to see some old friend again.” “Nay,” said the woman, “I feel so anxious, my teeth chatter, and I seem to have fire in my veins.” And she tore her stays open, but Marlinchen sat in a corner crying, and held her plate before her eyes and cried till it was quite wet. Then the bird sat on the juniper tree, and sang,

“My mother she killed me,”

Then the mother stopped her ears, and shut her eyes, and would not see or hear, but there was a roaring in her ears like the most violent storm, and her eyes burnt and flashed like lightning,

"My father he ate me,"

"Ah, mother," says the man, "that is a beautiful bird! He sings so splendidly, and the sun shines so warm, and there is a smell just like cinnamon."

"My sister, little Marlinchen,"

Then Marlinchen laid her head on her knees and wept without ceasing, but the man said, "I am going out, I must see the bird quite close." "Oh, don't go," said the woman, "I feel as if the whole house were shaking and on fire." But the man went out and looked at the bird:

"Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
Laid them beneath the juniper tree,
Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!"

On this the bird let the golden chain fall, and it fell exactly round the man's neck, and so exactly round it that it fitted beautifully. Then he went in and said, "Just look what a fine bird that is, and what a handsome gold chain he has given me, and how pretty he is!" But the woman was terrified, and fell down on the floor in the room, and her cap fell off her head. Then sang the bird once more,

"My mother she killed me."

"Would that I were a thousand feet beneath the earth so as not to hear that!"

"My father he ate me,"

Then the woman fell down again as if dead.

"My sister, little Marlinchen,"

"Ah," said Marlinchen, "I too will go out and see if the bird will give me anything," and she went out.

"Gathered together all my bones,
Tied them in a silken handkerchief,"

Then he threw down the shoes to her.

"Laid them beneath the juniper-tree,
Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!"

Then she was light-hearted and joyous, and she put on the new red shoes, and danced and leaped into the house. "Ah," said she, "I was so sad when I went out and now I am so light-hearted; that is a splendid bird, he has given me a pair of red shoes!" "Well," said the woman, and sprang to her feet and her hair stood up like flames of fire, "I feel as if the world were coming to an end! I, too, will go out and see if my heart feels lighter." And as she went out at the door, crash! the bird threw down the millstone on her head, and she was entirely crushed by it. The father and Marlinchen heard what had happened and went out, and smoke, flames, and fire were rising from the place, and when that was over, there stood the little brother, and he took his father and Marlinchen by the hand, and all three were right glad, and they went into the house to dinner, and ate.

Old Sultan

A farmer once had a faithful dog called Sultan, who had grown old, and lost all his teeth, so that he could no longer hold anything fast. One day the farmer was standing with his wife before the house-door, and said, “To-morrow I intend to shoot Old Sultan, he is no longer of any use.”

His wife, who felt pity for the faithful beast, answered, “He has served us so long, and been so faithful, that we might well give him his keep.”

“Eh! what?” said the man. “You are not very sharp. He has not a tooth left in his mouth, and not a thief is afraid of him; now he may be off. If he has served us, he has had good feeding for it.”

The poor dog, who was lying stretched out in the sun not far off, had heard everything, and was sorry that the morrow was to be his last day. He had a good friend, the wolf, and he crept out in the evening into the forest to him, and complained of the fate that awaited him. “Hark ye, gossip,” said the wolf, “be of good cheer, I will help you out of your trouble. I have thought of something. To-morrow, early in the morning, your master is going with his wife to make hay, and they will take their little child with them, for no one will be left behind in the house. They are wont, during work-time, to lay the child under the hedge in the shade; you lay yourself there too, just as if you wished to guard it. Then I will come out of the wood, and carry off the child. You must rush swiftly after me, as if you would seize it again from me. I will let it fall, and you will take it back to its parents, who will think that you have saved it, and will be far too grateful to do you any harm; on the contrary, you will be in high favor, and they will never let you want for anything again.”

The plan pleased the dog, and it was carried out just as it was arranged. The father screamed when he saw the Wolf running across the field with his child, but when Old Sultan brought it back, then he was full of joy, and stroked him and said, “Not a hair of yours shall be hurt, you shall eat my bread free as long as you live.” And to his wife he said, “Go home at once and make Old Sultan some bread-sop that he will not have to bite, and bring the pillow out of my bed, I will give him that to lie upon.”

Henceforth Old Sultan was as well off as he could wish to be.

Soon afterwards the wolf visited him, and was pleased that everything had succeeded so well. “But, gossip,” said he, “you will just wink an eye if when I have a chance, I carry off one of your master’s fat sheep.” “Do not reckon upon that,” answered the dog; “I will remain true to my master; I cannot agree to that.” The wolf, who thought that this could not be spoken in earnest, came creeping about in the night and was going to take away the sheep. But the farmer, to whom the faithful Sultan had told the wolf’s plan, caught him and dressed his hide soundly with the flail. The wolf had to pack off, but he cried out to the dog, “Wait a bit, you scoundrel, you shall pay for this.”

The next morning the wolf sent the boar to challenge the dog to come out into the forest so that they might settle the affair. Old Sultan could find no one to stand by him but a cat with only three legs, and as they went out together the poor cat limped along, and at the same time stretched out her tail into the air with pain.

The wolf and his friend were already on the spot appointed, but when they saw their enemy coming they thought that he was bringing a sabre with him, for they mistook the outstretched tail of the cat for one. And when the poor beast hopped on its three legs, they could only think every time that it was picking up a stone to throw at them. So they were both afraid; the wild boar crept into the under-wood and the wolf jumped up a tree.

The dog and the cat, when they came up, wondered that there was no one to be seen. The wild boar, however, had not been able to hide himself altogether; and one of his ears was still to be seen. Whilst the cat was looking carefully about, the boar moved his ear; the cat, who thought it was a mouse moving there, jumped upon it and bit it hard. The boar made a fearful noise and ran away, crying out, “The guilty one is up in the tree.” The dog and cat looked up and saw the wolf, who was ashamed of having shown himself so timid, and made friends with the dog.

The Six Swans

Once upon a time, a certain King was hunting in a great forest, and he chased a wild beast so eagerly that none of his attendants could follow him. When evening drew near he stopped and looked around him, and then he saw that he had lost his way. He sought a way out, but could find none. Then he perceived an aged woman with a head which nodded perpetually, who came towards him, but she was a witch. “Good woman,” said he to her, “Can you not show me the way through the forest?” “Oh, yes, Lord King,” she answered, “that I certainly can, but on one condition, and if you do not fulfil that, you will never get out of the forest, and will die of hunger in it.”

“What kind of condition is it?” asked the King.

“I have a daughter,” said the old woman, “who is as beautiful as any one in the world, and well deserves to be your consort, and if you will make her your Queen, I will show you the way out of the forest.” In the anguish of his heart the King consented, and the old woman led him to her little hut, where her daughter was sitting by the fire. She received the King as if she had been expecting him, and he saw that she was very beautiful, but still she did not please him, and he could not look at her without secret horror. After he had taken the maiden up on his horse, the old woman showed him the way, and the King reached his royal palace again, where the wedding was celebrated.

The King had already been married once, and had by his first wife, seven children, six boys and a girl, whom he loved better than anything else in the world. As he now feared that the step-mother might not treat them well, and even do them some injury, he took them to a lonely castle which stood in the midst of a forest. It lay so concealed, and the way was so difficult to find that he himself would not have found it, if a wise woman had not given him a ball of yarn with wonderful properties. When he threw it down before him, it unrolled itself and showed him his path. The King, however, went so frequently away to his dear children that the Queen observed his absence; she was curious and wanted to know what he did when he was quite alone in the forest. She gave a great deal of money to his servants, and they betrayed the secret to her, and told her likewise of the ball which alone could point out the way. And now she knew no rest until she had learnt where the King kept the ball of yarn, and then she made little shirts of white silk, and as she had learnt the art of witchcraft from her mother, she sewed a charm inside them. And once when the King had ridden forth to hunt, she took the little shirts and went into the forest, and the ball showed her the way. The children, who saw from a distance that some one was approaching, thought that their dear father was coming to them, and full of joy, ran to meet him. Then she threw one of the little shirts over each of them, and no sooner had the shirts touched their bodies than they were changed into swans, and flew away over the forest. The Queen went home quite delighted, and thought she had got rid of her step-children, but the girl had not run out with her brothers, and the Queen knew nothing about her. Next day the King went to visit his children, but he found no one but the little girl. “Where are thy brothers?” asked the King. “Alas, dear father,” she answered, “they have gone away and left me alone!” and she told him that she had seen from her little window how her brothers had flown away over the forest in the shape of swans, and she showed him the feathers, which they had let fall in the courtyard, and which she had picked up. The King mourned, but he did not think that the Queen had done this wicked deed, and as he feared that the girl would also be stolen away from him, he wanted to take her away with him. But she was afraid of her step-mother, and entreated the King to let her stay just this one night more in the forest castle.

The poor girl thought, “I can no longer stay here. I will go and seek my brothers.” And when night came, she ran away, and went straight into the forest. She walked the whole night long, and next day also without stopping, until she could go no farther for weariness. Then she saw a forest-hut, and went into it, and found a room with six little beds, but she did not venture to get into one of them, but crept under one, and lay down on the hard ground, intending to pass the night there. Just before sunset, however, she heard a rustling, and saw six swans come flying in at the window. They alighted on the ground and blew at each other, and blew all the feathers off, and their swan’s skins stripped off like a shirt. Then the maiden looked at them and recognized her brothers, was glad and crept forth from beneath the bed. The brothers were not less delighted to see their little sister, but their joy was of short duration. “Here canst thou not abide,” they said to her. “This is a shelter for robbers, if they come home and find thee, they will kill thee.” “But can you not protect me?” asked the little sister. “No,” they replied, “only for one quarter of an hour each evening can we lay aside our swan’s skins and have during that time our human form; after that, we are once more turned into swans.” The little sister wept and said, “Can you not be set free?” “Alas, no,” they answered, “the conditions are too hard! For six years thou mayst neither speak nor laugh, and in that time thou must sew together six little shirts of starwort for us. And if one single word falls from thy lips, all thy work will be lost.” And when the brothers had said this, the quarter of an hour was over, and they flew out of the window again as swans.

The maiden, however, firmly resolved to deliver her brothers, even if it should cost her her life. She left the hut, went into the midst of the forest, seated herself on a tree, and there passed the night. Next morning she went out and gathered starwort and began to sew. She could not speak to any one, and she had no inclination to laugh; she sat there and looked at nothing but her work. When she had already spent a long time there it came to pass that the King of the country was hunting in the forest, and his huntsmen came to the tree on which the maiden was sitting. They called to her and said, “Who art thou?” But she made no answer. “Come down to us,” said they. “We will not do thee any harm.” She only shook her head. As they pressed her further with questions she threw her golden necklace down to them, and thought to content them thus. They, however, did not cease, and then she threw her girdle down to them, and as this also was to no purpose, her garters, and by degrees everything that she had on that she could do without until she had nothing left but her shift. The huntsmen, however, did not let themselves be turned aside by that, but climbed the tree and fetched the maiden down and led her before the King. The King asked, “Who art thou? What art thou doing on the tree?” But she did not answer. He put the question in every language that he knew, but she remained as mute as a fish. As she was so beautiful, the King’s heart was touched, and he was smitten with a great love for her. He put his mantle on her, took her before him on his horse, and carried her to his castle. Then he caused her to be dressed in rich garments, and she shone in her beauty like bright daylight, but no word could be drawn from her. He placed her by his side at table, and her modest bearing and courtesy pleased him so much that he said, “She is the one whom I wish to marry, and no other woman in the world.” And after some days he united himself to her.

The King, however, had a wicked mother who was dissatisfied with this marriage and spoke ill of the young Queen. “Who knows,” said she, “from whence the creature who can’t speak, comes? She is not worthy of a king!” After a year had passed, when the Queen brought her first child into the world, the old woman took it away from her, and smeared her mouth with blood as she slept. Then she went to the King and accused the Queen of being a man-eater. The King would not believe it, and would not suffer any one to do her any injury. She, however, sat continually sewing at the shirts, and cared for nothing else. The next time, when she again bore a beautiful boy, the false step-mother used the same treachery, but the King could not bring himself to give credit to her words. He said, “She is too pious and good to do anything of that kind; if she were not dumb, and could defend herself, her innocence would come to light.” But when the old woman stole away the newly-born child for the third time, and accused the Queen, who did not utter one word of defence, the King could do no otherwise than deliver her over to justice, and she was sentenced to suffer death by fire.

When the day came for the sentence to be executed, it was the last day of the six years during which she was not to speak or laugh, and she had delivered her dear brothers from the power of the enchantment. The six shirts were ready, only the left sleeve of the sixth was wanting. When, therefore, she was led to the stake, she laid the shirts on her arm, and when she stood on high and the fire was just going to be lighted, she looked around and six swans came flying through the air towards her. Then she saw that her deliverance was near, and her heart leapt with joy. The swans swept towards her and sank down so that she could throw the shirts over them, and as they were touched by them, their swan’s skins fell off, and her brothers stood in their own bodily form before her, and were vigorous and handsome. The youngest only lacked his left arm, and had in the place of it a swan’s wing on his shoulder. They embraced and kissed each other, and the Queen went to the King, who was greatly moved, and she began to speak and said, “Dearest husband, now I may speak and declare to thee that I am innocent, and falsely accused.” And she told him of the treachery of the old woman who had taken away her three children and hidden them. Then to the great joy of the King they were brought thither, and as a punishment, the wicked step-mother was bound to the stake, and burnt to ashes. But the King and the Queen with their six brothers lived many years in happiness and peace.

Briar-Rose

A long time ago there were a King and Queen who said every day, “Ah, if only we had a child!” but they never had one. But it happened that once when the Queen was bathing, a frog crept out of the water on to the land, and said to her, “Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has gone by, you shall have a daughter.”

What the frog had said came true, and the Queen had a little girl who was so pretty that the King could not contain himself for joy, and ordered a great feast. He invited not only his kindred, friends and acquaintance, but also the Wise Women, in order that they might be kind and well-disposed towards the child. There were thirteen of them in his kingdom, but, as he had only twelve golden plates for them to eat out of, one of them had to be left at home.

The feast was held with all manner of splendour and when it came to an end the Wise Women bestowed their magic gifts upon the baby: one gave virtue, another beauty, a third riches, and so on with everything in the world that one can wish for.

When eleven of them had made their promises, suddenly the thirteenth came in. She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited, and without greeting, or even looking at any one, she cried with a loud voice, “The King’s daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead.” And, without saying a word more, she turned round and left the room.

They were all shocked; but the twelfth, whose good wish still remained unspoken, came forward, and as she could not undo the evil sentence, but only soften it, she said, “It shall not be death, but a deep sleep of a hundred years, into which the princess shall fall.”

The King, who would fain keep his dear child from the misfortune, gave orders that every spindle in the whole kingdom should be burnt. Meanwhile the gifts of the Wise Women were plenteously fulfilled on the young girl, for she was so beautiful, modest, good-natured, and wise, that everyone who saw her was bound to love her.

It happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old, the King and Queen were not at home, and the maiden was left in the palace quite alone. So she went round into all sorts of places, looked into rooms and bed-chambers just as she liked, and at last came to an old tower. She climbed up the narrow winding-staircase, and reached a little door. A rusty key was in the lock, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there in a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax.

“Good day, old dame,” said the King’s daughter; “what are you doing there?” “I am spinning,” said the old woman, and nodded her head. “What sort of thing is that, that rattles round so merrily?” said the girl, and she took the spindle and wanted to spin too. But scarcely had she touched the spindle when the magic decree was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with it.

And, in the very moment when she felt the prick, she fell down upon the bed that stood there, and lay in a deep sleep. And this sleep extended over the whole palace; the King and Queen who had just come home, and had entered the great hall, began to go to sleep, and the whole of the court with them. The horses, too, went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons upon the roof, the flies on the wall; even the fire that was flaming on the hearth became quiet and slept, the roast meat left off frizzling, and the cook, who was just going to pull the hair of the scullery boy, because he had forgotten something, let him go, and went to sleep. And the wind fell, and on the trees before the castle not a leaf moved again.

But round about the castle there began to grow a hedge of thorns, which every year became higher, and at last grew close up round the castle and all over it, so that there was nothing of it to be seen, not even the flag upon the roof. But the story of the beautiful sleeping “Briar-rose,” for so the princess was named, went about the country, so that from time to time kings’ sons came and tried to get through the thorny hedge into the castle.

But they found it impossible, for the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands, and the youths were caught in them, could not get loose again, and died a miserable death.

After long, long years a King’s son came again to that country, and heard an old man talking about the thorn-hedge, and that a castle was said to stand behind it in which a wonderfully beautiful princess, named Briar-rose, had been asleep for a hundred years; and that the King and Queen and the whole court were asleep likewise. He had heard, too, from his grandfather, that many kings’ sons had already come, and had tried to get through the thorny hedge, but they had remained sticking fast in it, and had died a pitiful death. Then the youth said, “I am not afraid, I will go and see the beautiful Briar-rose.” The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words.

But by this time the hundred years had just passed, and the day had come when Briar-rose was to awake again. When the King’s son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord, and let him pass unhurt, then they closed again behind him like a hedge. In the castle-yard he saw the horses and the spotted hounds lying asleep; on the roof sat the pigeons with their heads under their wings. And when he entered the house, the flies were asleep upon the wall, the cook in the kitchen was still holding out his hand to seize the boy, and the maid was sitting by the black hen which she was going to pluck.

He went on farther, and in the great hall he saw the whole of the court lying asleep, and up by the throne lay the King and Queen.

Then he went on still farther, and all was so quiet that a breath could be heard, and at last he came to the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Briar-rose was sleeping. There she lay, so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away; and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But as soon as he kissed her, Briar-rose opened her eyes and awoke, and looked at him quite sweetly.

Then they went down together, and the King awoke, and the Queen, and the whole court, and looked at each other in great astonishment. And the horses in the court-yard stood up and shook themselves; the hounds jumped up and wagged their tails; the pigeons upon the roof pulled out their heads from under their wings, looked round, and flew into the open country; the flies on the wall crept again; the fire in the kitchen burned up and flickered and cooked the meat; the joint began to turn and frizzle again, and the cook gave the boy such a box on the ear that he screamed, and the maid plucked the fowl ready for the spit.

And then the marriage of the King’s son with Briar-rose was celebrated with all splendour, and they lived contented to the end of their days.

Fundevogel (Bird-foundling)

There was once a forester who went into the forest to hunt, and as he entered it he heard a sound of screaming as if a little child were there. He followed the sound, and at last came to a high tree, and at the top of this a little child was sitting, for the mother had fallen asleep under the tree with the child, and a bird of prey had seen it in her arms, had flown down, snatched it away, and set it on the high tree.

The forester climbed up, brought the child down, and thought to himself, "Thou wilt take him home with thee, and bring him up with thy Lina." He took it home, therefore, and the two children grew up together. The one, however, which he had found on a tree was called Fundevogel, because a bird had carried it away. Fundevogel and Lina loved each other so dearly that when they did not see each other they were sad.

The forester, however, had an old cook, who one evening took two pails and began to fetch water, and did not go once only, but many times, out to the spring. Lina saw this and said, "Hark you, old Sanna, why are you fetching so much water?" "If thou wilt never repeat it to anyone, I will tell thee why." So Lina said, no, she would never repeat it to anyone, and then the cook said, "Early to-morrow morning, when the forester is out hunting, I will heat the water, and when it is boiling in the kettle, I will throw in Fundevogel, and will boil him in it."

Betimes next morning the forester got up and went out hunting, and when he was gone the children were still in bed. Then Lina said to Fundevogel, "If thou wilt never leave me, I too will never leave thee." Fundevogel said, "Neither now, nor ever will I leave thee." Then said Lina, "Then I will tell thee. Last night, old Sanna carried so many buckets of water into the house that I asked her why she was doing that, and she said that if I would promise not to tell any one she would tell me, and I said I would be sure not to tell any one, and she said that early to-morrow morning when father was out hunting, she would set the kettle full of water, throw thee into it and boil thee; but we will get up quickly, dress ourselves, and go away together."

The two children therefore got up, dressed themselves quickly, and went away. When the water in the kettle was boiling, the cook went into the bed-room to fetch Fundevogel and throw him into it. But when she came in, and went to the beds, both the children were gone. Then she was terribly alarmed, and she said to herself, "What shall I say now when the forester comes home and sees that the children are gone? They must be followed instantly to get them back again."

Then the cook sent three servants after them, who were to run and overtake the children. The children, however, were sitting outside the forest, and when they saw from afar the three servants running, Lina said to Fundevogel, "Never leave me, and I will never leave thee." Fundevogel said, "Neither now, nor ever." Then said Lina, "Do thou become a rose-tree, and I the rose upon it." When the three servants came to the forest, nothing was there but a rose-tree and one rose on it, but the children were nowhere. Then said they, “There is nothing to be done here,” and they went home and told the cook that they had seen nothing in the forest but a little rose-bush with one rose on it. Then the old cook scolded and said, “You simpletons, you should have cut the rose-bush in two, and have broken off the rose and brought it home with you; go, and do it once.” They had therefore to go out and look for the second time. The children, however, saw them coming from a distance. Then Lina said, “Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave thee.” Fundevogel said, “Neither now, nor ever.” Said Lina, “Then do thou become a church, and I’ll be the chandelier in it.” So when the three servants came, nothing was there but a church, with a chandelier in it. They said therefore to each other, “What can we do here, let us go home.” When they got home, the cook asked if they had not found them; so they said no, they had found nothing but a church, and that there was a chandelier in it. And the cook scolded them and said, “You fools! why did you not pull the church to pieces, and bring the chandelier home with you?” And now the old cook herself got on her legs, and went with the three servants in pursuit of the children. The children, however, saw from afar that the three servants were coming, and the cook waddling after them. Then said Lina, “Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave thee.” Then said Fundevogel, “Neither now, nor ever.” Said Lina, “Be a fishpond, and I will be the duck upon it.” The cook, however, came up to them, and when she saw the pond she lay down by it, and was about to drink it up. But the duck swam quickly to her, seized her head in its beak and drew her into the water, and there the old witch had to drown. Then the children went home together, and were heartily delighted, and if they are not dead, they are living still.

King Thrushbeard

A King had a daughter who was beautiful beyond all measure, but so proud and haughty withal that no suitor was good enough for her. She sent away one after the other, and ridiculed them as well.

Once the King made a great feast and invited thereto, from far and near, all the young men likely to marry. They were all marshalled in a row according to their rank and standing; first came the kings, then the grand-dukes, then the princes, the earls, the barons, and the gentry. Then the King's daughter was led through the ranks, but to every one she had some objection to make; one was too fat, "The wine-cask," she said. Another was too tall, "Long and thin has little in." The third was too short, "Short and thick is never quick." The fourth was too pale, "As pale as death." The fifth too red, "A fighting-cock." The sixth was not straight enough, "A green log dried behind the stove."

So she had something to say against every one, but she made herself especially merry over a good king who stood quite high up in the row, and whose chin had grown a little crooked. "Well," she cried and laughed, "he has a chin like a thrush's beak!" and from that time he got the name of King Thrushbeard.

But the old King, when he saw that his daugher did nothing but mock the people, and despised all the suitors who were gathered there, was very angry, and swore that she should have for her husband the very first beggar that came to his doors.

A few days afterwards a fiddler came and sang beneath the windows, trying to earn a small alms. When the King heard him he said, "Let him come up." So the fiddler came in, in his dirty, ragged clothes, and sang before the King and his daughter, and when he had ended he asked for a trifling gift. The King said, "Your song has pleased me so well that I will give you my daughter there, to wife."

The King's daughter shuddered, but the King said, "I have taken an oath to give you to the very first beggar-man, and I will keep it." All she could say was in vain; the priest was brought, and she had to let herself be wedded to the fiddler on the spot. When that was done the King said, "Now it is not proper for you, a beggar-woman, to stay any longer in my palace, you may just go away with your husband."

The beggar-man led her out by the hand, and she was obliged to walk away on foot with him. When they came to a large forest she asked, "To whom does that beautiful forest belong?" "It belongs to King Thrushbeard; if you had taken him, it would have been yours." "Ah, unhappy girl that I am, if I had but taken King Thrushbeard!"

Afterwards they came to a meadow, and she asked again, "To whom does this beautiful green meadow belong?" "It belongs to King Thrushbeard; if you had taken him, it would have been yours." "Ah, unhappy girl that I am, if I had but taken King Thrushbeard!"

Then they came to a large town, and she asked again, “To whom does this fine large town belong?” “It belongs to King Thrushbeard; if you had taken him, it would have been yours.” “Ah, unhappy girl that I am, if I had but taken King Thrushbeard!”

“It does not please me,” said the fiddler, “to hear you always wishing for another husband; am I not good enough for you?” At last they came to a very little hut, and she said, “Oh goodness! what a small house; to whom does this miserable, mean hovel belong?” The fiddler answered, “That is my house and yours, where we shall live together.”

She had to stoop in order to go in at the low door. “Where are the servants?” said the King’s daughter. “What servants?” answered the beggar-man; “you must yourself do what you wish to have done. Just make a fire at once, and set on water to cook my supper, I am quite tired.” But the King’s daughter knew nothing about lighting fires or cooking, and the beggar-man had to lend a hand himself to get anything fairly done. When they had finished their scanty meal they went to bed; but he forced her to get up quite early in the morning in order to look after the house.

For a few days they lived in this way as well as might be, and came to the end of all their provisions. Then the man said, “Wife, we cannot go on any longer eating and drinking here and earning nothing. You weave baskets.” He went out, cut some willows, and brought them home. Then she began to weave, but the tough willows wounded her delicate hands.

“I see that this will not do,” said the man; “you had better spin, perhaps you can do that better.” She sat down and tried to spin, but the hard thread soon cut her soft fingers so that the blood ran down. “See,” said the man, “you are fit for no sort of work; I have made a bad bargain with you. Now I will try to make a business with pots and earthenware; you must sit in the market-place and sell the ware.” “Alas,” thought she, “if any of the people from my father’s kingdom come to the market and see me sitting there, selling, how they will mock me?” But it was of no use, she had to yield unless she chose to die of hunger.

For the first time she succeeded well, for the people were glad to buy the woman’s wares because she was good-looking, and they paid her what she asked; many even gave her the money and left the pots with her as well. So they lived on what she had earned as long as it lasted, then the husband bought a lot of new crockery. With this she sat down at the corner of the market-place, and set it out round about her ready for sale. But suddenly there came a drunken hussar galloping along, and he rode right amongst the pots so that they were all broken into a thousand bits. She began to weep, and did now know what to do for fear. “Alas! what will happen to me?” cried she; “what will my husband say to this?”

She ran home and told him of the misfortune. “Who would seat herself at a corner of the market-place with crockery?” said the man; “leave off crying, I see very well that you cannot do any ordinary work, so I have been to our King’s palace and have asked whether they cannot find a place for a kitchen-maid, and they have promised me to take you; in that way you will get your food for nothing.”

The King’s daughter was now a kitchen-maid, and had to be at the cook’s beck and call, and do the dirtiest work. In both her pockets she fastened a little jar, in which she took home her share of the leavings, and upon this they lived.

It happened that the wedding of the King’s eldest son was to be celebrated, so the poor woman went up and placed herself by the door of the hall to look on. When all the candles were lit, and people, each more beautiful than the other, entered, and all was full of pomp and splendour, she thought of her lot with a sad heart, and cursed the pride and haughtiness which had humbled her and brought her to so great poverty.

The smell of the delicious dishes which were being taken in and out reached her, and now and then the servants threw her a few morsels of them: these she put in her jars to take home.

All at once the King’s son entered, clothed in velvet and silk, with gold chains about his neck. And when he saw the beautiful woman standing by the door he seized her by the hand, and would have danced with her; but she refused and shrank with fear, for she saw that it was King Thrushbeard, her suitor whom she had driven away with scorn. Her struggles were of no avail, he drew her into the hall; but the string by which her pockets were hung broke, the pots fell down, the soup ran out, and the scraps were scattered all about. And when the people saw it, there arose general laughter and derision, and she was so ashamed that she would rather have been a thousand fathoms below the ground. She sprang to the door and would have run away, but on the stairs a man caught her and brought her back; and when she looked at him it was King Thrushbeard again. He said to her kindly, “Do not be afraid, I and the fiddler who has been living with you in that wretched hovel are one. For love of you I disguised myself so; and I also was the hussar who rode through your crockery. This was all done to humble your proud spirit, and to punish you for the insolence with which you mocked me.”

Then she wept bitterly and said, “I have done great wrong, and am not worthy to be your wife.” But he said, “Be comforted, the evil days are past; now we will celebrate our wedding.” Then the maids-in-waiting came and put on her the most splendid clothing, and her father and his whole court came and wished her happiness in her marriage with King Thrushbeard, and the joy now began in earnest. I wish you and I had been there too.

Little Snow-white

Once upon a time in the middle of winter, when the flakes of snow were falling like feathers from the sky, a queen sat at a window sewing, and the frame of the window was made of black ebony. And whilst she was sewing and looking out of the window at the snow, she pricked her finger with the needle, and three drops of blood fell upon the snow. And the red looked pretty upon the white snow, and she thought to herself, “Would that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the window-frame.”

Soon after that she had a little daughter, who was as white as snow, and as red as blood, and her hair was as black as ebony; and she was therefore called Little Snow-white. And when the child was born, the Queen died.

After a year had passed the King took to himself another wife. She was a beautiful woman, but proud and haughty, and she could not bear that anyone else should surpass her in beauty. She had a wonderful looking-glass, and when she stood in front of it and looked at herself in it, and said —

“Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

the looking-glass answered —

“Thou, O Queen, art the fairest of all!”

Then she was satisfied, for she knew that the looking-glass spoke the truth.

But Snow-white was growing up, and grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as the day, and more beautiful than the Queen herself. And once when the Queen asked her looking-glass —

“Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall, Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

it answered —

“Thou art fairer than all who are here, Lady Queen.”
But more beautiful still is Snow-white, as I ween.”

Then the Queen was shocked, and turned yellow and green with envy. From that hour, whenever she looked at Snow-white, her heart heaved in her breast, she hated the girl so much.

And envy and pride grew higher and higher in her heart like a weed, so that she had no peace day or night. She called a huntsman, and said, “Take the child away into the forest; I will no longer have her in my sight. Kill her, and bring me back her heart as a token.” The huntsman obeyed, and took her away; but when he had drawn his knife, and was about to pierce Snow-white’s innocent heart, she began to weep, and said, “Ah dear huntsman, leave me my life! I will run away into the wild forest, and never come home again.”

And as she was so beautiful the huntsman had pity on her and said, “Run away, then, you poor child.” “The wild beasts will soon have devoured you,” thought he, and yet it seemed as if a stone had been rolled from his heart since it was no longer needful for him to kill her. And as a young boar just then came running by he stabbed it, and cut out its heart and took it to the Queen as proof that the child was dead. The cook had to salt this, and the wicked Queen ate it, and thought she had eaten the heart of Snow-white.

But now the poor child was all alone in the great forest, and so terrified that she looked at every leaf of every tree, and did not know what to do. Then she began to run, and ran over sharp stones and through thorns, and the wild beasts ran past her, but did her no harm.

She ran as long as her feet would go until it was almost evening; then she saw a little cottage and went into it to rest herself. Everything in the cottage was small, but neater and cleaner than can be told. There was a table on which was a white cover, and seven little plates, and on each plate a little spoon; moreover, there were seven little knives and forks, and seven little mugs. Against the wall stood seven little beds side by side, and covered with snow-white counterpanes.

Little Snow-white was so hungry and thirsty that she ate some vegetables and bread from each plate and drank a drop of wine out of each mug, for she did not wish to take all from one only. Then, as she was so tired, she laid herself down on one of the little beds, but none of them suited her; one was too long, another too short, but at last she found that the seventh one was right, and so she remained in it, said a prayer and went to sleep.

When it was quite dark the owners of the cottage came back; they were seven dwarfs who dug and delved in the mountains for ore. They lit their seven candles, and as it was now light within the cottage they saw that someone had been there, for everything was not in the same order in which they had left it.

The first said, “Who has been sitting on my chair?”

The second, “Who has been eating off my plate?”

The third, “Who has been taking some of my bread?”

The fourth, “Who has been eating my vegetables?”

The fifth, “Who has been using my fork?”

The sixth, “Who has been cutting with my knife?”

The seventh, “Who has been drinking out of my mug?”

Then the first looked round and saw that there was a little hole on his bed, and he said, “Who has been getting into my bed?” The others came up and each called out, “Somebody has been lying in my bed too.” But the seventh when he looked at his bed saw little Snow-white, who was lying asleep therein. And he called the others, who came running up, and they cried out with astonishment, and brought their seven little candles and let the light fall on little Snow-white. “Oh, heavens! oh, heavens!” cried they, “what a lovely child!” and they were so glad that they did not wake her up, but let her sleep on in the bed. And the seventh dwarf slept with his companions, one hour with each, and so got through the night.

When it was morning little Snow-white awoke, and was frightened when she saw the seven dwarfs. But they were friendly and asked her what her name was. “My name is Snow-white,” she answered. “How have you come to our house?” said the dwarfs. Then she told them that her step-mother had wished to have her killed, but that the huntsman had spared her life, and that she had run for the whole day, until at last she had found their dwelling. The dwarfs said, “If you will take care of our house, cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit, and if you will keep everything neat and clean, you can stay with us and you shall want for nothing.” “Yes,” said Snow-white, “with all my heart,” and she stayed with them. She kept the house in order for them; in the mornings they went to the mountains and looked for copper and gold, in the evenings they came back, and then their supper had to be ready. The girl was alone the whole day, so the good dwarfs warned her and said, “Beware of your step-mother, she will soon know that you are here; be sure to let no one come in.”

But the Queen, believing that she had eaten Snow-white’s heart, could not but think that she was again the first and most beautiful of all; and she went to her looking-glass and said —

“Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

and the glass answered —

“Oh, Queen, thou art fairest of all I see,
But over the hills, where the seven dwarfs dwell,
Snow-white is still alive and well,

And none is so fair as she.”

Then she was astounded, for she knew that the looking-glass never spoke falsely, and she knew that the huntsman had betrayed her, and that little Snow-white was still alive.

And so she thought and thought again how she might kill her, for so long as she was not the fairest in the whole land, envy let her have no rest. And when she had at last thought of something to do, she painted her face, and dressed herself like an old pedler-woman, and no one could have known her. In this disguise she went over the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs, and knocked at the door and cried, “Pretty things to sell, very cheap, very cheap.” Little Snow-white looked out of the window and called out, “Good-day my good woman, what have you to sell?” “Good things, pretty things,” she answered; “stay-laces of all colours,” and she pulled out one which was woven of bright-coloured silk. “I may let the worthy old woman in,” thought Snow-white, and she unbolted the door and bought the pretty laces. “Child,” said the old woman, “what a fright you look; come, I will lace you properly for once.” Snow-white had no suspicion, but stood before her, and let herself be laced with the new laces. But the old woman laced so quickly and so tightly that Snow-white lost her breath and fell down as if dead. "Now I am the most beautiful," said the Queen to herself, and ran away.

Not long afterwards, in the evening, the seven dwarfs came home, but how shocked they were when they saw their dear little Snow-white lying on the ground, and that she neither stirred nor moved, and seemed to be dead. They lifted her up, and, as they saw that she was laced too tightly, they cut the laces; then she began to breathe a little, and after a while came to life again. When the dwarfs heard what had happened they said, "The old pedler-woman was no one else than the wicked Queen; take care and let no one come in when we are not with you."

But the wicked woman when she had reached home went in front of the glass and asked —

"Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?"

and it answered as before —
"Oh, Queen, thou art fairest of all I see,
But over the hills, where the seven dwarfs dwell,
Snow-white is still alive and well,

And none is so fair as she."

When she heard that, all her blood rushed to her heart with fear, for she saw plainly that little Snow-white was again alive. "But now," she said, "I will think of something that shall put an end to you," and by the help of witchcraft, which she understood, she made a poisonous comb. Then she disguised herself and took the shape of another old woman. So she went over the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs, knocked at the door, and cried, "Good things to sell, cheap, cheap!" Little Snow-white looked out and said, "Go away; I cannot let any one come in." "I suppose you can look," said the old woman, and pulled the poisonous comb out and held it up. It pleased the girl so well that she let herself be beguiled, and opened the door. When they had made a bargain the old woman said, "Now I will comb you properly for once." Poor little Snow-white had no suspicion, and let the old woman do as she pleased, but hardly had she put the comb in her hair than the poison in it took effect, and the girl fell down senseless. "You paragon of beauty," said the wicked woman, "you are done for now," and she went away.

But fortunately it was almost evening, when the seven dwarfs came home. When they saw Snow-white lying as if dead upon the ground they at once suspected the step-mother, and they looked and found the poisoned comb. Scarcely had they taken it out when Snow-white came to herself, and told them what had happened. Then they warned her once more to be upon her guard and to open the door to no one.

The Queen, at home, went in front of the glass and said —

“Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

then it answered as before —

“Oh, Queen, thou art fairest of all I see,
But over the hills, where the seven dwarfs dwell,
Snow-white is still alive and well,

And none is so fair as she.”

When she heard the glass speak thus she trembled and shook with rage. “Snow-white shall die,” she cried, “even if it costs me my life!”

Thereupon she went into a quite secret, lonely room, where no one ever came, and there she made a very poisonous apple. Outside it looked pretty, white with a red cheek, so that everyone who saw it longed for it; but whoever ate a piece of it must surely die.

When the apple was ready she painted her face, and dressed herself up as a country-woman, and so she went over the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs. She knocked at the door. Snow-white put her head out of the window and said, “I cannot let any one in; the seven dwarfs have forbidden me.” “It is all the same to me,” answered the woman, “I shall soon get rid of my apples. There, I will give you one.”

“No,” said Snow-white, “I dare not take anything.” “Are you afraid of poison?” said the old woman; “look, I will cut the apple in two pieces; you eat the red cheek, and I will eat the white.” The apple was so cunningly made that only the red cheek was poisoned. Snow-white longed for the fine apple, and when she saw that the woman ate part of it she could resist no longer, and stretched out her hand and took the poisonous half. But hardly had she a bit of it in her mouth than she fell down dead. Then the Queen looked at her with a dreadful look, and laughed aloud and said, “White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony-wood! this time the dwarfs cannot wake you up again.”

And when she asked of the Looking-glass at home —

“Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

it answered at last —

“Oh, Queen, in this land thou art fairest of all.”

Then her envious heart had rest, so far as an envious heart can have rest.

The dwarfs, when they came home in the evening, found Snow-white lying upon the ground; she breathed no longer and was dead. They lifted her up, looked to see whether they could find anything poisonous, unlaced her, combed her hair, washed her with water and wine, but it was all of no use;

the poor child was dead, and remained dead. They laid her upon a bier, and all seven of them sat round it and wept for her, and wept three days long.

Then they were going to bury her, but she still looked as if she were living, and still had her pretty red cheeks. They said, "We could not bury her in the dark ground," and they had a transparent coffin of glass made, so that she could be seen from all sides, and they laid her in it, and wrote her name upon it in golden letters, and that she was a king's daughter. Then they put the coffin out upon the mountain, and one of them always stayed by it and watched it. And birds came too, and wept for Snow-white; first an owl, then a raven, and last a dove.

And now Snow-white lay a long, long time in the coffin, and she did not change, but looked as if she were asleep; for she was as white as snow, as red as blood, and her hair was as black as ebony.

It happened, however, that a king's son came into the forest, and went to the dwarfs' house to spend the night. He saw the coffin on the mountain, and the beautiful Snow-white within it, and read what was written upon it in golden letters. Then he said to the dwarfs, "Let me have the coffin, I will give you whatever you want for it." But the dwarfs answered, "We will not part with it for all the gold in the world." Then he said, "Let me have it as a gift, for I cannot live without seeing Snow-white. I will honour and prize her as my dearest possession." As he spoke in this way the good dwarfs took pity upon him, and gave him the coffin.

And now the King's son had it carried away by his servants on their shoulders. And it happened that they stumbled over a tree-stump, and with the shock the poisonous piece of apple which Snow-white had bitten off came out of her throat. And before long she opened her eyes, lifted up the lid of the coffin, sat up, and was once more alive. "Oh, heavens, where am I?" she cried. The King's son, full of joy, said, "You are with me," and told her what had happened, and said, "I love you more than everything in the world; come with me to my father's palace, you shall be my wife."

And Snow-white was willing, and went with him, and their wedding was held with great show and splendour. But Snow-white's wicked step-mother was also bidden to the feast. When she had arrayed herself in beautiful clothes she went before the Looking-glass, and said —

"Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?"

the glass answered —

"Oh, Queen, of all here the fairest art thou,
But the young Queen is fairer by far as I trow."

Then the wicked woman uttered a curse, and was so wretched, so utterly wretched, that she knew not what to do. At first she would not go to the wedding at all, but she had no peace, and must go to see the young Queen. And when she went in she knew Snow-white; and she stood still with rage and fear, and could not stir. But iron slippers had already been put upon the fire, and they were brought in with tongs, and set before her. Then she was forced to put on the red-hot shoes, and dance until she dropped down dead.

The Knapsack, the Hat, and the Horn

There were once three brothers who had fallen deeper and deeper into poverty, and at last their need was so great that they had to endure hunger, and had nothing to eat or drink. Then said they, “We cannot go on thus, we had better go into the world and seek our fortune.” They therefore set out, and had already walked over many a long road and many a blade of grass, but had not yet met with good luck. One day they arrived in a great forest, and in the midst of it was a hill, and when they came nearer they saw that the hill was all silver. Then spoke the eldest, “Now I have found the good luck I wished for, and I desire nothing more.” He took as much of the silver as he could possibly carry, and then turned back and went home again. But the two others said, “We want something more from good luck than mere silver,” and did not touch it, but went onwards. After they had walked for two days longer without stopping, they came to a hill which was all gold. The second brother stopped, took thought with himself, and was undecided. “What shall I do?” said he; “shall I take for myself so much of this gold, that I have sufficient for all the rest of my life, or shall I go farther?” At length he made a decision, and putting as much into his pockets as would go in, said farewell to his brother, and went home. But the third said, “Silver and gold do not move me, I will not renounce my chance of fortune, perhaps something better still will be given me.” He journeyed onwards, and when he had walked for three days, he got into a forest which was still larger than the one before, and never would come to an end, and as he found nothing to eat or to drink, he was all but exhausted. Then he climbed up a high tree to find out if up there he could see the end of the forest, but so far as his eye could pierce he saw nothing but the tops of trees. Then he began to descend the tree again, but hunger tormented him, and he thought to himself, “If I could but eat my fill once more!” When he got down he saw with astonishment a table beneath the tree richly spread with food, the steam of which rose up to meet him. “This time,” said he, “my wish has been fulfilled at the right moment.” And without inquiring who had brought the food, or who had cooked it, he approached the table, and ate with enjoyment until he had appeased his hunger. When he was done, he thought, “It would after all be a pity if the pretty little table-cloth were to be spoilt in the forest here,” and folded it up tidily and put it in his pocket. Then he went onwards, and in the evening, when hunger once more made itself felt, he wanted to make a trial of his little cloth, and spread it out and said, “I wish thee to be covered with good cheer again,” and scarcely had the wish crossed his lips than as many dishes with the most exquisite food on them stood on the table as there was room for. “Now I perceive,” said he, “in what kitchen my cooking is done. Thou shalt be dearer to me than the mountains of silver and gold.” For he saw plainly that it was a wishing-cloth. The cloth, however, was still not enough to enable him to sit down quietly at home; he preferred to wander about the world and pursue his fortune farther.

One night he met, in a lonely wood, a dusty, black charcoal-burner, who was burning charcoal there, and had some potatoes by the fire, on which he was going to make a meal. “Good evening, blackbird!” said the youth. “How dost thou get on in thy solitude?”

“One day is like another,” replied the charcoal-burner, “and every night potatoes! Hast thou a mind to have some, and wilt thou be my guest?” “Many thanks,” replied the traveler, “I won’t rob thee of thy supper; thou didst not reckon on a visitor, but if thou wilt put up with what I have, thou shalt have an invitation.”

“Who is to prepare it for thee?” said the charcoal-burner. “I see that thou hast nothing with thee, and there is no one within a two hours’ walk who could give thee anything.” “And yet there shall be a meal,” answered the youth, “and better than any thou hast ever tasted.” Thereupon he brought his cloth out of his knapsack, spread it on the ground, and said, “Little cloth, cover thyself,” and instantly boiled meat and baked meat stood there, and as hot as if it had just come out of the kitchen. The charcoal-burner stared, but did not require much pressing; he fell to, and thrust larger and larger mouthfuls into his black mouth. When they had eaten everything, the charcoal-burner smiled contentedly, and said, “Hark thee, thy table-cloth has my approval; it would be a fine thing for me in this forest, where no one ever cooks me anything good. I will propose an exchange to thee; there in the corner hangs a soldier’s knapsack, which is certainly old and shabby, but in it lie concealed wonderful powers; but, as I no longer use it, I will give it to thee for the table-cloth.”

“I must first know what these wonderful powers are,” answered the youth.

“That will I tell thee,” replied the charcoal-burner; “every time thou tappest it with thy hand, a corporal comes with six men armed from head to foot, and they do whatsoever thou commandest them.” “So far as I am concerned,” said the youth, “if nothing else can be done, we will exchange,” and he gave the charcoal-burner the cloth, took the knapsack from the hook, put it on, and bade farewell. When he had walked a while, he wished to make a trial of the magical powers of his knapsack and tapped it. Immediately the seven warriors stepped up to him, and the corporal said, “What does my lord and ruler wish for?”

“March with all speed to the charcoal-burner, and demand my wishing-cloth back.” They faced to the left, and it was not long before they brought what he required, and had taken it from the charcoal-burner without asking many questions. The young man bade them retire, went onwards, and hoped fortune would shine yet more brightly on him. By sunset he came to another charcoal-burner, who was making his supper ready by the fire. “If thou wilt eat some potatoes with salt, but with no dripping, come and sit down with me,” said the sooty fellow.

“No, he replied, this time thou shalt be my guest,” and he spread out his cloth, which was instantly covered with the most beautiful dishes. They ate and drank together, and enjoyed themselves heartily. After the meal was over, the charcoal-burner said, “Up there on that shelf lies a little old worn-out hat which has strange properties: when any one puts it on, and turns it round on his head, the cannons go off as if twelve were fired all together, and they shoot down everything so that no one can withstand them. The hat is of no use to me, and I will willingly give it for thy table-cloth.”

“That suits me very well,” he answered, took the hat, put it on, and left his table-cloth behind him. Hardly, however, had he walked away than he tapped on his knapsack, and his soldiers had to fetch the cloth back again. “One thing comes on the top of another,” thought he, “and I feel as if my luck had not yet come to an end.” Neither had his thoughts deceived him. After he had walked on for the whole of one day, he came to a third charcoal-burner, who like the previous ones, invited him to potatoes without dripping. But he let him also dine with him from his wishing-cloth, and the charcoal-burner liked it so well, that at last he offered him a horn for it, which had very different properties from those of the hat. When any one blew it all the walls and fortifications fell down, and all towns and villages became ruins. He certainly gave the charcoal-burner the cloth for it, but he afterwards sent his soldiers to demand it back again, so that at length he had the knapsack, hat and horn, all three. “Now,” said he, “I am a made man, and it is time for me to go home and see how my brothers are getting on.”

When he reached home, his brothers had built themselves a handsome house with their silver and gold, and were living in clover. He went to see them, but as he came in a ragged coat, with his shabby hat on his head, and his old knapsack on his back, they would not acknowledge him as their brother. They mocked and said, “Thou givest out that thou art our brother who despised silver and gold, and craved for something still better for himself. He will come in his carriage in full splendour like a mighty king, not like a beggar,” and they drove him out of doors. Then he fell into a rage, and tapped his knapsack until a hundred and fifty men stood before him armed from head to foot. He commanded them to surround his brothers’ house, and two of them were to take hazel-sticks with them, and beat the two insolent men until they knew who he was. A violent disturbance arose, people ran together, and wanted to lend the two some help in their need, but against the soldiers they could do nothing. News of this at length came to the King, who was very angry, and ordered a captain to march out with his troop, and drive this disturber of the peace out of the town; but the man with the knapsack soon got a greater body of men together, who repulsed the captain and his men, so that they were forced to retire with bloody noses. The King said, “This vagabond is not brought to order yet,” and next day sent a still larger troop against him, but they could do even less. The youth set still more men against them, and in order to be done the sooner, he turned his hat twice round on his head, and heavy guns began to play, and the king’s men were beaten and put to flight. “And now,” said he, “I will not make peace until the King gives me his daughter to wife, and I govern the whole kingdom in his name.” He caused this to be announced to the King, and the latter said to his daughter, “Necessity is a hard nut to crack, what remains to me but to do what he desires? If I want peace and to keep the crown on my head, I must give thee away."

So the wedding was celebrated, but the King's daughter was vexed that her husband should be a common man, who wore a shabby hat, and put on an old knapsack. She wished much to get rid of him, and night and day studied how she could accomplished this. Then she thought to herself, "Is it possible that his wonderful powers lie in the knapsack?" and she dissembled and caressed him, and when his heart was softened, she said, "If thou wouldst but lay aside that ugly knapsack, it makes disfigures thee so, that I can't help being ashamed of thee." "Dear child," said he, "this knapsack is my greatest treasure; as long as I have it, there is no power on earth that I am afraid of." And he revealed to her the wonderful virtue with which it was endowed. Then she threw herself in his arms as if she were going to kiss him, but dexterously took the knapsack off his shoulders, and ran away with it. As soon as she was alone she tapped it, and commanded the warriors to seize their former master, and take him out of the royal palace. They obeyed, and the false wife sent still more men after him, who were to drive him quite out of the country. Then he would have been ruined if he had not had the little hat. But his hands were scarcely at liberty before he turned it twice. Immediately the cannon began to thunder, and struck down everything, and the King's daughter herself was forced to come and beg for mercy. As she entreated in such moving terms, and promised amendment, he allowed himself to be persuaded and granted her peace. She behaved in a friendly manner to him, and acted as if she loved him very much, and after some time managed so to befool him, that he confided to her that even if someone got the knapsack into his power, he could do nothing against him so long as the old hat was still his. When she knew the secret, she waited until he was asleep, and then she took the hat away from him, and had it thrown out into the street. But the horn still remained to him, and in great anger he blew it with all his strength. Instantly all walls, fortifications, towns, and villages, toppled down, and crushed the King and his daughter to death. And had he not put down the horn and had blown just a little longer, everything would have been in ruins, and not one stone would have been left standing on another. Then no one opposed him any longer, and he made himself King of the whole country.

Rumpelstiltskin

Once there was a miller who was poor, but who had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he had to go and speak to the King, and in order to make himself appear important he said to him, “I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold.” The King said to the miller, “That is an art which pleases me well; if your daughter is as clever as you say, bring her to-morrow to my palace, and I will try what she can do.”

And when the girl was brought to him he took her into a room which was quite full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel and a reel, and said, “Now set to work, and if by to-morrow morning early you have not spun this straw into gold during the night, you must die.” Thereupon he himself locked up the room, and left her in it alone. So there sat the poor miller’s daughter, and for the life of her could not tell what to do; she had no idea how straw could be spun into gold, and she grew more and more miserable, until at last she began to weep.

But all at once the door opened, and in came a little man, and said, “Good evening, Mistress Miller; why are you crying so?” “Alas!” answered the girl, “I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it.” “What will you give me,” said the manikin, “if I do it for you?” “My necklace,” said the girl. The little man took the necklace, seated himself in front of the wheel, and “whirr, whirr, whirr,” three turns, and the reel was full; then he put another on, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three times round, and the second was full too. And so it went on until the morning, when all the straw was spun, and all the reels were full of gold. By daybreak the King was already there, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and delighted, but his heart became only more greedy. He had the miller’s daughter taken into another room full of straw, which was much larger, and commanded her to spin that also in one night if she valued her life. The girl knew not how to help herself, and was crying, when the door again opened, and the little man appeared, and said, “What will you give me if I spin that straw into gold for you?” “The ring on my finger,” answered the girl. The little man took the ring, again began to turn the wheel, and by morning had spun all the straw into glittering gold.

The King rejoiced beyond measure at the sight, but still he had not gold enough; and he had the miller’s daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and said, “You must spin this, too, in the course of this night; but if you succeed, you shall be my wife.” “Even if she be a miller’s daughter,” thought he, “I could not find a richer wife in the whole world.”

When the girl was alone the manikin came again for the third time, and said, “What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time also?” “I have nothing left that I could give,” answered the girl. “Then promise me, if you should become Queen, your first child.” “Who knows whether that will ever happen?” thought the miller’s daughter; and, not knowing how else to help herself in this strait, she promised the manikin what he wanted, and for that he once more span the straw into gold.

And when the King came in the morning, and found all as he had wished, he took her in marriage, and the pretty miller's daughter became a Queen.

A year after, she had a beautiful child, and she never gave a thought to the manikin. But suddenly he came into her room, and said, "Now give me what you promised." The Queen was horror-struck, and offered the manikin all the riches of the kingdom if he would leave her the child. But the manikin said, "No, something that is living is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world." Then the Queen began to weep and cry, so that the manikin pitied her. "I will give you three days' time," said he, "if by that time you find out my name, then shall you keep your child."

So the Queen thought the whole night of all the names that she had ever heard, and she sent a messenger over the country to inquire, far and wide, for any other names that there might be. When the manikin came the next day, she began with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and said all the names she knew, one after another; but to every one the little man said, "That is not my name." On the second day she had inquiries made in the neighborhood as to the names of the people there, and she repeated to the manikin the most uncommon and curious. "Perhaps your name is Shortribs, or Sheepshanks, or Laceleg?" but he always answered, "That is not my name."

On the third day the messenger came back again, and said, "I have not been able to find a single new name, but as I came to a high mountain at the end of the forest, where the fox and the hare bid each other good night, there I saw a little house, and before the house a fire was burning, and round about the fire quite a ridiculous little man was jumping: he hopped upon one leg, and shouted —

"To-day I bake, to-morrow brew,
 The next I'll have the young Queen's child.
 Ha! glad am I that no one knew
 That Rumpelstiltskin I am styled."

You may think how glad the Queen was when she heard the name! And when soon afterwards the little man came in, and asked, "Now, Mistress Queen, what is my name?" at first she said, "Is your name Conrad?" "No." "Is your name Harry?" "No."

"Perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The devil has told you that! the devil has told you that!" cried the little man, and in his anger he plunged his right foot so deep into the earth that his whole leg went in; and then in rage he pulled at his left leg so hard with both hands that he tore himself in two.

Sweetheart Roland

There was once on a time a woman who was a real witch and had two daughters, one ugly and wicked, and this one she loved because she was her own daughter, and one beautiful and good, and this one she hated, because she was her step-daughter. The step-daughter once had a pretty apron, which the other fancied so much that she became envious, and told her mother that she must and would have that apron. “Be quiet, my child,” said the old woman, “and thou shalt have it. Thy step-sister has long deserved death, to-night when she is asleep I will come and cut her head off. Only be careful that thou art at the far-side of the bed, and push her well to the front.” It would have been all over with the poor girl if she had not just then been standing in a corner, and heard everything. All day long she dared not go out of doors, and when bed-time had come, the witch’s daughter got into bed first, so as to lie at the far side, but when she was asleep, the other pushed her gently to the front, and took for herself the place at the back, close by the wall. In the night, the old woman came creeping in, she held an axe in her right hand, and felt with her left to see if anyone was lying at the outside, and then she grasped the axe with both hands, and cut her own child’s head off.

When she had gone away, the girl got up and went to her sweetheart, who was called Roland, and knocked at his door. When he came out, she said to him, “Hear me, dearest Roland, we must fly in all haste; my step-mother wanted to kill me, but has struck her own child. When daylight comes, and she sees what she has done, we shall be lost.” “But,” said Roland, “I counsel thee first to take away her magic wand, or we cannot escape if she pursues us.” The maiden fetched the magic wand, and she took the dead girl’s head and dropped three drops of blood on the ground, one in front of the bed, one in the kitchen, and one on the stairs. Then she hurried away with her lover. When the old witch got up next morning, she called her daughter, and wanted to give her the apron, but she did not come. Then the witch cried, “Where art thou?” “Here, on the stairs, I am sweeping,” answered the first drop of blood. The old woman went out, but saw no one on the stairs, and cried again, “Where art thou?” “Here in the kitchen, I am warming myself,” cried the second drop of blood. She went into the kitchen, but found no one. Then she cried again, “Where art thou?” “Ah, here in the bed, I am sleeping.” cried the third drop of blood. She went into the room to the bed. What did she see there? Her own child, whose head she had cut off, bathed in her blood. The witch fell into a passion, sprang to the window, and as she could look forth quite far into the world, she perceived her step-daughter hurrying away with her sweetheart Roland. “That shall not serve you,” cried she, “even if you have got a long way off, you shall still not escape me.” She put on her many league boots, in which went an hour’s walk at every step, and it was not long before she overtook them. The girl, however, when she saw the old woman striding towards her, changed, with her magic wand, her sweetheart Roland into a lake, and herself into a duck swimming in the middle of it. The witch placed herself on the shore, threw bread-crumbs in, and gave herself every possible trouble to entice the duck; but the duck did not let herself be enticed, and the old woman had to go home at night as she had come. On this the girl and her sweetheart Roland resumed their natural shapes again, and they walked on the whole night until daybreak. Then the maiden changed herself into a beautiful flower which stood in the midst of a briar hedge, and her sweetheart Roland into a fiddler. It was not long before the witch came striding up towards them, and said to the musician, "Dear musician, may I pluck that beautiful flower for myself?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I will play to you while you do it." As she was hastily creeping into the hedge and was just going to pluck the flower, for she well knew who the flower was, he began to play, and whether she would or not, she was forced to dance, for it was a magical dance. The quicker he played, the more violent springs was she forced to make, and the thorns tore her clothes from her body, and pricked her and wounded her till she bled, and as he did not stop, she had to dance till she lay dead on the ground.

When they were delivered, Roland said, "Now I will go to my father and arrange for the wedding." "Then in the meantime I will stay here and wait for thee," said the girl, "and that no one may recognize me, I will change myself into a red stone land-mark." Then Roland went away, and the girl stood like a red land-mark in the field and waited for her beloved. But when Roland got home, he fell into the snares of another, who prevailed on him so far that he forgot the maiden. The poor girl remained there a long time, but at length, as he did not return at all, she was sad, and changed herself into a flower, and thought, "Some one will surely come this way, and trample me down."

It befell, however, that a shepherd kept his sheep in the field, and saw the flower, and as it was so pretty, plucked it, took it with him, and laid it away in his chest. From that time forth, strange things happened in the shepherd's house. When he arose in the morning, all the work was already done, the room was swept, the table and benches cleaned, the fire on the hearth was lighted, and the water was fetched, and at noon, when he came home, the table was laid, and a good dinner served. He could not conceive how this came to pass, for he never saw a human being in his house, and no one could have concealed himself in it. He was certainly pleased with this good attendance, but still at last he was so afraid that he went to a wise woman and asked for her advice. The wise woman said, "There is some enchantment behind it, listen very early some morning if anything is moving in the room, and if thou seest anything, let it be what it may, throw a white cloth over it, and then the magic will be stopped."

The shepherd did as she bade him, and next morning just as day dawned, he saw the chest open, and the flower come out. Swiftly he sprang towards it, and threw a white cloth over it. Instantly the transformation came to an end, and a beautiful girl stood before him, who owned to him that she had been the flower, and that up to this time she had attended to his housekeeping. She told him her story, and as she pleased him he asked her if she would marry him, but she answered, “No,” for she wanted to remain faithful to her sweetheart Roland, although he had deserted her, but she promised not to go away, but to keep house for the shepherd for the future.

And now the time drew near when Roland’s wedding was to be celebrated, and then, according to an old custom in the country, it was announced that all the girls were to be present at it, and sing in honour of the bridal pair. When the faithful maiden heard of this, she grew so sad that she thought her heart would break, and she would not go thither, but the other girls came and took her. When it came to her turn to sing, she stepped back, until at last she was the only one left, and then she could not refuse. But when she began her song, and it reached Roland’s ears, he sprang up and cried, “I know the voice, that is the true bride, I will have no other!” Everything he had forgotten, and which had vanished from his mind, had suddenly come home again to his heart. Then the faithful maiden held her wedding with her sweetheart Roland, and grief came to an end and joy began.

The Golden Bird

In the olden time there was a king, who had behind his palace a beautiful pleasure-garden in which there was a tree that bore golden apples. When the apples were getting ripe they were counted, but on the very next morning one was missing. This was told to the King, and he ordered that a watch should be kept every night beneath the tree.

The King had three sons, the eldest of whom he sent, as soon as night came on, into the garden; but when midnight came he could not keep himself from sleeping, and next morning again an apple was gone.

The following night the second son had to keep watch, it fared no better with him; as soon as twelve o'clock had struck he fell asleep, and in the morning an apple was gone.

Now it came to the turn of the third son to watch; and he was quite ready, but the King had not much trust in him, and thought that he would be of less use even than his brothers; but at last he let him go. The youth lay down beneath the tree, but kept awake, and did not let sleep master him. When it struck twelve, something rustled through the air, and in the moonlight he saw a bird coming whose feathers were all shining with gold. The bird alighted on the tree, and had just plucked off an apple, when the youth shot an arrow at him. The bird flew off, but the arrow had struck his plumage, and one of his golden feathers fell down. The youth picked it up, and the next morning took it to the King and told him what he had seen in the night. The King called his council together, and everyone declared that a feather like this was worth more than the whole kingdom. "If the feather is so precious," declared the King, "one alone will not do for me; I must and will have the whole bird!"

The eldest son set out; he trusted to his cleverness, and thought that he would easily find the Golden Bird. When he had gone some distance he saw a Fox sitting at the edge of a wood, so he cocked his gun and took aim at him. The Fox cried, "Do not shoot me! and in return I will give you some good counsel. You are on the way to the Golden Bird; and this evening you will come to a village in which stand two inns opposite to one another. One of them is lighted up brightly, and all goes on merrily within, but do not go into it; go rather into the other, even though it seems a bad one." "How can such a silly beast give wise advice?" thought the King's son, and he pulled the trigger. But he missed the Fox, who stretched out his tail and ran quickly into the wood.

So he pursued his way, and by evening came to the village where the two inns were; in one they were singing and dancing; the other had a poor, miserable look. "I should be a fool, indeed," he thought, "if I were to go into the shabby tavern, and pass by the good one." So he went into the cheerful one, lived there in riot and revel, and forgot the bird and his father, and all good counsels.

When some time had passed, and the eldest son for month after month did not come back home, the second set out, wishing to find the Golden Bird. The Fox met him as he had met the eldest, and gave him the good advice of which he took no heed. He came to the two inns, and his brother was standing at the window of the one from which came the music, and called out to him. He could not resist, but went inside and lived only for pleasure.

Again some time passed, and then the King's youngest son wanted to set off and try his luck, but his father would not allow it. "It is of no use," said he, "he will find the Golden Bird still less than his brothers, and if a mishap were to befall him he knows not how to help himself; he is a little wanting at the best." But at last, as he had no peace, he let him go.

Again the Fox was sitting outside the wood, and begged for his life, and offered his good advice. The youth was good-natured, and said, "Be easy, little Fox, I will do you no harm." "You shall not repent it," answered the Fox; "and that you may get on more quickly, get up behind on my tail." And scarcely had he seated himself when the Fox began to run, and away he went over stock and stone till his hair whistled in the wind. When they came to the village the youth got off; he followed the good advice, and without looking round turned into the little inn, where he spent the night quietly.

The next morning, as soon as he got into the open country, there sat the Fox already, and said, "I will tell you further what you have to do. Go on quite straight, and at last you will come to a castle, in front of which a whole regiment of soldiers is lying, but do not trouble yourself about them, for they will all be asleep and snoring. Go through the midst of them straight into the castle, and go through all the rooms, till at last you will come to a chamber where a Golden Bird is hanging in a wooden cage. Close by, there stands an empty gold cage for show, but beware of taking the bird out of the common cage and putting it into the fine one, or it may go badly with you." With these words the Fox again stretched out his tail, and the King's son seated himself upon it, and away he went over stock and stone till his hair whistled in the wind.

When he came to the castle he found everything as the Fox had said. The King's son went into the chamber where the Golden Bird was shut up in a wooden cage, whilst a golden one stood hard by; and the three golden apples lay about the room. "But," thought he, "it would be absurd if I were to leave the beautiful bird in the common and ugly cage," so he opened the door, laid hold of it, and put it into the golden cage. But at the same moment the bird uttered a shrill cry. The soldiers awoke, rushed in, and took him off to prison. The next morning he was taken before a court of justice, and as he confessed everything, was sentenced to death.

The King, however, said that he would grant him his life on one condition namely, if he brought him the Golden Horse which ran faster than the wind; and in that case he should receive, over and above, as a reward, the Golden Bird.

The King's son set off, but he sighed and was sorrowful, for how was he to find the Golden Horse? But all at once he saw his old friend the Fox sitting on the road. "Look you," said the Fox, "this has happened because you did not give heed to me. However, be of good courage. I will give you my help, and tell you how to get to the Golden Horse. You must go straight on, and you will come to a castle, where in the stable stands the horse. The grooms will be lying in front of the stable; but they will be asleep and snoring, and you can quietly lead out the Golden Horse. But of one thing you must take heed; put on him the common saddle of wood and leather, and not the golden one, which hangs close by, else it will go ill with you." Then the Fox stretched out his tail, the King's son seated himself upon it, and away he went over stock and stone until his hair whistled in the wind.

Everything happened just as the Fox had said; the prince came to the stable in which the Golden Horse was standing, but just as he was going to put the common saddle upon him, he thought, "It will be a shame to such a beautiful beast, if I do not give him the good saddle which belongs to him by right." But scarcely had the golden saddle touched the horse than he began to neigh loudly. The grooms awoke, seized the youth, and threw him into prison. The next morning he was sentenced by the court to death; but the King promised to grant him his life, and the Golden Horse as well, if he could bring back the beautiful princess from the Golden Castle.

With a heavy heart the youth set out; yet luckily for him he soon found the trusty Fox. "I ought only to leave you to your ill-luck," said the Fox, "but I pity you, and will help you once more out of your trouble. This road takes you straight to the Golden Castle, you will reach it by eventide; and at night when everything is quiet the beautiful princess goes to the bathing-house to bathe. When she enters it, run up to her and give her a kiss, then she will follow you, and you can take her away with you; only do not allow her to take leave of her parents first, or it will go ill with you."

Then the Fox stretched out his tail, the King's son seated himself upon it, and away the Fox went, over stock and stone, till his hair whistled in the wind.

When he reached the Golden Castle it was just as the Fox had said. He waited until midnight, when everything lay in deep sleep, and the beautiful princess was going to the bathing-house. Then he sprang out and gave her a kiss. She said that she would like to go with him, but she asked him pitifully, and with tears, to allow her first to take leave of her parents. At first he withstood her prayer, but when she wept more and more, and fell at his feet, he at last gave in. But no sooner had the maiden reached the bedside of her father than he and all the rest in the castle awoke, and the youth was laid hold of and put into prison.

The next morning the King said to him, "Your life is forfeited, and you can only find mercy if you take away the hill which stands in front of my windows, and prevents my seeing beyond it; and you must finish it all within eight days. If you do that you shall have my daughter as your reward."

The King's son began, and dug and shovelled without leaving off, but when after seven days he saw how little he had done, and how all his work was as good as nothing, he fell into great sorrow and gave up all hope. But on the evening of the seventh day the Fox appeared and said, "You do not deserve that I should take any trouble about you; but just go away and lie down to sleep, and I will do the work for you."

The next morning when he awoke and looked out of the window the hill had gone. The youth ran, full of joy, to the King, and told him that the task was fulfilled, and whether he liked it or not, the King had to hold to his word and give him his daughter.

So the two set forth together, and it was not long before the trusty Fox came up with them. "You have certainly got what is best," said he, "but the Golden Horse also belongs to the maiden of the Golden Castle." "How shall I get it?" asked the youth. "That I will tell you," answered the Fox; "first take the beautiful maiden to the King who sent you to the Golden Castle. There will be unheard-of rejoicing; they will gladly give you the Golden Horse, and will bring it out to you. Mount it as soon as possible, and offer your hand to all in farewell; last of all to the beautiful maiden. And as soon as you have taken her hand swing her up on to the horse, and gallop away, and no one will be able to bring you back, for the horse runs faster than the wind."

All was carried out successfully, and the King's son carried off the beautiful princess on the Golden Horse.

The Fox did not remain behind, and he said to the youth, "Now I will help you to get the Golden Bird. When you come near to the castle where the Golden Bird is to be found, let the maiden get down, and I will take her into my care. Then ride with the Golden Horse into the castle-yard; there will be great rejoicing at the sight, and they will bring out the Golden Bird for you. As soon as you have the cage in your hand gallop back to us, and take the maiden away again."

When the plan had succeeded, and the King's son was about to ride home with his treasures, the Fox said, "Now you shall reward me for my help." "What do you require for it?" asked the youth. "When you get into the wood yonder, shoot me dead, and chop off my head and feet."

"That would be fine gratitude," said the King's son. "I cannot possibly do that for you."

The Fox said, "If you will not do it I must leave you, but before I go away I will give you a piece of good advice. Be careful about two things. Buy no gallows'-flesh, and do not sit at the edge of any well." And then he ran into the wood.

The youth thought, "That is a wonderful beast, he has strange whims; who is going to buy gallows'-flesh? and the desire to sit at the edge of a well it has never yet seized me."

He rode on with the beautiful maiden, and his road took him again through the village in which his two brothers had remained. There was a great stir and noise, and, when he asked what was going on, he was told that two men were going to be hanged. As he came nearer to the place he saw that they were his brothers, who had been playing all kinds of wicked pranks, and had squandered all their wealth. He inquired whether they could not be set free. “If you will pay for them,” answered the people; “but why should you waste your money on wicked men, and buy them free.” He did not think twice about it, but paid for them, and when they were set free they all went on their way together.

They came to the wood where the Fox had first met them, as it was cool and pleasant within it, the two brothers said, “Let us rest a little by the well, and eat and drink.” He agreed, and whilst they were talking he forgot himself, and sat down upon the edge of the well without thinking of any evil. But the two brothers threw him backwards into the well, took the maiden, the Horse, and the Bird, and went home to their father. “Here we bring you not only the Golden Bird,” said they; “we have won the Golden Horse also, and the maiden from the Golden Castle.” Then was there great joy; but the Horse would not eat, the Bird would not sing, and the maiden sat and wept.

But the youngest brother was not dead. By good fortune the well was dry, and he fell upon soft moss without being hurt, but he could not get out again. Even in this strait the faithful Fox did not leave him: it came and leapt down to him, and upbraided him for having forgotten its advice. “But yet I cannot give it up so,” he said; “I will help you up again into daylight.” He bade him grasp his tail and keep tight hold of it; and then he pulled him up.

“You are not out of all danger yet,” said the Fox. “Your brothers were not sure of your death, and have surrounded the wood with watchers, who are to kill you if you let yourself be seen.” But a poor man was sitting upon the road, with whom the youth changed clothes, and in this way he got to the King’s palace.

No one knew him, but the Bird began to sing, the Horse began to eat, and the beautiful maiden left off weeping. The King, astonished, asked, “What does this mean?” Then the maiden said, “I do not know, but I have been so sorrowful and now I am so happy! I feel as if my true bridegroom had come.” She told him all that had happened, although the other brothers had threatened her with death if she were to betray anything.

The King commanded that all people who were in his castle should be brought before him; and amongst them came the youth in his ragged clothes; but the maiden knew him at once and fell upon his neck. The wicked brothers were seized and put to death, but he was married to the beautiful maiden and declared heir to the King.

But how did it fare with the poor Fox? Long afterwards the King’s son was once again walking in the wood, when the Fox met him and said, “You have everything now that you can wish for, but there is never an end to my misery, and yet it is in your power to free me,” and again he asked him with tears to shoot him dead and chop off his head and feet. So he did it, and scarcely was it done when the Fox was changed into a man, and was no other than the brother of the beautiful princess, who at last was freed from the magic charm which had been laid upon him. And now nothing more was wanting to their happiness as long as they lived.

The Dog and the Sparrow

A sheep-dog had not a good master, but, on the contrary, one who let him suffer hunger. As he could stay no longer with him, he went quite sadly away. On the road he met a sparrow who said, “Brother dog, why art thou so sad?” The dog replied, “I am hungry, and have nothing to eat.” Then said the sparrow, “Dear brother, come into the town with me, and I will satisfy thy hunger.” So they went into the town together, and when they came in front of a butcher’s shop the sparrow said to the dog, “Stay there, and I will pick a bit of meat down for thee,” and he alighted on the stall, looked about him to see that no one was observing him, and pecked and pulled and tore so long at a piece which lay on the edge, that it slipped down. Then the dog seized it, ran into a corner, and devoured it. The sparrow said, “Now come with me to another shop, and then I will get thee one more piece that thou mayst be satisfied.” When the dog had devoured the second piece as well, the sparrow asked, “Brother dog, hast thou now had enough?” “Yes, I have had meat enough,” he answered, “but I have had no bread yet.” Said the sparrow, “Thou shalt have that also, come with me.” Then he took him to a baker’s shop, and pecked at a couple of little buns till they rolled down, and as the dog wanted still more, he led him to another stall, and again got bread for him. When that was consumed, the sparrow said, “Brother dog, hast thou now had enough?” “Yes,” he replied, “now we will walk awhile outside the town.” Then they both went out on to the highway. It was, however, warm weather, and when they had walked a little way the dog said, “I am tired, and would like to sleep.” “Well, do sleep,” answered the sparrow, “and in the meantime I will seat myself on a branch.” So the dog lay down on the road, and fell fast asleep. Whilst he lay sleeping there, a waggoner came driving by, who had a cart with three horses, laden with two barrels of wine. The sparrow, however, saw that he was not going to turn aside, but was staying in the wheel track in which the dog was lying, so it cried, “Waggoner, don’t do it, or I will make thee poor.” The waggoner, however, growled to himself, “Thou wilt not make me poor,” and cracked his whip and drove the cart over the dog, and the wheels killed him. Then the sparrow cried, “Thou hast run over my brother dog and killed him, it shall cost thee thy cart and horses.” “Cart and horses indeed!” said the waggoner. “What harm canst thou do me?” and drove onwards. Then the sparrow crept under the cover of the cart, and pecked so long at the same bung-hole that he got the bung out, and then all the wine ran out without the driver noticing it. But once when he was looking behind him he saw that the cart was dripping, and looked at the barrels and saw that one of them was empty. “Unfortunate fellow that I am,” cried he. “Not unfortunate enough yet,” said the sparrow, and flew on to the head of one of the horses and pecked his eyes out. When the driver saw that, he drew out his axe and wanted to hit the sparrow, but the sparrow flew into the air, and he hit his horse on the head, and it fell down dead. “Oh, what an unfortunate man I am,” cried he. “Not unfortunate enough yet," said the sparrow, and when the driver drove on with the two hoses, the sparrow again crept under the cover, and pecked the bung out of the second cask, so all the wine was spilt. When the driver became aware of it, he again cried, "Oh, what an unfortunate man I am," but the sparrow replied, "Not unfortunate enough yet," and seated himself on the head of the second horse, and pecked his eyes out. The driver ran up to it and raised his axe to strike, but the sparrow flew into the air and the blow struck the horse, which fell. "Oh, what an unfortunate man I am." "Not unfortunate enough yet," said the sparrow, and lighted on the third horse's head, and pecked out his eyes. The driver, in his rage, struck at the sparrow without looking round, and did not hit him but killed his third horse likewise. "Oh, what an unfortunate man I am," cried he. "Not unfortunate enough yet," answered the sparrow. "Now will I make thee unfortunate in thy home," and flew away.

The driver had to leave the waggon standing, and full of anger and vexation went home. "Ah," said he to his wife, "what misfortunes I have had! My wine has run out, and the horses are all three dead!" "Alas, husband," she answered, "what a malicious bird has come into the house! It has gathered together every bird there is in the world, and they have fallen on our corn up there, and are devouring it." Then he went upstairs, and thousands and thousands of birds were sitting in the loft and had eaten up all the corn, and the sparrow was sitting in the midst of them. Then the driver cried, "Oh, what an unfortunate man I am?"

"Not unfortunate enough yet!" answered the sparrow; "waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life as well," and flew out.

Then the waggoner had lost all his property, and he went downstairs into the room, sat down behind the stove and was quite furious and bitter. But the sparrow sat outside in front of the window, and cried, "Waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life." Then the waggoner snatched the axe and threw it at the sparrow, but it only broke the window, and did not hit the bird. The sparrow now hopped in, placed itself on the stove and cried, "Waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life." The latter, quite mad and blind with rage, smote the stove in twain, and as the sparrow flew from one place to another so it fared with all his household furniture, looking-glass, benches, table, and at last the walls of his house, and yet he could not hit the bird. At length, however, he caught it with his hand. Then his wife said, "Shall I kill it?" "No," cried he, "that would be too merciful. It shall die much more cruelly," and he took it and swallowed it whole. The sparrow, however, began to flutter about in his body, and fluttered up again into the man's mouth; then it stretched out its head, and cried, "Waggoner, it shall still cost thee thy life." The driver gave the axe to his wife, and said, "Wife, kill the bird in my mouth for me." The woman struck, but missed her blow, and hit the waggoner right on his head, so that he fell dead. But the sparrow flew up and away.

Frederick and Catherine

There was once on a time a man who was called Frederick and a woman called Catherine, who had married each other and lived together as young married folks. One day Frederick said, “I will now go and plough, Catherine; when I come back, there must be some roast meat on the table for hunger, and a fresh draught for thirst.” “Just go, Frederick,” answered Kate, “just go, I will have all ready for you.” Therefore when dinner-time drew near she got a sausage out of the chimney, put it in the frying-pan, put some butter to it, and set it on the fire. The sausage began to fry and to hiss, Catherine stood beside it and held the handle of the pan, and had her own thoughts as she was doing it. Then it occurred to her, “While the sausage is getting done thou couldst go into the cellar and draw beer.” So she set the frying-pan safely on the fire, took a can, and went down into the cellar to draw beer. The beer ran into the can and Kate watched it, and then she thought, “Oh, dear! The dog upstairs is not fastened up, it might get the sausage out of the pan. Well thought of.” And in a trice she was up the cellar-steps again, but the Spitz had the sausage in its mouth already, and trailed it away on the ground. But Catherine, who was not idle, set out after it, and chased it a long way into the field; the dog, however, was swifter than Catherine and did not let the sausage journey easily, but skipped over the furrows with it. “What’s gone is gone!” said Kate, and turned round, and as she had run till she was weary, she walked quietly and comfortably, and cooled herself. During this time the beer was still running out of the cask, for Kate had not turned the tap. And when the can was full and there was no other place for it, it ran into the cellar and did not stop until the whole cask was empty. As soon as Kate was on the steps she saw the mischance. “Good gracious!” she cried. “What shall I do now to stop Frederick knowing it!” She thought for a while, and at last she remembered that up in the garret was still standing a sack of the finest wheat flour from the last fair, and she would fetch that down and strew it over the beer. “Yes,” said she, “he who saves a thing when he ought, has it afterwards when he needs it,” and she climbed up to the garret and carried the sack below, and threw it straight down on the can of beer, which she knocked over, and Frederick’s draught swam also in the cellar. “It is all right,” said Kate, “where the one is the other ought to be also,” and she strewed the meal over the whole cellar. When it was done she was heartily delighted with her work, and said, “How clean and wholesome it does look here!” At mid-day home came Frederick: “Now, wife, what have you ready for me?” “Ah, Freddy,” she answered, “I was frying a sausage for you, but whilst I was drawing the beer to drink with it, the dog took it away out of the pan, and whilst I was running after the dog, all the beer ran out, and whilst I was drying up the beer with the flour, I knocked over the can as well, but be easy, the cellar is quite dry again.” Said Frederick, “Kate, Kate, you should not have done that! to let the sausage be carried off and the beer run out of the cask, and throw out all our flour into the bargain!” “Indeed, Frederick, I did not know that, you should have told me.” The man thought, “If my wife is like this, I must look after things more.” Now he had got together a good number of thalers which he changed into gold, and said to Catherine, “Look, these are counters for playing games; I will put them in a pot and bury them in the stable under the cow’s manger, but mind you keep away from them, or it will be the worse for you.” Said she, “Oh, no, Frederick, I certainly will not go.” And when Frederick was gone some pedlars came into the village who had cheap earthen-bowls and pots, and asked the young woman if there was nothing she wanted to bargain with them for? “Oh, dear people,” said Catherine, “I have no money and can buy nothing, but if you have any use for yellow counters I will buy of you.” “Yellow counters, why not? But just let us see them.” “Then go into the stable and dig under the cow’s manger, and you will find the yellow counters. I am not allowed to go there.” The rogues went thither, dug and found pure gold. Then they laid hold of it, ran away, and left their pots and bowls behind in the house. Catherine though she must use her new things, and as she had no lack in the kitchen already without these, she knocked the bottom out of every pot, and set them all as ornaments on the paling which went round about the house. When Frederick came and saw the new decorations, he said, “Catherine, what have you been about?” “I have bought them, Frederick, for the counters which were under the cow’s manger. I did not go there myself, the pedlars had to dig them out for themselves.” “Ah, wife,” said Frederick, “what have you done? Those were not counters, but pure gold, and all our wealth; you should not have done that.” “Indeed, Frederick,” said she, “I did not know that, you should have forewarned me.”

Catherine stood for a while and bethought to herself; then she said, “Listen, Frederick, we will soon get the gold back again, we will run after the thieves.” “Come, then,” said Frederick, “we will try it; but take with you some butter and cheese that we may have something to eat on the way.” “Yes, Frederick, I will take them.” They set out, and as Frederick was the better walker, Catherine followed him. “It is to my advantage,” thought she, “when we turn back I shall be a little way in advance.” Then she came to a hill where there were deep ruts on both sides of the road. “There one can see,” said Catherine, “how they have torn and skinned and galled the poor earth, it will never be whole again as long as it lives,” and in her heart’s compassion she took her butter and smeared the ruts right and left, that they might not be so hurt by the wheels, and as she was thus bending down in her charity, one of the cheeses rolled out of her pocket down the hill. Said Catherine, “I have made my way once up here, I will not go down again; another may run and fetch it back.” So she took another cheese and rolled it down. But the cheeses did not come back, so she let a third run down, thinking. “Perhaps they are waiting for company, and do not like to walk alone.” As all three stayed away she said, “I do not know what that can mean, but it may perhaps be that the third has not found the way, and has gone wrong, I will just send the fourth to call it.” But the fourth did no better than the third. Then Catherine was angry, and threw down the fifth and sixth as well, and these were her last. She remained standing for some time watching for their coming, but when they still did not come, she said, “Oh, you are good folks to send in search of death, you stay a fine long time away! Do you think I will wait any longer for you? I shall go my way, you may run after me; you have younger legs than I.” Catherine went on and found Frederick, who was standing waiting for her because he wanted something to eat. “Now just let us have what you have brought with you,” said he. She gave him the dry bread. “Where have you the butter and the cheeses?” asked the man. “Ah, Freddy,” said Catherine, “I smeared the cart-ruts with the butter and the cheeses will come soon; one ran away from me, so I sent the others after to call it.” Said Frederick, “You should not have done that, Catherine, to smear the butter on the road, and let the cheeses run down the hill!” “Really, Frederick, you should have told me.” Then they ate the dry bread together, and Frederick said, “Catherine, did you make the house safe when you came away?” “No, Frederick, you should have told me to do it before.” “Then go home again, and make the house safe before we go any farther, and bring with you something else to eat. I will wait here for you.” Catherine went back and thought, “Frederick wants something more to eat, he does not like butter and cheese, so I will take with me a handkerchief full of dried pears and a pitcher of vinegar for him to drink.” Then she bolted the upper half of the door fast, but unhinged the lower door, and took it on her back, believing that when she had placed the door in security the house must be well taken care of. Catherine took her time on the way, and thought, “Frederick will rest himself so much the longer.” When she had once reached him she said, “Here is the house-door for you, Frederick, and now you can take care of the house yourself.” “Oh, heavens,” said he, “what a wise wife I have! She takes the under-door off the hinges that everything may run in, and bolts the upper one. It is now too late to go back home again, but since you have brought the door here, you shall just carry it farther.” “I will carry the door, Frederick, but the dried pears and the vinegar-jug will be too heavy for me, I will hang them on the door, it may carry them.”

And now they went into the forest, and sought the rogues, but did not find them. At length as it grew dark they climbed into a tree and resolved to spend the night there. Scarcely, however, had they sat down at the top of it than the rascals came thither who carry away with them what does not want to go, and find things before they are lost. They sat down under the very tree in which Frederick and Catherine were sitting, lighted a fire, and were about to share their booty. Frederick got down on the other side and collected some stones together. Then he climbed up again with them, and wished to throw them at the thieves and kill them. The stones, however, did not hit them, and the knaves cried, “It will soon be morning, the wind is shaking down the fir-apples.” Catherine still had the door on her back, and as it pressed so heavily on her, she thought it was the fault of the dried pears, and said, “Frederick, I must throw the pears down.” “No, Catherine, not now,” he replied, “they might betray us.” “Oh, but, Frederick, I must! They weigh me down far too much.” “Do it, then, and be hanged!” Then the dried pears rolled down between the branches, and the rascals below said, “The leaves are falling.”

A short time afterwards, as the door was still heavy, Catherine said, “Ah, Frederick, I must pour out the vinegar.” “No, Catherine, you must not, it might betray us.” “Ah, but, Frederick, I must, it weighs me down far too much.” “Then do it and be hanged!” So she emptied out the vinegar, and it besprinkled the robbers. They said amongst themselves, “The dew is already falling.” At length Catherine thought, “Can it really be the door which weighs me down so?” and said, “Frederick, I must throw the door down.” “No, not now, Catherine, it might discover us.” “Oh, but, Frederick, I must. It weighs me down far too much.” “Oh, no, Catherine, do hold it fast.” “Ah, Frederick, I am letting it fall!” “Let it go, then, in the devil’s name.” Then it fell down with a violent clatter, and the rascals below cried, “The devil is coming down the tree!” and they ran away and left everything behind them. Early next morning, when the two came down they found all their gold again, and carried it home.

When they were once more at home, Frederick said, “And now, Catherine, you, too, must be industrious and work.” “Yes, Frederick, I will soon do that, I will go into the field and cut corn.” When Catherine got into the field, she said to herself, “Shall I eat before I cut, or shall I sleep before I cut? Oh, I will eat first.” Then Catherine ate and eating made her sleepy, and she began to cut, and half in a dream cut all her clothes to pieces, her apron, her gown, and her shift. When Catherine awoke again after a long sleep she was standing there half-naked, and said to herself, “Is it I, or is it not I? Alas, it is not I.” In the meantime night came, and Catherine ran into the village, knocked at her husband’s window, and cried, “Frederick.”

“What is the matter?” “I should very much like to know if Catherine is in?” “Yes, yes,” replied Frederick, “she must be in and asleep.”

Said she, “’Tis well, then I am certainly at home already,” and ran away.

Outside Catherine found some vagabonds who were going to steal. Then she went to them and said, “I will help you to steal.” The rascals thought that she knew the situation of the place, and were willing. Catherine went in front of the houses, and cried, “Good folks, have you anything? We want to steal.” The thieves thought to themselves, “That’s a fine way of doing things,” and wished themselves once more rid of Catherine. Then they said to her, “Outside the village the pastor has some turnips in the field. Go there and pull up some turnips for us.” Catherine went to the ground, and began to pull them up, but was so idle that she did not gather them together. Then a man came by, saw her, and stood still and thought that it was the devil who was thus rooting amongst the turnips. He ran away into the village to the pastor, and said, “Mr. Pastor, the devil is in your turnip-ground, rooting up turnips.” “Ah, heavens,” answered the pastor, “I have a lame foot, I cannot go out and drive him away.” Said the man, “Then I will carry you on my back,” and he carried him out on his back. And when they came to the ground, Catherine arose and stood up her full height. “Ah, the devil!” cried the pastor, and both hurried away, and in his great fright the pastor could run better with his lame foot than the man who had carried him on his back could do with his sound one.

The Two Brothers

There were once upon a time two brothers, one rich and the other poor. The rich one was a goldsmith and evil-hearted. The poor one supported himself by making brooms, and was good and honourable. The poor one had two children, who were twin brothers and as like each other as two drops of water. The two boys went backwards and forwards to the rich house, and often got some of the scraps to eat. It happened once when the poor man was going into the forest to fetch brush-wood, that he saw a bird which was quite golden and more beautiful than any he had ever chanced to meet with. He picked up a small stone, threw it at him, and was lucky enough to hit him, but one golden feather only fell down, and the bird flew away. The man took the feather and carried it to his brother, who looked at it and said, “It is pure gold!” and gave him a great deal of money for it. Next day the man climbed into a birch-tree, and was about to cut off a couple of branches when the same bird flew out, and when the man searched he found a nest, and an egg lay inside it, which was of gold. He took the egg home with him, and carried it to his brother, who again said, “It is pure gold,” and gave him what it was worth. At last the goldsmith said, “I should indeed like to have the bird itself.” The poor man went into the forest for the third time, and again saw the golden bird sitting on the tree, so he took a stone and brought it down and carried it to his brother, who gave him a great heap of gold for it. “Now I can get on,” thought he, and went contentedly home.

The goldsmith was crafty and cunning, and knew very well what kind of a bird it was. He called his wife and said, “Roast me the gold bird, and take care that none of it is lost. I have a fancy to eat it all myself.” The bird, however, was no common one, but of so wondrous a kind that whosoever ate its heart and liver found every morning a piece of gold beneath his pillow. The woman made the bird ready, put it on the spit, and let it roast. Now it happened that while it was at the fire, and the woman was forced to go out of the kitchen on account of some other work, the two children of the poor broom-maker ran in, stood by the spit and turned it round once or twice. And as at that very moment two little bits of the bird fell down into the dripping-tin, one of the boys said, “We will eat these two little bits; I am so hungry, and no one will ever miss them.” Then the two ate the pieces, but the woman came into the kitchen and saw that they were eating something and said, “What have ye been eating?” “Two little morsels which fell out of the bird,” answered they. “That must have been the heart and the liver,” said the woman, quite frightened, and in order that her husband might not miss them and be angry, she quickly killed a young cock, took out his heart and liver, and put them beside the golden bird. When it was ready, she carried it to the goldsmith, who consumed it all alone, and left none of it. Next morning, however, when he felt beneath his pillow, and expected to bring out the piece of gold, no more gold pieces were there than there had always been.

The two children did not know what a piece of good-fortune had fallen to their lot. Next morning when they arose, something fell rattling to the ground, and when they picked it up there were two gold pieces! They took them to their father, who was astonished and said, “How can that have happened?” When next morning they again found two, and so on daily, he went to his brother and told him the strange story. The goldsmith at once knew how it had come to pass, and that the children had eaten the heart and liver of the golden bird, and in order to revenge himself, and because he was envious and hard-hearted, he said to the father, “Thy children are in league with the Evil One, do not take the gold, and do not suffer them to stay any longer in thy house, for he has them in his power, and may ruin thee likewise.” The father feared the Evil One, and painful as it was to him, he nevertheless led the twins forth into the forest, and with a sad heart left them there.

And now the two children ran about the forest, and sought the way home again, but could not find it, and only lost themselves more and more. At length they met with a huntsman, who asked, “To whom do you children belong?” “We are the poor broom-maker’s boys,” they replied, and they told him that their father would not keep them any longer in the house because a piece of gold lay every morning under their pillows. “Come,” said the huntsman, “that is nothing so very bad, if at the same time you keep honest, and are not idle.” As the good man liked the children, and had none of his own, he took them home with him and said, “I will be your father, and bring you up till you are big.” They learnt huntsmanship from him, and the piece of gold which each of them found when he awoke, was kept for them by him in case they should need it in the future.

When they were grown up, their foster-father one day took them into the forest with him, and said, “To-day shall you make your trial shot, so that I may release you from your apprenticeship, and make you huntsmen.” They went with him to lie in wait and stayed there a long time, but no game appeared. The huntsman, however, looked above him and saw a covey of wild geese flying in the form of a triangle, and said to one of them, “Shoot me down one from each corner.” He did it, and thus accomplished his trial shot. Soon after another covey came flying by in the form of the figure two, and the huntsman bade the other also bring down one from each corner, and his trial shot was likewise successful. “Now,” said the foster-father, “I pronounce you out of your apprenticeship; you are skilled huntsmen.” Thereupon the two brothers went forth together into the forest, and took counsel with each other and planned something. And in the evening when they had sat down to supper, they said to their foster-father, “We will not touch food, or take one mouthful, until you have granted us a request.” Said he, “What, then, is your request?” They replied, “We have now finished learning, and we must prove ourselves in the world, so allow us to go away and travel.” Then spake the old man joyfully, “You talk like brave huntsmen, that which you desire has been my wish; go forth, all will go well with you.” Thereupon they ate and drank joyously together.

When the appointed day came, their foster-father presented each of them with a good gun and a dog, and let each of them take as many of his saved-up gold pieces as he chose. Then he accompanied them a part of the way, and when taking leave, he gave them a bright knife, and said, “If ever you separate, stick this knife into a tree at the place where you part, and when one of you goes back, he will will be able to see how his absent brother is faring, for the side of the knife which is turned in the direction by which he went, will rust if he dies, but will remain bright as long as he is alive.” The two brothers went still farther onwards, and came to a forest which was so large that it was impossible for them to get out of it in one day. So they passed the night in it, and ate what they had put in their hunting-pouches, but they walked all the second day likewise, and still did not get out. As they had nothing to eat, one of them said, “We must shoot something for ourselves or we shall suffer from hunger,” and loaded his gun, and looked about him. And when an old hare came running up towards them, he laid his gun on his shoulder, but the hare cried,
“Dear huntsman, do but let me live,
Two little ones to thee I’ll give,”

and sprang instantly into the thicket, and brought two young ones. But the little creatures played so merrily, and were so pretty, that the huntsmen could not find it in their hearts to kill them. They therefore kept them with them, and the little hares followed on foot. Soon after this, a fox crept past; they were just going to shoot it, but the fox cried,

“Dear hunstman, do but let me live,
Two little ones I’ll also give.”

He, too, brought two little foxes, and the huntsmen did not like to kill them either, but gave them to the hares for company, and they followed behind. It was not long before a wolf strode out of the thicket; the huntsmen made ready to shoot him, but the wolf cried,

“Dear huntsman, do but let me live,
Two little ones I’ll likewise give.”

The huntsmen put the two wolves beside the other animals, and they followed behind them. Then a bear came who wanted to trot about a little longer, and cried:

“Dear huntsman, do but let me live,
Two little ones I, too, will give.”

The two young bears were added to the others, and there were already eight of them. At length who came? A lion came, and tossed his mane. But the huntsmen did not let themselves be frightened and aimed at him likewise, but the lion also said,

“Dear huntsman, do but let me live,
Two little ones I, too, will give.”

And he brought his little ones to them, and now the huntsmen had two lions, two bears, two wolves, two foxes, and two hares, who followed them and served them. In thu meantime their hunger was not appeased by this, and they said to the foxes, “Hark ye, cunning fellows, provide us with something to eat. You are crafty and deep.” They replied, “Not far from here lies a village, from which we have already brought many a fowl; we will show you the way there.” So they went into the village, bought themselves something to eat, had some food given to their beasts, and then travelled onwards. The foxes, however, knew their way very well about the district and where the poultry-yards were, and were able to guide the huntsmen.

Now they travelled about for a while, but could find no situations where they could remain together, so they said, “There is nothing else for it, we must part.” They divided the animals, so that each of them had a lion, a bear, a wolf, a fox, and a hare, then they took leave of each other, promised to love each other like brothers till their death, and stuck the knife which their foster-father had given them, into a tree, after which one went east, and the other went west.

The younger, however, arrived with his beasts in a town which was all hung with black crape. He went into an inn, and asked the host if he could accommodate his animals. The innkeeper gave him a stable, where there was a hole in the wall, and the hare crept out and fetched himself the head of a cabbage, and the fox fetched himself a hen, and when he had devoured that got the cock as well, but the wolf, the bear, and the lion could not get out because they were too big. Then the innkeeper let them be taken to a place where a cow was just then lying on the grass, that they might eat till they were satisfied. And when the huntsman had taken care of his animals, he asked the innkeeper why the town was thus hung with black crape? Said the host, “Because our King’s only daughter is to die to-morrow.” The huntsman inquired if she was “sick unto death?” “No,” answered the host, “she is vigorous and healthy, nevertheless she must die!” “How is that?” asked the huntsman. “There is a high hill without the town, whereon dwells a dragon who every year must have a pure virgin, or he lays the whole country waste, and now all the maidens have already been given to him, and there is no longer anyone left but the King’s daughter, yet there is no mercy for her; she must be given up to him, and that is to be done to-morrow.” Said the huntsman, “Why is the dragon not killed?” “Ah,” replied the host, “so many knights have tried it, but it has cost all of them their lives. The King has promised that he who conquers the dragon shall have his daughter to wife, and shall likewise govern the kingdom after his own death.”

The huntsman said nothing more to this, but next morning took his animals, and with them ascended the dragon’s hill. A little church stood at the top of it, and on the altar three full cups were standing, with the inscription, “Whosoever empties the cups will become the strongest man on earth, and will be able to wield the sword which is buried before the threshold of the door.” The huntsman did not drink, but went out and sought for the sword in the ground, but was unable to move it from its place. Then he went in and emptied the cups, and now he was strong enough to take up the sword, and his hand could quite easily wield it. When the hour came when the maiden was to be delivered over to the dragon, the King, the marshal, and courtiers accompanied her. From afar she saw the huntsman on the dragon’s hill, and thought it was the dragon standing there waiting for her, and did not want to go up to him, but at last, because otherwise the whole town would have been destroyed, she was forced to go the miserable journey. The King and courtiers returned home full of grief; the King’s marshal, however, was to stand still, and see all from a distance.

When the King’s daughter got to the top of the hill, it was not the dragon which stood there, but the young huntsman, who comforted her, and said he would save her, led her into the church, and locked her in. It was not long before the seven-headed dragon came thither with loud roaring. When he perceived the huntsman, he was astonished and said, “What business hast thou here on the hill?” The huntsman answered, “I want to fight with thee.” Said the dragon, “Many knights have left their lives here, I shall soon have made an end of thee too,” and he breathed fire out of seven jaws. The fire was to have lighted the dry grass, and the huntsman was to have been suffocated in the heat and smoke, but the animals came running up and trampled out the fire. Then the dragon rushed upon the huntsman, but he swung his sword until it sang through the air, and struck off three of his heads. Then the dragon grew right furious, and rose up in the air, and spat out flames of fire over the huntsman, and was about to plunge down on him, but the huntsman once more drew out his sword, and again cut off three of his heads. The monster became faint and sank down, nevertheless it was just able to rush upon the huntsman, but he with his last strength smote its tail off, and as he could fight no longer, called up his animals who tore it in pieces. When the struggle was ended, the huntsman unlocked the church, and found the King’s daughter lying on the floor, as she had lost her senses with anguish and terror during the contest. He carried her out, and when she came to herself once more, and opened her eyes, he showed her the dragon all cut to pieces, and told her that she was now delivered. She rejoiced and said, “Now thou wilt be my dearest husband, for my father has promised me to him who kills the dragon.” Thereupon she took off her necklace of coral, and divided it amongst the animals in order to reward them, and the lion received the golden clasp. Her pocket-handkerchief, however, on which was her name, she gave to the huntsman, who went and cut the tongues out of the dragon’s seven heads, wrapped them in the handkerchief, and preserved them carefully.

That done, as he was so faint and weary with the fire and the battle, he said to the maiden, “We are both faint and weary, we will sleep awhile.” Then she said, “yes,” and they lay down on the ground, and the huntsman said to the lion, “Thou shalt keep watch, that no one surprises us in our sleep,” and both fell asleep. The lion lay down beside them to watch, but he also was so weary with the fight, that he called to the bear and said, “Lie down near me, I must sleep a little: if anything comes, waken me.” Then the bear lay down beside him, but he also was tired, and called the wolf and said, “Lie down by me, I must sleep a little, but if anything comes, waken me.” Then the wolf lay down by him, but he was tired likewise, and called the fox and said, “Lie down by me, I must sleep a little; if anything comes, waken me.” Then the fox lay down beside him, but he too was weary, and called the hare and said, “Lie down near me, I must sleep a little, and if anything should come, waken me.” Then the hare sat down by him, but the poor hare was tired too, and had no one whom he could call there to keep watch, and fell asleep. And now the King’s daughter, the huntsman, the lion, the bear, the wolf, the fox, and the hare, were all sleeping a sound sleep. The marshal, however, who was to look on from a distance, took courage when he did not see the dragon flying away with the maiden, and finding that all the hill had become quiet, ascended it. There lay the dragon hacked and hewn to pieces on the ground, and not far from it were the King’s daughter and a huntsman with his animals, and all of them were sunk in a sound sleep. And as he was wicked and godless he took his sword, cut off the huntsman’s head, and seized the maiden in his arms, and carried her down the hill. Then she awoke and was terrified, but the marshal said, “Thou art in my hands, thou shalt say that it was I who killed the dragon.” “I cannot do that,” she replied, “for it was a huntsman with his animals who did it.” Then he drew his sword, and threatened to kill her if she did not obey him, and so compelled her that she promised it. Then he took her to the King, who did not know how to contain himself for joy when he once more looked on his dear child in life, whom he had believed to have been torn to pieces by the monster. The marshal said to him, “I have killed the dragon, and delivered the maiden and the whole kingdom as well, therefore I demand her as my wife, as was promised.” The King said to the maiden, “Is what he says true?” “Ah, yes,” she answered, “it must indeed be true, but I will not consent to have the wedding celebrated until after a year and a day,” for she thought in that time she should hear something of her dear huntsman.

The animals, however, were still lying sleeping beside their dead master on the dragon’s hill, and there came a great humble-bee and lighted on the hare’s nose, but the hare wiped it off with his paw, and went on sleeping. The humble-bee came a second time, but the hare again rubbed it off and slept on. Then it came for the third time, and stung his nose so that he awoke. As soon as the hare was awake, he roused the fox, and the fox, the wolf, and the wolf the bear, and the bear the lion. And when the lion awoke and saw that the maiden was gone, and his master was dead, he began to roar frightfully and cried, “Who has done that? Bear, why didst thou not waken me?” The bear asked the wolf, “Why didst thou not waken me?” and the wolf the fox, “Why didst thou not waken me?” and the fox the hare, “Why didst thou not waken me?” The poor hare alone did not know what answer to make, and the blame rested with him. Then they were just going to fall upon him, but he entreated them and said, “Kill me not, I will bring our master to life again. I know a mountain on which a root grows which, when placed in the mouth of any one, cures him of all illness and every wound. But the mountain lies two hundred hours journey from here.” The lion said, “In four-and-twenty hours must thou have run thither and have come back, and have brought the root with thee.” Then the hare sprang away, and in four-and-twenty hours he was back, and brought the root with him. The lion put the huntsman’s head on again, and the hare placed the root in his mouth, and immediately everything united together again, and his heart beat, and life came back. Then the huntsman awoke, and was alarmed when he did not see the maiden, and thought, “She must have gone away whilst I was sleeping, in order to get rid of me.” The lion in his great haste had put his master’s head on the wrong way round, but the huntsman did not observe it because of his melancholy thoughts about the King’s daughter. But at noon, when he was going to eat something, he saw that his head was turned backwards and could not understand it, and asked the animals what had happened to him in his sleep. Then the lion told him that they, too, had all fallen asleep from weariness, and on awaking, had found him dead with his head cut off, that the hare had brought the life-giving root, and that he, in his haste, had laid hold of the head the wrong way, but that he would repair his mistake. Then he tore the huntsman’s head off again, turned it round, and the hare healed it with the root.

The huntsman, however, was sad at heart, and travelled about the world, and made his animals dance before people. It came to pass that precisely at the end of one year he came back to the same town where he had delivered the King’s daughter from the dragon, and this time the town was gaily hung with red cloth. Then he said to the host, “What does this mean? Last year the town was all hung with black crape, what means the red cloth to-day?” The host answered, “Last year our King’s daughter was to have been delivered over to the dragon, but the marshal fought with it and killed it, and so to-morrow their wedding is to be solemnized, and that is why the town was then hung with black crape for mourning, and is to-day covered with red cloth for joy?”

Next day when the wedding was to take place, the huntsman said at mid-day to the inn-keeper, “Do you believe, sir host, that I while with you here to-day shall eat bread from the King’s own table?” “Nay,” said the host, “I would bet a hundred pieces of gold that that will not come true.” The huntsman accepted the wager, and set against it a purse with just the same number of gold pieces. Then he called the hare and said, “Go, my dear runner, and fetch me some of the bread which the King is eating.” Now the little hare was the lowest of the animals, and could not transfer this order to any the others, but had to get on his legs himself. “Alas!” thought he, “if I bound through the streets thus alone, the butchers’ dogs will all be after me.” It happened as he expected, and the dogs came after him and wanted to make holes in his good skin. But he sprang away, have you have never seen one running? and sheltered himself in a sentry-box without the soldier being aware of it. Then the dogs came and wanted to have him out, but the soldier did not understand a jest, and struck them with the butt-end of his gun, till they ran away yelling and howling. As soon as the hare saw that the way was clear, he ran into the palace and straight to the King's daughter, sat down under her chair, and scratched at her foot. Then she said, "Wilt thou get away?" and thought it was her dog. The hare scratched her foot for the second time, and she again said, "Wilt thou get away?" and thought it was her dog. But the hare did not let itself be turned from its purpose, and scratched her for the third time. Then she peeped down, and knew the hare by its collar. She took him on her lap, carried him into her chamber, and said, "Dear Hare, what dost thou want?" He answered, "My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and has sent me to ask for a loaf of bread like that which the King eats." Then she was full of joy and had the baker summoned, and ordered him to bring a loaf such as was eaten by the King. The little hare said, "But the baker must likewise carry it thither for me, that the butchers' dogs may do no harm to me." The baker carried if for him as far as the door of the inn, and then the hare got on his hind legs, took the loaf in his front paws, and carried it to his master. Then said the huntsman, "Behold, sir host, the hundred pieces of gold are mine." The host was astonished, but the huntsman went on to say, "Yes, sir host, I have the bread, but now I will likewise have some of the King's roast meat."

The host said, "I should indeed like to see that," but he would make no more wagers. The huntsman called the fox and said, "My little fox, go and fetch me some roast meat, such as the King eats." The red fox knew the bye-ways better, and went by holes and corners without any dog seeing him, seated himself under the chair of the King's daughter, and scratched her foot. Then she looked down and recognized the fox by its collar, took him into her chamber with her and said, "Dear fox, what dost thou want?" He answered, "My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and has sent me. I am to ask for some roast meat such as the King is eating." Then she made the cook come, who was obliged to prepare a roast joint, the same as was eaten by the King, and to carry it for the fox as far as the door. Then the fox took the dish, waved away with his tail the flies which had settled on the meat, and then carried it to his master. "Behold, sir host," said the huntsman, "bread and meat are here but now I will also have proper vegetables with it, such as are eaten by the King." Then he called the wolf, and said, "Dear Wolf, go thither and fetch me vegetables such as the King eats." Then the wolf went straight to the palace, as he feared no one, and when he got to the King's daughter's chamber, he twitched at the back of her dress, so that she was forced to look round. She recognized him by his collar, and took him into her chamber with her, and said, "Dear Wolf, what dost thou want?" He answered, "My master, who killed the dragon, is here, I am to ask for some vegetables, such as the King eats." Then she made the cook come, and he had to make ready a dish of vegetables, such as the King ate, and had to carry it for the wolf as far as the door, and then the wolf took the dish from him, and carried it to his master. “Behold, sir host,” said the huntsman, “now I have bread and meat and vegetables, but I will also have some pastry to eat like that which the King eats.” He called the bear, and said, “Dear Bear, thou art fond of licking anything sweet; go and bring me some confectionery, such as the King eats.” Then the bear trotted to the palace, and every one got out of his way, but when he went to the guard, they presented their muskets, and would not let him go into the royal palace. But he got up on his hind legs, and gave them a few boxes on the ears, right and left, with his paws, so that the whole watch broke up, and then he went straight to the King’s daughter, placed himself behind her, and growled a little. Then she looked behind her, knew the bear, and bade him go into her room with her, and said, “Dear Bear, what dost thou want?” He answered, “My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and I am to ask for some confectionery, such as the King eats.” Then she summoned her confectioner, who had to bake confectionery such as the King ate, and carry it to the door for the bear; then the bear first licked up the comfits which had rolled down, and then he stood upright, took the dish, and carried it to his master. “Behold, sir host,” said the huntsman, “now I have bread, meat, vegetables and confectionery, but I will drink wine also, and such as the King drinks.” He called his lion to him and said, “Dear Lion, thou thyself likest to drink till thou art intoxicated, go and fetch me some wine, such as is drunk by the King.” Then the lion strode through the streets, and the people fled from him, and when he came to the watch, they wanted to bar the way against him, but he did but roar once, and they all ran away. Then the lion went to the royal apartment, and knocked at the door with his tail. Then the King’s daughter came forth, and was almost afraid of the lion, but she knew him by the golden clasp of her necklace, and bade him go with her into her chamber, and said, “Dear Lion, what wilt thou have?” He answered, “My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and I am to ask for some wine such as is drunk by the King.” Then she bade the cup-bearer be called, who was to give the lion some wine like that which was drunk by the King. The lion said, “I will go with him, and see that I get the right wine.” Then he went down with the cup-bearer, and when they were below, the cup-bearer wanted to draw him some of the common wine that was drunk by the King’s servants, but the lion said, “Stop, I will taste the wine first,” and he drew half a measure, and swallowed it down at one draught. “No,” said he, “that is not right.” The cup-bearer looked at him askance, but went on, and was about to give him some out of another barrel which was for the King’s marshal. The lion said, “Stop, let me taste the wine first,” and drew half a measure and drank it. “That is better, but still not right,” said he. Then the cup-bearer grew angry and said, “How can a stupid animal like you understand wine?” But the lion gave him a blow behind the ears, which made him fall down by no means gently, and when he had got up again, he conducted the lion quite silently into a little cellar apart, where the King’s wine lay, from which no one ever drank. The lion first drew half a measure and tried the wine, and then he said, That may possibly be the right sort, and bade the cup-bearer fill six bottles of it. And now they went upstairs again, but when the lion came out of the cellar into the open air, he reeled here and there, and was rather drunk, and the cup-bearer was forced to carry the wine as far as the door for him, and then the lion took the handle of the basket in his mouth, and took it to his master. The huntsman said, "Behold, sir host, here have I bread, meat, vegetables, confectionery and wine such as the King has, and now I will dine with my animals," and he sat down and ate and drank, and gave the hare, the fox, the wolf, the bear, and the lion also to eat and to drink, and was joyful, for he saw that the King's daughter still loved him. And when he had finished his dinner, he said, "Sir host, now have I eaten and drunk, as the King eats and drinks, and now I will go to the King's court and marry the King's daughter." Said the host, "How can that be, when she already has a betrothed husband, and when the wedding is to be solemnized to-day?" Then the huntsman drew forth the handkerchief which the King's daughter had given him on the dragon's hill, and in which were folded the monster's seven tongues, and said, "That which I hold in my hand shall help me to do it." Then the innkeeper looked at the handkerchief, and said, "Whatever I believe, I do not believe that, and I am willing to stake my house and courtyard on it." The huntsman, however, took a bag with a thousand gold pieces, put it on the table, and said, "I stake that on it."

Now the King said to his daughter, at the royal table, "What did all the wild animals want, which have been coming to thee, and going in and out of my palace?" She replied, "I may not tell you, but send and have the master of these animals brought, and you will do well." The King sent a servant to the inn, and invited the stranger, and the servant came just as the huntsman had laid his wager with the innkeeper. Then said he, "Behold, sir host, now the King sends his servant and invites me, but I do not go in this way." And he said to the servant, "I request the Lord King to send me royal clothing, and a carriage with six horses, and servants to attend me." When the King heard the answer, he said to his daughter, "What shall I do?" She said, "Cause him to be fetched as he desires to be, and you will do well." Then the King sent royal apparel, a carriage with six horses, and servants to wait on him. When the huntsman saw them coming, he said, "Behold, sir host, now I am fetched as I desired to be," and he put on the royal garments, took the handkerchief with the dragon's tongues with him, and drove off to the King. When the King saw him coming, he said to his daughter, "How shall I receive him?" She answered, "Go to meet him and you will do well." Then the King went to meet him and led him in, and his animals followed. The King gave him a seat near himself and his daughter, and the marshal, as bridegroom, sat on the other side, but no longer knew the huntsman. And now at this very moment, the seven heads of the dragon were brought in as a spectacle, and the King said, "The seven heads were cut off the dragon by the marshal, wherefore to-day I give him my daughter to wife." The the huntsman stood up, opened the seven mouths, and said, "Where are the seven tongues of the dragon?" Then was the marshal terrified, and grew pale and knew not what answer he should make, and at length in his anguish he said, “Dragons have no tongues.” The huntsman said, “Liars ought to have none, but the dragon’s tongues are the tokens of the victor,” and he unfolded the handkerchief, and there lay all seven inside it. And he put each tongue in the mouth to which it belonged, and it fitted exactly. Then he took the handkerchief on which the name of the princess was embroidered, and showed it to the maiden, and asked to whom she had given it, and she replied, “To him who killed the dragon.” And then he called his animals, and took the collar off each of them and the golden clasp from the lion, and showed them to the maiden and asked to whom they belonged. She answered, “The necklace and golden clasp were mine, but I divided them among the animals who helped to conquer the dragon.” Then spake the huntsman, “When I, tired with the fight, was resting and sleeping, the marshal came and cut off my head. Then he carried away the King’s daughter, and gave out that it was he who had killed the dragon, but that he lied I prove with the tongues, the handkerchief, and the necklace.” And then he related how his animals had healed him by means of a wonderful root, and how he had travelled about with them for one year, and had at length again come there and had learnt the treachery of the marshal by the inn-keeper’s story. Then the King asked his daughter, “Is it true that this man killed the dragon?” And she answered, “Yes, it is true. Now can I reveal the wicked deed of the marshal, as it has come to light without my connivance, for he wrung from me a promise to be silent. For this reason, however, did I make the condition that the marriage should not be solemnized for a year and a day.” Then the King bade twelve councillors be summoned who were to pronounce judgment on the marshal, and they sentenced him to be torn to pieces by four bulls. The marshal was therefore executed, but the King gave his daughter to the huntsman, and named him his viceroy over the whole kingdom. The wedding was celebrated with great joy, and the young King caused his father and his foster-father to be brought, and loaded them with treasures. Neither did he forget the inn-keeper, but sent for him and said, “Behold, sir host, I have married the King’s daughter, and your house and yard are mine.” The host said, “Yes, according to justice it is so.” But the young King said, “It shall be done according to mercy,” and told him that he should keep his house and yard, and gave him the thousand pieces of gold as well.

And now the young King and Queen were thoroughly happy, and lived in gladness together. He often went out hunting because it was a delight to him, and the faithful animals had to accompany him. In the neighborhood, however, there was a forest of which it was reported that it was haunted, and that whosoever did but enter it did not easily get out again. The young King, however, had a great inclination to hunt in it, and let the old King have no peace until he allowed him to do so. So he rode forth with a great following, and when he came to the forest, he saw a snow-white hart and said to his people, “Wait here until I return, I want to chase that beautiful creature,” and he rode into the forest after it, followed only by his animals. The attendants halted and waited until evening, but he did not return, so they rode home, and told the young Queen that the young King had followed a white hart into the enchanted forest, and had not come back again. Then she was in the greatest concern about him. He, however, had still continued to ride on and on after the beautiful wild animal, and had never been able to overtake it; when he thought he was near enough to aim, he instantly saw it bound away into the far distance, and at length it vanished altogether. And now he perceived that he had penetrated deep into the forest, and blew his horn but he received no answer, for his attendants could not hear it. And as night, too, was falling, he saw that he could not get home that day, so he dismounted from his horse, lighted himself a fire near a tree, and resolved to spend the night by it. While he was sitting by the fire, and his animals also were lying down beside him, it seemed to him that he heard a human voice. He looked round, but could perceived nothing. Soon afterwards, he again heard a groan as if from above, and then he looked up, and saw an old woman sitting in the tree, who wailed unceasingly, "Oh, oh, oh, how cold I am!" Said he, "Come down, and warm thyself if thou art cold." But she said, "No, thy animals will bite me." He answered, "They will do thee no harm, old mother, do come down." She, however, was a witch, and said, "I will throw down a wand from the tree, and if thou strikest them on the back with it, they will do me no harm." Then she threw him a small wand, and he struck them with it, and instantly they lay still and were turned into stone. And when the witch was safe from the animals, she leapt down and touched him also with a wand, and changed him to stone. Thereupon she laughed, and dragged him and the animals into a vault, where many more such stones already lay.

As, however, the young King did not come back at all, the Queen's anguish and care grew constantly greater. And it so happened that at this very time the other brother who had turned to the east when they separated, came into the kingdom. He had sought a situation, and had found none, and had then travelled about here and there, and had made his animals dance. Then it came into his mind that he would just go and look at the knife that they had thrust in the trunk of a tree at their parting, that he might learn how his brother was. When he got there his brother's side of the knife was half rusted, and half bright. Then he was alarmed and thought, "A great misfortune must have befallen my brother, but perhaps I can still save him, for half the knife is still bright." He and his animals travelled towards the west, and when he entered the gate of the town, the guard came to meet him, and asked if he was to announce him to his consort the young Queen, who had for a couple of days been in the greatest sorrow about his staying away, and was afraid he had been killed in the enchanted forest? The sentries, indeed, thought no otherwise than that he was the young King himself, for he looked so like him, and had wild animals running behind him. Then he saw that they were speaking of his brother, and thought, "It will be better if I pass myself off for him, and then I can rescue him more easily." So he allowed himself to be escorted into the castle by the guard, and was received with the greatest joy. The young Queen indeed thought that he was her husband, and asked him why he had stayed away so long. He answered, "I had lost myself in a forest, and could not find my way out again any sooner.” At night he was taken to the royal bed, but he laid a two-edged sword between him and the young Queen; she did not know what that could mean, but did not venture to ask.

He remained in the palace a couple of days, and in the meantime inquired into everything which related to the enchanted forest, and at last he said, “I must hunt there once more.” The King and the young Queen wanted to persuade him not to do it, but he stood out against them, and went forth with a larger following. When he had got into the forest, it fared with him as with his brother; he saw a white hart and said to his people, “Stay here, and wait until I return, I want to chase the lovely wild beast,” and then he rode into the forest and his animals ran after him. But he could not overtake the hart, and got so deep into the forest that he was forced to pass the night there. And when he had lighted a fire, he heard some one wailing above him, “Oh, oh, oh, how cold I am!” Then he looked up, and the self-same witch was sitting in the tree. Said he, “If thou art cold, come down, little old mother, and warm thyself.” She answered, “No, thy animals will bite me.” But he said, “They will not hurt thee.” Then she cried, “I will throw down a wand to thee, and if thou smitest them with it they will do me no harm.” When the huntsman heard that, he had no confidence in the old woman, and said, “I will not strike my animals. Come down, or I will fetch thee.” Then she cried, “What dost thou want? Thou shalt not touch me.” But he replied, “If thou dost not come, I will shoot thee.” Said she, “Shoot away, I do not fear thy bullets!” Then he aimed, and fired at her, but the witch was proof against all leaden bullets, and laughed, and yelled and cried, “Thou shalt not hit me.” The huntsman knew what to do, tore three silver buttons off his coat, and loaded his gun with them, for against them her arts were useless, and when he fired she fell down at once with a scream. Then he set his foot on her and said, Old witch, if thou dost not instantly confess where my brother is, I will seize thee with both my hands and throw thee into the fire. She was in a great fright, begged for mercy and said, He and his animals lie in a vault, turned to stone. Then he compelled her to go thither with him, threatened her, and said, Old sea-cat, now shalt thou make my brother and all the human beings lying here, alive again, or thou shalt go into the fire! She took a wand and touched the stones, and then his brother with his animals came to life again, and many others, merchants, artizans, and shepherds, arose, thanked him for their deliverance, and went to their homes. But when the twin brothers saw each other again, they kissed each other and rejoiced with all their hearts. Then they seized the witch, bound her and laid her on the fire, and when she was burnt the forest opened of its own accord, and was light and clear, and the King’s palace could be seen at about the distance of a three hours walk.

Thereupon the two brothers went home together, and on the way told each other their histories. And when the youngest said that he was ruler of the whole country in the King’s stead, the other observed, “That I remarked very well, for when I came to the town, and was taken for thee, all royal honours were paid me; the young Queen looked on me as her husband, and I had to eat at her side, and sleep in thy bed.” When the other heard that, he became so jealous and angry that he drew his sword, and struck off his brother’s head. But when he saw him lying there dead, and saw his red blood flowing, he repented most violently: “My brother delivered me,” cried he, “and I have killed him for it,” and he bewailed him aloud. Then his hare came and offered to go and bring some of the root of life, and bounded away and brought it while yet there was time, and the dead man was brought to life again, and knew nothing about the wound.

After this they journeyed onwards, and the youngest said, “Thou lookest like me, hast royal apparel on as I have, and the animals follow thee as they do me; we will go in by opposite gates, and arrive at the same time from the two sides in the aged King’s presence.” So they separated, and at the same time came the watchmen from the one door and from the other, and announced that the young King and the animals had returned from the chase. The King said, “It is not possible, the gates lie quite a mile apart.” In the meantime, however, the two brothers entered the courtyard of the palace from opposite sides, and both mounted the steps. Then the King said to the daughter, “Say which is thy husband. Each of them looks exactly like the other, I cannot tell.” Then she was in great distress, and could not tell; but at last she remembered the necklace which she had given to the animals, and she sought for and found her little golden clasp on the lion, and she cried in her delight, “He who is followed by this lion is my true husband”. Then the young King laughed and said, “Yes, he is the right one,” and they sat down together to table, and ate and drank, and were merry. At night when the young King went to bed, his wife said, “Why hast thou for these last nights always laid a two-edged sword in our bed? I thought thou hadst a wish to kill me.” Then he knew how true his brother had been.

The Little Peasant

There was a certain village wherein no one lived but really rich peasants, and just one poor one, whom they called the little peasant. He had not even so much as a cow, and still less money to buy one, and yet he and his wife did so wish to have one. One day he said to her, “Hark you, I have a good thought, there is our gossip the carpenter, he shall make us a wooden calf, and paint it brown, so that it look like any other, and in time it will certainly get big and be a cow.” The woman also liked the idea, and their gossip the carpenter cut and planed the calf, and painted it as it ought to be, and made it with its head hanging down as if it were eating.

Next morning when the cows were being driven out, the little peasant called the cow-herd and said, “Look, I have a little calf there, but it is still small and has still to be carried.” The cow-herd said, “All right, and took it in his arms and carried it to the pasture, and set it among the grass.” The little calf always remained standing like one which was eating, and the cow-herd said, “It will soon run alone, just look how it eats already!” At night when he was going to drive the herd home again, he said to the calf, “If thou canst stand there and eat thy fill, thou canst also go on thy four legs; I don’t care to drag thee home again in my arms.” But the little peasant stood at his door, and waited for his little calf, and when the cow-herd drove the cows through the village, and the calf was missing, he inquired where it was. The cow-herd answered, “It is still standing out there eating. It would not stop and come with us.” But the little peasant said, “Oh, but I must have my beast back again.” Then they went back to the meadow together, but some one had stolen the calf, and it was gone. The cow-herd said, “It must have run away.” The peasant, however, said, “Don’t tell me that,” and led the cow-herd before the mayor, who for his carelessness condemned him to give the peasant a cow for the calf which had run away.

And now the little peasant and his wife had the cow for which they had so long wished, and they were heartily glad, but they had no food for it, and could give it nothing to eat, so it soon had to be killed. They salted the flesh, and the peasant went into the town and wanted to sell the skin there, so that he might buy a new calf with the proceeds. On the way he passed by a mill, and there sat a raven with broken wings, and out of pity he took him and wrapped him in the skin. As, however, the weather grew so bad and there was a storm of rain and wind, he could go no farther, and turned back to the mill and begged for shelter. The miller’s wife was alone in the house, and said to the peasant, “Lay thyself on the straw there”, and gave him a slice of bread with cheese on it. The peasant ate it, and lay down with his skin beside him, and the woman thought, “He is tired and has gone to sleep.” In the meantime came the parson; the miller’s wife received him well, and said, “My husband is out, so we will have a feast.” The peasant listened, and when he heard about feasting he was vexed that he had been forced to make shift with a slice of bread with cheese on it. Then the woman served up four different things, roast meat, salad, cakes, and wine.

Just as they were about to sit down and eat, there was a knocking outside. The woman said, “Oh, heavens! It is my husband!” She quickly hid the roast meat inside the tiled stove, the wine under the pillow, the salad on the bed, the cakes under it, and the parson in the cupboard in the entrance. Then she opened the door for her husband, and said, “Thank heaven, thou art back again! There is such a storm, it looks as if the world were coming to an end.” The miller saw the peasant lying on the straw, and asked, “What is that fellow doing there?” “Ah,” said the wife, “the poor knave came in the storm and rain, and begged for shelter, so I gave him a bit of bread and cheese, and showed him where the straw was.” The man said, “I have no objection, but be quick and get me something to eat.” The woman said, “But I have nothing but bread and cheese.” “I am contented with anything,” replied the husband, “so far as I am concerned, bread and cheese will do,” and looked at the peasant and said, “Come and eat some more with me.” The peasant did not require to be invited twice, but got up and ate. After this the miller saw the skin in which the raven was, lying on the ground, and asked, “What hast thou there?” The peasant answered, “I have a soothsayer inside it.” “Can he foretell anything to me?” said the miller. “Why not?” answered the peasant, “but he only says four things, and the fifth he keeps to himself.” The miller was curious, and said, “Let him foretell something for once.” Then the peasant pinched the raven’s head, so that he croaked and made a noise like krr, krr. The miller said, “What did he say?” The peasant answered, “In the first place, he says that there is some wine hidden under the pillow.” “Bless me!” cried the miller, and went there and found the wine. “Now go on,” said he. The peasant made the raven croak again, and said, “In the second place, he says that there is some roast meat in the tiled stove.” “Upon my word!” cried the miller, and went thither, and found the roast meat. The peasant made the raven prophesy still more, and said, “Thirdly, he says that there is some salad on the bed.” “That would be a fine thing!” cried the miller, and went there and found the salad. At last the peasant pinched the raven once more till he croaked, and said, “Fourthly, he says that there are some cakes under the bed.” “That would be a fine thing!” cried the miller, and looked there, and found the cakes.

And now the two sat down to the table together, but the miller’s wife was frightened to death, and went to bed and took all the keys with her. The miller would have liked much to know the fifth, but the little peasant said, “First, we will quickly eat the four things, for the fifth is something bad.” So they ate, and after that they bargained how much the miller was to give for the fifth prophesy, until they agreed on three hundred thalers. Then the peasant once more pinched the raven’s head till he croaked loudly. The miller asked, “What did he say?” The peasant replied, “He says that the Devil is hiding outside there in the cupboard in the entrance.” The miller said, “The Devil must go out,” and opened the house-door; then the woman was forced to give up the keys, and the peasant unlocked the cupboard. The parson ran out as fast as he could, and the miller said, “It was true; I saw the black rascal with my own eyes.” The peasant, however, made off next morning by daybreak with the three hundred thalers.

At home the small peasant gradually launched out; he built a beautiful house, and the peasants said, “The small peasant has certainly been to the place where golden snow falls, and people carry the gold home in shovels.” Then the small peasant was brought before the Mayor, and bidden to say from whence his wealth came. He answered, “I sold my cow’s skin in the town, for three hundred thalers.” When the peasants heard that, they too wished to enjoy this great profit, and ran home, killed all their cows, and stripped off their skins in order to sell them in the town to the greatest advantage. The Mayor, however, said, “But my servant must go first.” When she came to the merchant in the town, he did not give her more than two thalers for a skin, and when the others came, he did not give them so much, and said, “What can I do with all these skins?”

Then the peasants were vexed that the small peasant should have thus overreached them, wanted to take vengeance on him, and accused him of this treachery before the Mayor. The innocent little peasant was unanimously sentenced to death, and was to be rolled into the water, in a barrel pierced full of holes. He was led forth, and a priest was brought who was to say a mass for his soul. The others were all obliged to retire to a distance, and when the peasant looked at the priest, he recognized the man who had been with the miller’s wife. He said to him, “I set you free from the cupboard, set me free from the barrel.” At this same moment up came, with a flock of sheep, the very shepherd who as the peasant knew had long been wishing to be Mayor, so he cried with all his might, “No, I will not do it; if the whole world insists on it, I will not do it!” The shepherd hearing that, came up to him, and asked, “What art thou about? What is it that thou wilt not do?” The peasant said, “They want to make me Mayor, if I will but put myself in the barrel, but I will not do it.” The shepherd said, “If nothing more than that is needful in order to be Mayor, I would get into the barrel at once.” The peasant said, “If thou wilt get in, thou wilt be Mayor.” The shepherd was willing, and got in, and the peasant shut the top down on him; then he took the shepherd’s flock for himself, and drove it away. The parson went to the crowd, and declared that the mass had been said. Then they came and rolled the barrel towards the water. When the barrel began to roll, the shepherd cried, “I am quite willing to be Mayor.” They believed no otherwise than that it was the peasant who was saying this, and answered, “That is what we intend, but first thou shalt look about thee a little down below there,” and they rolled the barrel down into the water.

After that the peasants went home, and as they were entering the village, the small peasant also came quietly in, driving a flock of sheep and looking quite contented. Then the peasants were astonished, and said, “Peasant, from whence comest thou? Hast thou come out of the water?” “Yes, truly,” replied the peasant, “I sank deep, deep down, until at last I got to the bottom; I pushed the bottom out of the barrel, and crept out, and there were pretty meadows on which a number of lambs were feeding, and from thence I brought this flock away with me.” Said the peasants, “Are there any more there?” “Oh, yes,” said he, “more than I could do anything with.” Then the peasants made up their minds that they too would fetch some sheep for themselves, a flock apiece, but the Mayor said, “I come first.” So they went to the water together, and just then there were some of the small fleecy clouds in the blue sky, which are called little lambs, and they were reflected in the water, whereupon the peasants cried, “We already see the sheep down below!” The Mayor pressed forward and said, “I will go down first, and look about me, and if things promise well I’ll call you.” So he jumped in; splash! went the water; he made a sound as if he were calling them, and the whole crowd plunged in after him as one man. Then the entire village was dead, and the small peasant, as sole heir, became a rich man.

The Queen Bee

Two kings' sons once went out in search of adventures, and fell into a wild, disorderly way of living, so that they never came home again. The youngest, who was called Simpleton, set out to seek his brothers, but when at length he found them they mocked him for thinking that he with his simplicity could get through the world, when they two could not make their way, and yet were so much cleverer. They all three travelled away together, and came to an ant-hill. The two elder wanted to destroy it, to see the little ants creeping about in their terror, and carrying their eggs away, but Simpleton said, "Leave the creatures in peace; I will not allow you to disturb them." Then they went onwards and came to a lake, on which a great number of ducks were swimming. The two brothers wanted to catch a couple and roast them, but Simpleton would not permit it, and said, "Leave the creatures in peace, I will not suffer you to kill them." At length they came to a bee's nest, in which there was so much honey that it ran out of the trunk of the tree where it was. The two wanted to make a fire beneath the tree, and suffocate the bees in order to take away the honey, but Simpleton again stopped them and said, "Leave the creatures in peace, I will not allow you to burn them." At length the three brothers arrived at a castle where stone horses were standing in the stables, and no human being was to be seen, and they went through all the halls until, quite at the end, they came to a door in which were three locks. In the middle of the door, however, there was a little pane, through which they could see into the room. There they saw a little grey man, who was sitting at a table. They called him, once, twice, but he did not hear; at last they called him for the third time, when he got up, opened the locks, and came out. He said nothing, however, but conducted them to a handsomely-spread table, and when they had eaten and drunk, he took each of them to a bedroom. Next morning the little grey man came to the eldest, beckoned to him, and conducted him to a stone table, on which were inscribed three tasks, by the performance of which the castle could be delivered. The first was that in the forest, beneath the moss, lay the princess's pearls, a thousand in number, which must be picked up, and if by sunset one single pearl was wanting, he who had looked for them would be turned into stone. The eldest went thither, and sought the whole day, but when it came to an end, he had only found one hundred, and what was written on the table came to pass, and he was changed into stone. Next day, the second brother undertook the adventure; it did not, however, fare much better with him than with the eldest; he did not find more than two hundred pearls, and was changed to stone. At last the turn came to Simpleton also, who sought in the moss. It was, however, so hard to find the pearls, and he got on so slowly, that he seated himself on a stone, and wept. And while he was thus sitting, the King of the ants whose life he had once saved, came with five thousand ants, and before long the little creatures had got all the pearls together, and laid them in a heap. The second task, however, was to fetch out of the lake the key of the King’s daughter’s bed-chamber. When Simpleton came to the lake, the ducks which he had saved, swam up to him, dived down, and brought the key out of the water. But the third task was the most difficult; from amongst the three sleeping daughters of the King was the youngest and dearest to be sought out. They, however, resembled each other exactly, and were only to be distinguished by their having eaten different sweetmeats before they fell asleep; the eldest a bit of sugar; the second a little syrup; and the youngest a spoonful of honey. Then the Queen of the bees, which Simpleton had protected from the fire, came and tasted the lips of all three, and at last she remained sitting on the mouth which had eaten honey, and thus the King’s son recognized the right princess. Then the enchantment was at an end; everything was released from sleep, and those who had been turned to stone received once more their natural forms. Simpleton married the youngest and sweetest princess, and after her father’s death became King, and his two brothers received the two other sisters.

The Three Feathers

There was once on a time a King who had three sons, of whom two were clever and wise, but the third did not speak much, and was simple, and was called the Simpleton. When the King had become old and weak, and was thinking of his end, he did not know which of his sons should inherit the kingdom after him. Then he said to them, “Go forth, and he who brings me the most beautiful carpet shall be King after my death.” And that there should be no dispute amongst them, he took them outside his castle, blew three feathers in the air, and said, “You shall go as they fly.” One feather flew to the east, the other to the west, but the third flew straight up and did not fly far, but soon fell to the ground. And now one brother went to the right, and the other to the left, and they mocked Simpleton, who was forced to stay where the third feather had fallen. He sat down and was sad, then all at once he saw that there was a trap-door close by the feather. He raised it up, found some steps, and went down them, and then he came to another door, knocked at it, and heard somebody inside calling,

“Little green maiden small,
Hopping hither and thither;

Hop to the door,
And quickly see who is there.”

The door opened, and he saw a great, fat toad sitting, and round about her a crowd of little toads. The fat toad asked what he wanted? He answered, “I should like to have the prettiest and finest carpet in the world.” Then she called a young one and said,

“Little green maiden small,
Hopping hither and thither,

Hop quickly and bring me
The great box here.”

The young toad brought the box, and the fat toad opened it, and gave Simpleton a carpet out of it, so beautiful and so fine, that on the earth above, none could have been woven like it. Then he thanked her, and ascended again. The two others had, however, looked on their youngest brother as so stupid that they believed he would find and bring nothing at all. “Why should we give ourselves a great deal of trouble to search?” said they, and got some coarse handkerchiefs from the first shepherds’ wives whom they met, and carried them home to the King. At the same time Simpleton also came back, and brought his beautiful carpet, and when the King saw it he was astonished, and said, “If justice be done, the kingdom belongs to the youngest.” But the two others let their father have no peace, and said that it was impossible that Simpleton, who in everything lacked understanding, should be King, and entreated him to make a new agreement with them. Then the father said, “He who brings me the most beautiful ring shall inherit the kingdom,” and led the three brothers out, and blew into the air three feathers, which they were to follow. Those of the two eldest again went east and west, and Simpleton’s feather flew straight up, and fell down near the door into the earth. Then he went down again to the fat toad, and told her that he wanted the most beautiful ring. She at once ordered her great box to be brought, and gave him a ring out of it, which sparkled with jewels, and was so beautiful that no goldsmith on earth would have been able to make it. The two eldest laughed at Simpleton for going to seek a golden ring. They gave themselves no trouble, but knocked the nails out of an old carriage-ring, and took it to the King; but when Simpleton produced his golden ring, his father again said, “The kingdom belongs to him.” The two eldest did not cease from tormenting the King until he made a third condition, and declared that the one who brought the most beautiful woman home, should have the kingdom. He again blew the three feathers into the air, and they flew as before.

Then Simpleton without more ado went down to the fat toad, and said, “I am to take home the most beautiful woman!” “Oh,” answered the toad, “the most beautiful woman! She is not at hand at the moment, but still thou shalt have her.” She gave him a yellow turnip which had been hollowed out, to which six mice were harnessed. Then Simpleton said quite mournfully, “What am I to do with that?” The toad answered, “Just put one of my little toads into it.” Then he seized one at random out of the circle, and put her into the yellow coach, but hardly was she seated inside it than she turned into a wonderfully beautiful maiden, and the turnip into a coach, and the six mice into horses. So he kissed her, and drove off quickly with the horses, and took her to the King. His brothers came afterwards; they had given themselves no trouble at all to seek beautiful girls, but had brought with them the first peasant women they chanced to meet. When the King saw them he said, “After my death the kingdom belongs to my youngest son.” But the two eldest deafened the King’s ears afresh with their clamour, “We cannot consent to Simpleton’s being King,” and demanded that the one whose wife could leap through a ring which hung in the centre of the hall should have the preference. They thought, “The peasant women can do that easily; they are strong enough, but the delicate maiden will jump herself to death.” The aged King agreed likewise to this. Then the two peasant women jumped, and jumped through the ring, but were so stout that they fell, and their coarse arms and legs broke in two. And then the pretty maiden whom Simpleton had brought with him, sprang, and sprang through as lightly as a deer, and all opposition had to cease. So he received the crown, and has ruled wisely for a length of time.

The Golden Goose

There was a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was called Dummling, and was despised, mocked, and put down on every occasion.

It happened that the eldest wanted to go into the forest to hew wood, and before he went his mother gave him a beautiful sweet cake and a bottle of wine in order that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst.

When he entered the forest there met him a little grey-haired old man who bade him good-day, and said, “Do give me a piece of cake out of your pocket, and let me have a draught of your wine; I am so hungry and thirsty.” But the prudent youth answered, “If I give you my cake and wine, I shall have none for myself; be off with you,” and he left the little man standing and went on.

But when he began to hew down a tree, it was not long before he made a false stroke, and the axe cut him in the arm, so that he had to go home and have it bound up. And this was the little grey man’s doing.

After this the second son went into the forest, and his mother gave him, like the eldest, a cake and a bottle of wine. The little old grey man met him likewise, and asked him for a piece of cake and a drink of wine. But the second son, too, said with much reason, “What I give you will be taken away from myself; be off!” and he left the little man standing and went on. His punishment, however, was not delayed; when he had made a few strokes at the tree he struck himself in the leg, so that he had to be carried home.

Then Dummling said, “Father, do let me go and cut wood.” The father answered, “Your brothers have hurt themselves with it, leave it alone, you do not understand anything about it.” But Dummling begged so long that at last he said, “Just go then, you will get wiser by hurting yourself.” His mother gave him a cake made with water and baked in the cinders, and with it a bottle of sour beer.

When he came to the forest the little old grey man met him likewise, and greeting him, said, “Give me a piece of your cake and a drink out of your bottle; I am so hungry and thirsty.” Dummling answered, “I have only cinder-cake and sour beer; if that pleases you, we will sit down and eat.” So they sat down, and when Dummling pulled out his cinder-cake, it was a fine sweet cake, and the sour beer had become good wine. So they ate and drank, and after that the little man said, “Since you have a good heart, and are willing to divide what you have, I will give you good luck. There stands an old tree, cut it down, and you will find something at the roots.” Then the little man took leave of him.

Dummling went and cut down the tree, and when it fell there was a goose sitting in the roots with feathers of pure gold. He lifted her up, and taking her with him, went to an inn where he thought he would stay the night. Now the host had three daughters, who saw the goose and were curious to know what such a wonderful bird might be, and would have liked to have one of its golden feathers.

The eldest thought, “I shall soon find an opportunity of pulling out a feather,” and as soon as Dummling had gone out she seized the goose by the wing, but her finger and hand remained sticking fast to it.

The second came soon afterwards, thinking only of how she might get a feather for herself, but she had scarcely touched her sister than she was held fast.

At last the third also came with the like intent, and the others screamed out, “Keep away; for goodness’ sake keep away!” But she did not understand why she was to keep away. “The others are there,” she thought, “I may as well be there too,” and ran to them; but as soon as she had touched her sister, she remained sticking fast to her. So they had to spend the night with the goose.

The next morning Dummling took the goose under his arm and set out, without troubling himself about the three girls who were hanging on to it. They were obliged to run after him continually, now left, now right, just as he was inclined to go.

In the middle of the fields the parson met them, and when he saw the procession he said, “For shame, you good-for-nothing girls, why are you running across the fields after this young man? is that seemly?” At the same time he seized the youngest by the hand in order to pull her away, but as soon as he touched her he likewise stuck fast, and was himself obliged to run behind.

Before long the sexton came by and saw his master, the parson, running behind three girls. He was astonished at this and called out, “Hi, your reverence, whither away so quickly? do not forget that we have a christening to-day!” and running after him he took him by the sleeve, but was also held fast to it.

Whilst the five were trotting thus one behind the other, two labourers came with their hoes from the fields; the parson called out to them and begged that they would set him and the sexton free. But they had scarcely touched the sexton when they were held fast, and now there were seven of them running behind Dummling and the goose.

Soon afterwards he came to a city, where a king ruled who had a daughter who was so serious that no one could make her laugh. So he had put forth a decree that whosoever should be able to make her laugh should marry her. When Dummling heard this, he went with his goose and all her train before the King’s daughter, and as soon as she saw the seven people running on and on, one behind the other, she began to laugh quite loudly, and as if she would never leave off. Thereupon Dummling asked to have her for his wife, and the wedding was celebrated. After the King’s death, Dummling inherited the kingdom and lived a long time contentedly with his wife.

Allerleirauh

There was once on a time a King who had a wife with golden hair, and she was so beautiful that her equal was not to be found on earth. It came to pass that she lay ill, and as she felt that she must soon die, she called the King and said, “If thou wishest to marry again after my death, take no one who is not quite as beautiful as I am, and who has not just such golden hair as I have: this thou must promise me.” And after the King had promised her this she closed her eyes and died.

For a long time the King could not be comforted, and had no thought of taking another wife. At length his councillors said, “There is no help for it, the King must marry again, that we may have a Queen.” And now messengers were sent about far and wide, to seek a bride who equalled the late Queen in beauty. In the whole world, however, none was to be found, and even if one had been found, still there would have been no one who had such golden hair. So the messengers came home as they went.

Now the King had a daughter, who was just as beautiful as her dead mother, and had the same golden hair. When she was grown up the King looked at her one day, and saw that in every respect she was like his late wife, and suddenly felt a violent love for her. Then he spake to his councillors, “I will marry my daughter, for she is the counterpart of my late wife, otherwise I can find no bride who resembles her.” When the councillors heard that, they were shocked, and said, “God has forbidden a father to marry his daughter, no good can come from such a crime, and the kingdom will be involved in the ruin.”

The daughter was still more shocked when she became aware of her father’s resolution, but hoped to turn him from his design. Then she said to him, “Before I fulfil your wish, I must have three dresses, one as golden as the sun, one as silvery as the moon, and one as bright as the stars; besides this, I wish for a mantle of a thousand different kinds of fur and hair joined together, and one of every kind of animal in your kingdom must give a piece of his skin for it.” But she thought, “To get that will be quite impossible, and thus I shall divert my father from his wicked intentions.” The King, however, did not give it up, and the cleverest maidens in his kingdom had to weave the three dresses, one as golden as the sun, one as silvery as the moon, and one as bright as the stars, and his huntsmen had to catch one of every kind of animal in the whole of his kingdom, and take from it a piece of its skin, and out of these was made a mantle of a thousand different kinds of fur. At length, when all was ready, the King caused the mantle to be brought, spread it out before her, and said, “The wedding shall be to-morrow.”

When, therefore, the King’s daughter saw that there was no longer any hope of turning her father’s heart, she resolved to run away from him. In the night whilst every one was asleep, she got up, and took three different things from her treasures, a golden ring, a golden spinning-wheel, and a golden reel. The three dresses of the sun, moon, and stars she put into a nutshell, put on her mantle of all kinds of fur, and blackened her face and hands with soot. Then she commended herself to God, and went away, and walked the whole night until she reached a great forest. And as she was tired, she got into a hollow tree, and fell asleep.

The sun rose, and she slept on, and she was still sleeping when it was full day. Then it so happened that the King to whom this forest belonged, was hunting in it. When his dogs came to the tree, they sniffed, and ran barking round about it. The King said to the huntsmen, “Just see what kind of wild beast has hidden itself in there.” The huntsmen obeyed his order, and when they came back they said, “A wondrous beast is lying in the hollow tree; we have never before seen one like it. Its skin is fur of a thousand different kinds, but it is lying asleep.” Said the King, “See if you can catch it alive, and then fasten it to the carriage, and we will take it with us.” When the huntsmen laid hold of the maiden, she awoke full of terror, and cried to them, “I am a poor child, deserted by father and mother; have pity on me, and take me with you.” Then said they, “Allerleirauh, thou wilt be useful in the kitchen, come with us, and thou canst sweep up the ashes.” So they put her in the carriage, and took her home to the royal palace. There they pointed out to her a closet under the stairs, where no daylight entered, and said, “Hairy animal, there canst thou live and sleep.” Then she was sent into the kitchen, and there she carried wood and water, swept the hearth, plucked the fowls, picked the vegetables, raked the ashes, and did all the dirty work.

Allerleirauh lived there for a long time in great wretchedness. Alas, fair princess, what is to become of thee now! It happened, however, that one day a feast was held in the palace, and she said to the cook, “May I go up-stairs for a while, and look on? I will place myself outside the door.” The cook answered, “Yes, go, but you must be back here in half-an-hour to sweep the hearth.” Then she took her oil-lamp, went into her den, put off her fur-dress, and washed the soot off her face and hands, so that her full beauty once more came to light. And she opened the nut, and took out her dress which shone like the sun, and when she had done that she went up to the festival, and every one made way for her, for no one knew her, and thought no otherwise than that she was a king’s daughter. The King came to meet her, gave his hand to her, and danced with her, and thought in his heart, “My eyes have never yet seen any one so beautiful!” When the dance was over she curtsied, and when the King looked round again she had vanished, and none knew whither. The guards who stood outside the palace were called and questioned, but no one had seen her.

She had, however, run into her little den, had quickly taken off her dress, made her face and hands black again, put on the fur-mantle, and again was Allerleirauh. And now when she went into the kitchen, and was about to get to her work and sweep up the ashes, the cook said, “Leave that alone till morning, and make me the soup for the King; I, too, will go upstairs awhile, and take a look; but let no hairs fall in, or in future thou shalt have nothing to eat.” So the cook went away, and Allerleirauh made the soup for the king, and made bread soup and the best she could, and when it was ready she fetched her golden ring from her little den, and put it in the bowl in which the soup was served. When the dancing was over, the King had his soup brought and ate it, and he liked it so much that it seemed to him he had never tasted better. But when he came to the bottom of the bowl, he saw a golden ring lying, and could not conceive how it could have got there. Then he ordered the cook to appear before him. The cook was terrified when he heard the order, and said to Allerleirauh, “Thou hast certainly let a hair fall into the soup, and if thou hast, thou shalt be beaten for it.” When he came before the King the latter asked who had made the soup? The cook replied, “I made it.” But the King said, “That is not true, for it was much better than usual, and cooked differently.” He answered, “I must acknowledge that I did not make it, it was made by the rough animal.” The King said, “Go and bid it come up here.”

When Allerleirauh came, the King said, “Who art thou?” “I am a poor girl who no longer has any father or mother.” He asked further, “Of what use art thou in my palace?” She answered, “I am good for nothing but to have boots thrown at my head.” He continued, “Where didst thou get the ring which was in the soup?” She answered, “I know nothing about the ring.” So the King could learn nothing, and had to send her away again.

After a while, there was another festival, and then, as before, Allerleirauh begged the cook for leave to go and look on. He answered, “Yes, but come back again in half-an-hour, and make the King the bread soup which he so much likes.” Then she ran into her den, washed herself quickly, and took out of the nut the dress which was as silvery as the moon, and put it on. Then she went up and was like a princess, and the King stepped forward to meet her, and rejoiced to see her once more, and as the dance was just beginning they danced it together. But when it was ended, she again disappeared so quickly that the King could not observe where she went. She, however, sprang into her den, and once more made herself a hairy animal, and went into the kitchen to prepare the bread soup. When the cook had gone upstairs, she fetched the little golden spinning-wheel, and put it in the bowl so that the soup covered it. Then it was taken to the King, who ate it, and liked it as much as before, and had the cook brought, who this time likewise was forced to confess that Allerleirauh had prepared the soup. Allerleirauh again came before the King, but she answered that she was good for nothing else but to have boots thrown at her head, and that she knew nothing at all about the little golden spinning-wheel.

When, for the third time, the King held a festival, all happened just as it had done before. The cook said, “Faith rough-skin, thou art a witch, and always puttest something in the soup which makes it so good that the King likes it better than that which I cook,” but as she begged so hard, he let her go up at the appointed time. And now she put on the dress which shone like the stars, and thus entered the hall. Again the King danced with the beautiful maiden, and thought that she never yet had been so beautiful. And whilst she was dancing, he contrived, without her noticing it, to slip a golden ring on her finger, and he had given orders that the dance should last a very long time. When it was ended, he wanted to hold her fast by her hands, but she tore herself loose, and sprang away so quickly through the crowd that she vanished from his sight. She ran as fast as she could into her den beneath the stairs, but as she had been too long, and had stayed more than half-an-hour she could not take off her pretty dress, but only threw over it her fur-mantle, and in her haste she did not make herself quite black, but one finger remained white. Then Allerleirauh ran into the kitchen, and cooked the bread soup for the King, and as the cook was away, put her golden reel into it. When the King found the reel at the bottom of it, he caused Allerleirauh to be summoned, and then he espied the white finger, and saw the ring which he had put on it during the dance. Then he grasped her by the hand, and held her fast, and when she wanted to release herself and run away, her mantle of fur opened a little, and the star-dress shone forth. The King clutched the mantle and tore it off. Then her golden hair shone forth, and she stood there in full splendour, and could no longer hide herself. And when she had washed the soot and ashes from her face, she was more beautiful than anyone who had ever been seen on earth. But the King said, “Thou art my dear bride, and we will never more part from each other.” Thereupon the marriage was solemnized, and they lived happily until their death.

The Hare’s Bride

There was once a woman and her daughter who lived in a pretty garden with cabbages; and a little hare came into it, and during the winter time ate all the cabbages. Then says the mother to the daughter, “Go into the garden, and chase the hare away.” The girl says to the little hare, “Sh-sh, hare, you are still eating up all our cabbages.” Says the hare, “Come, maiden, and seat yourself on my little hare’s tail, and come with me into my little hare’s hut.” The girl will not do it. Next day the hare comes again and eats the cabbages, then says the mother to the daughter, “Go into the garden, and drive the hare away.” The girl says to the hare, “Sh-sh, little hare, you are still eating all the cabbages.” The little hare says, “Maiden, seat thyself on my little hare’s tail, and come with me into my little hare’s hut.” The maiden refuses. The third day the hare comes again, and eats the cabbages. On this the mother says to the daughter, “Go into the garden, and hunt the hare away.” Says the maiden, “Sh-sh, little hare, you are still eating all our cabbages.” Says the little hare, “Come, maiden, seat thyself on my little hare’s tail, and come with me into my little hare’s hut.” The girl seats herself on the little hare’s tail, and then the hare takes her far away to his little hut, and says, “Now cook green cabbage and millet-seed, and I will invite the wedding-guests.” Then all the wedding-guests assembled. (Who were the wedding-guests?) That I can tell you as another told it to me. They were all hares, and the crow was there as parson to marry the bride and bridegroom, and the fox as clerk, and the altar was under the rainbow.

The girl, however, was sad, for she was all alone. The little hare comes and says, “Open the doors, open the doors, the wedding-guests are merry.” The bride says nothing, but weeps. The little hare goes away. The little hare comes back and says, “Take off the lid, take off the lid, the wedding-guests are hungry.” The bride again says nothing, and weeps. The little hare goes away. The little hare comes back and says, “Take off the lid, take off the lid, the wedding-guests are waiting.” Then the bride says nothing, and the hare goes away, but she dresses a straw-doll in her clothes, and gives her a spoon to stir with, and sets her by the pan with the millet-seed, and goes back to her mother. The little hare comes once more and says, “Take off the lid, take off the lid,” and gets up, and strikes the doll on the head so that her cap falls off.

Then the little hare sees that it is not his bride, and goes away and is sorrowful.

The Twelve Huntsmen

There was once a King's son who was betrothed to a maiden whom he loved very much. And when he was sitting beside her and very happy, news came that his father lay sick unto death, and desired to see him once again before his end. Then he said to his beloved, "I must now go and leave thee, I give thee a ring as a remembrance of me. When I am King, I will return and fetch thee." So he rode away, and when he reached his father, the latter was dangerously ill, and near his death. He said to him, "Dear son, I wished to see thee once again before my end, promise me to marry as I wish," and he named a certain King's daughter who was to be his wife. The son was in such trouble that he did not think what he was doing, and said, "Yes, dear father, your will shall be done," and thereupon the King shut his eyes, and died.

When therefore the son had been proclaimed King, and the time of mourning was over, he was forced to keep the promise which he had given his father, and caused the King's daughter to be asked in marriage, and she was promised to him. His first betrothed heard of this, and fretted so much about his faithlessness that she nearly died. Then her father said to her, "Dearest child, why art thou so sad? Thou shalt have whatsoever thou wilt." She thought for a moment and said, "Dear father, I wish for eleven girls exactly like myself in face, figure, and size." The father said, "If it be possible, thy desire shall be fulfilled," and he caused a search to be made in his whole kingdom, until eleven young maidens were found who exactly resembled his daughter in face, figure, and size.

When they came to the King's daughter, she had twelve suits of huntsmen's clothes made, all alike, and the eleven maidens had to put on the huntsmen's clothes, and she herself put on the twelfth suit. Thereupon she took leave of her father, and rode away with them, and rode to the court of her former betrothed, whom she loved so dearly. Then she inquired if he required any huntsmen, and if he would take the whole of them into his service. The King looked at her and did not know her, but as they were such handsome fellows, he said, "Yes," and that he would willingly take them, and now they were the King's twelve huntsmen.

The King, however, had a lion which was a wondrous animal, for he knew all concealed and secret things. It came to pass that one evening he said to the King, "Thou thinkest thou hast twelve huntsmen?" "Yes," said the King, "they are twelve huntsmen." The lion continued, "Thou art mistaken, they are twelve girls." The King said, "That cannot be true! How wilt thou prove that to me?" "Oh, just let some peas be strewn in thy ante-chamber," answered the lion, "and then thou wilt soon see it. Men have a firm step, and when they walk over the peas none of them stir, but girls trip and skip, and drag their feet, and the peas roll about." The King was well pleased with the counsel, and caused the peas to be strewn.

There was, however, a servant of the King's who favored the huntsmen, and when he heard that they were going to be put to this test he went to them and repeated everything, and said, "The lion wants to make the King believe that you are girls." Then the King's daughter thanked him, and said to her maidens, "Put on some strength, and step firmly on the peas." So next morning when the King had the twelve huntsmen called before him, and they came into the ante-chamber where the peas were lying, they stepped so firmly on them, and had such a strong, sure walk, that not one of the peas either rolled or stirred. Then they went away again, and the King said to the lion, "Thou hast lied to me, they walk just like men." The lion said, "They have got to know that they were going to be put to the test, and have assumed some strength. Just let twelve spinning-wheels be brought into the ante-chamber some day, and they will go to them and be pleased with them, and that is what no man would do." The King liked the advice, and had the spinning-wheels placed in the ante-chamber.

But the servant, who was well disposed to the huntsmen, went to them, and disclosed the project. Then when they were alone the King's daughter said to her eleven girls, "Put some constraint on yourselves, and do not look round at the spinning-wheels." And next morning when the King had his twelve huntsmen summoned, they went through the ante-chamber, and never once looked at the spinning wheels. Then the King again said to the lion, "Thou hast deceived me, they are men, for they have not looked at the spinning-wheels." The lion replied, "They have learnt that they were going to be put to the test, and have restrained themselves." The King, however, would no longer believe the lion.

The twelve huntsmen always followed the King to the chase, and his liking for them continually increased. Now it came to pass that once when they were out hunting, news came that the King's betrothed was approaching. When the true bride heard that, it hurt her so much that her heart was almost broken, and she fell fainting to the ground. The King thought something had happened to his dear huntsman, ran up to him, wanted to help him, and drew his glove off. Then he saw the ring which he had given to his first bride, and when he looked in her face he recognized her. Then his heart was so touched that he kissed her, and when she opened her eyes he said, "Thou art mine, and I am thine, and no one in the world can alter that." He sent a messenger to the other bride, and entreated her to return to her own kingdom, for he had a wife already, and a man who had just found an old dish did not require a new one. Thereupon the wedding was celebrated, and the lion was again taken into favour, because, after all, he had told the truth.

The Thief and his Master

Hans wished to put his son to learn a trade, so he went into the church and prayed to our Lord God to know which would be most advantageous for him. Then the clerk got behind the altar, and said, “Thieving, thieving.” On this Hans goes back to his son, and tells him he is to learn thieving, and that the Lord God had said so. So he goes with his son to seek a man who is acquainted with thieving. They walk a long time and come into a great forest, where stands a little house with an old woman in it. Hans says, “Do you know of a man who is acquainted with thieving?” “You can learn that here quite well,” says the woman, “my son is a master of it.” So he speaks with the son, and asks if he knows thieving really well? The master-thief says, “I will teach him well. Come back when a year is over, and then if you recognize your son, I will take no payment at all for teaching him; but if you don’t know him, you must give me two hundred thalers.”

The father goes home again, and the son learns witchcraft and thieving, thoroughly. When the year is out, the father is full of anxiety to know how he is to contrive to recognize his son. As he is thus going about in his trouble, he meets a little dwarf, who says, “Man, what ails you, that you are always in such trouble?”

“Oh,” says Hans, “a year ago I placed my son with a master-thief who told me I was to come back when the year was out, and that if I then did not know my son when I saw him, I was to pay two hundred thalers; but if I did know him I was to pay nothing, and now I am afraid of not knowing him and can’t tell where I am to get the money.” Then the dwarf tells him to take a small basket of bread with him, and to stand beneath the chimney. “There on the cross-beam is a basket, out of which a little bird is peeping, and that is your son.”

Hans goes thither, and throws a little basket full of black bread in front of the basket with the bird in it, and the little bird comes out, and looks up. “Hollo, my son, art thou here?” says the father, and the son is delighted to see his father, but the master-thief says, “The devil must have prompted you, or how could you have known your son?” “Father, let us go,” said the youth.

Then the father and son set out homeward. On the way a carriage comes driving by. Hereupon the son says to his father, “I will change myself into a large greyhound, and then you can earn a great deal of money by me.” Then the gentleman calls from the carriage, “My man, will you sell your dog?” “Yes,” says the father. “How much do you want for it?” “Thirty thalers.” “Eh, man, that is a great deal, but as it is such a very fine dog I will have it.” The gentleman takes it into his carriage, but when they have driven a little farther the dog springs out of the carriage through the window, and goes back to his father, and is no longer a greyhound.

They go home together. Next day there is a fair in the neighboring town, so the youth says to his father, “I will now change myself into a beautiful horse, and you can sell me; but when you have sold me, you must take off my bridle, or I cannot become a man again.” Then the father goes with the horse to the fair, and the master-thief comes and buys the horse for a hundred thalers, but the father forgets, and does not take off the bridle. So the man goes home with the horse, and puts it in the stable. When the maid crosses the threshold, the horse says, “Take off my bridle, take off my bridle.” Then the maid stands still, and says, “What, canst thou speak?” So she goes and takes the bridle off, and the horse becomes a sparrow, and flies out at the door, and the wizard becomes a sparrow also, and flies after him. Then they come together and cast lots, but the master loses, and betakes himself to the water and is a fish. Then the youth also becomes a fish, and they cast lots again, and the master loses. So the master changes himself into a cock, and the youth becomes a fox, and bites the master’s head off, and he died and has remained dead to this day.

Jorinda and Joringel

There was once an old castle in the midst of a large and thick forest, and in it an old woman who was a witch dwelt all alone. In the day-time she changed herself into a cat or a screech-owl, but in the evening she took her proper shape again as a human being. She could lure wild beasts and birds to her, and then she killed and boiled and roasted them. If any one came within one hundred paces of the castle he was obliged to stand still, and could not stir from the place until she bade him be free. But whenever an innocent maiden came within this circle, she changed her into a bird, and shut her up in a wicker-work cage, and carried the cage into a room in the castle. She had about seven thousand cages of rare birds in the castle.

Now, there was once a maiden who was called Jorinda, who was fairer than all other girls. She and a handsome youth named Joringel had promised to marry each other. They were still in the days of betrothal, and their greatest happiness was being together. One day in order that they might be able to talk together in quiet they went for a walk in the forest. “Take care,” said Joringel, “that you do not go too near the castle.”

It was a beautiful evening; the sun shone brightly between the trunks of the trees into the dark green of the forest, and the turtle-doves sang mournfully upon the young boughs of the birch-trees.

Jorinda wept now and then: she sat down in the sunshine and was sorrowful. Joringel was sorrowful too; they were as sad as if they were about to die. Then they looked around them, and were quite at a loss, for they did not know by which way they should go home. The sun was still half above the mountain and half set.

Joringel looked through the bushes, and saw the old walls of the castle close at hand. He was horror-stricken and filled with deadly fear. Jorinda was singing —

“My little bird, with the necklace red,
Sings sorrow, sorrow, sorrow,
He sings that the dove must soon be dead,
Sings sorrow, sor — jug, jug, jug.”

Joringel looked for Jorinda. She was changed into a nightingale, and sang, “jug, jug, jug.” A screech-owl with glowing eyes flew three times round about her, and three times cried, “to-whoo, to-whoo, to-whoo!”

Joringel could not move: he stood there like a stone, and could neither weep nor speak, nor move hand or foot.

The sun had now set. The owl flew into the thicket, and directly afterwards there came out of it a crooked old woman, yellow and lean, with large red eyes and a hooked nose, the point of which reached to her chin. She muttered to herself, caught the nightingale, and took it away in her hand.

Joringel could neither speak nor move from the spot; the nightingale was gone. At last the woman came back, and said in a hollow voice, “Greet thee, Zachiel. If the moon shines on the cage, Zachiel, let him loose at once.” Then Joringel was freed. He fell on his knees before the woman and begged that she would give him back his Jorinda, but she said that he should never have her again, and went away. He called, he wept, he lamented, but all in vain, “Ah, what is to become of me?”

Joringel went away, and at last came to a strange village; there he kept sheep for a long time. He often walked round and round the castle, but not too near to it. At last he dreamt one night that he found a blood-red flower, in the middle of which was a beautiful large pearl; that he picked the flower and went with it to the castle, and that everything he touched with the flower was freed from enchantment; he also dreamt that by means of it he recovered his Jorinda.

In the morning, when he awoke, he began to seek over hill and dale if he could find such a flower. He sought until the ninth day, and then, early in the morning, he found the blood-red flower. In the middle of it there was a large dew-drop, as big as the finest pearl.

Day and night he journeyed with this flower to the castle. When he was within a hundred paces of it he was not held fast, but walked on to the door. Joringel was full of joy; he touched the door with the flower, and it sprang open. He walked in through the courtyard, and listened for the sound of the birds. At last he heard it. He went on and found the room from whence it came, and there the witch was feeding the birds in the seven thousand cages.

When she saw Joringel she was angry, very angry, and scolded and spat poison and gall at him, but she could not come within two paces of him. He did not take any notice of her, but went and looked at the cages with the birds; but there were many hundred nightingales, how was he to find his Jorinda again?

Just then he saw the old woman quietly take away a cage with a bird in it, and go towards the door.

Swiftly he sprang towards her, touched the cage with the flower, and also the old woman. She could now no longer bewitch any one; and Jorinda was standing there, clasping him round the neck, and she was as beautiful as ever!

The Three Sons of Fortune

A father once called his three sons before him, and he gave to the first a cock, to the second a scythe, and to the third a cat. “I am already aged,” said he, “my death is nigh, and I have wished to take thought for you before my end; money I have not, and what I now give you seems of little worth, but all depends on your making a sensible use of it. Only seek out a country where such things are still unknown, and your fortune is made.”

After the father’s death the eldest went away with his cock, but wherever he came the cock was already known; in the towns he saw him from a long distance, sitting upon the steeples and turning round with the wind, and in the villages he heard more than one crowing; no one would show any wonder at the creature, so that it did not look as if he would make his fortune by it.

At last, however, it happened that he came to an island where the people knew nothing about cocks, and did not even understand how to divide their time. They certainly knew when it was morning or evening, but at night, if they did not sleep through it, not one of them knew how to find out the time.

“Look!” said he, “what a proud creature! it has a ruby-red crown upon its head, and wears spurs like a knight; it calls you three times during the night, at fixed hours, and when it calls for the last time, the sun soon rises. But if it crows by broad daylight, then take notice, for there will certainly be a change of weather.”

The people were well pleased; for a whole night they did not sleep, and listened with great delight as the cock at two, four, and six o’clock, loudly and clearly proclaimed the time. They asked if the creature were for sale, and how much he wanted for it? “About as much gold as an ass can carry,” answered he. “A ridiculously small price for such a precious creature!” they cried unanimously, and willingly gave him what he had asked.

When he came home with his wealth his brothers were astonished, and the second said, “Well, I will go forth and see whether I cannot get rid of my scythe as profitably.” But it did not look as if he would, for labourers met him everywhere, and they had scythes upon their shoulders as well as he.

At last, however, he chanced upon an island where the people knew nothing of scythes. When the corn was ripe there, they took cannon out to the fields and shot it down. Now this was rather an uncertain affair; many shot right over it, others hit the ears instead of the stems, and shot them away, whereby much was lost, and besides all this, it made a terrible noise. So the man set to work and mowed it down so quietly and quickly that the people opened their mouths with astonishment. They agreed to give him what he wanted for the scythe, and he received a horse laden with as much gold as it could carry.

And now the third brother wanted to take his cat to the right man. He fared just like the others; so long as he stayed on the mainland there was nothing to be done. Every place had cats, and there were so many of them that new-born kittens were generally drowned in the ponds.

At last he sailed over to an island, and it luckily happened that no cats had ever yet been seen there, and that the mice had got the upper hand so much that they danced upon the tables and benches whether the master were at home or not. The people complained bitterly of the plague; the King himself in his palace did not know how to secure himself against them; mice squeaked in every corner, and gnawed whatever they could lay hold of with their teeth. But now the cat began her chase, and soon cleared a couple of rooms, and the people begged the King to buy the wonderful beast for the country. The King willingly gave what was asked, which was a mule laden with gold, and the third brother came home with the greatest treasure of all.

The cat made herself merry with the mice in the royal palace, and killed so many that they could not be counted. At last she grew warm with the work and thirsty, so she stood still, lifted up her head and cried, “Mew. Mew!” When they heard this strange cry, the King and all his people were frightened, and in their terror ran all at once out of the palace. Then the King took counsel what was best to be done; at last it was determined to send a herald to the cat, and demand that she should leave the palace, or if not, she was to expect that force would be used against her. The councillors said, “Rather will we let ourselves be plagued with the mice, for to that misfortune we are accustomed, than give up our lives to such a monster as this.” A noble youth, therefore, was sent to ask the cat “whether she would peaceably quit the castle?” But the cat, whose thirst had become still greater, merely answered, “Mew! Mew!” The youth understood her to say, “Most certainly not! most certainly not!” and took this answer to the King. “Then,” said the councillors, “she shall yield to force.” Cannon were brought out, and the palace was soon in flames. When the fire reached the room where the cat was sitting, she sprang safely out of the window; but the besiegers did not leave off until the whole palace was shot down to the ground.

How Six Men Got on in the World

There was once a man who understood all kinds of arts; he served in war, and behaved well and bravely, but when the war was over he received his dismissal, and three farthings for his expenses on the way. “Stop,” said he, “I shall not be content with this. If I can only meet with the right people, the King will yet have to give me all the treasure of the country.” Then full of anger he went into the forest, and saw a man standing therein who had plucked up six trees as if they were blades of corn. He said to him, “Wilt thou be my servant and go with me?” “Yes,” he answered, “but, first, I will take this little bundle of sticks home to my mother,” and he took one of the trees, and wrapped it round the five others, lifted the bundle on his back, and carried it away. Then he returned and went with his master, who said, “We two ought to be able to get through the world very well,” and when they had walked on for a short while they found a huntsman who was kneeling, had shouldered his gun, and was about to fire. The master said to him, “Huntsman, what art thou going to shoot?” He answered, “Two miles from here a fly is sitting on the branch of an oak-tree, and I want to shoot its left eye out.” “Oh, come with me,” said the man, “if we three are together, we certainly ought to be able to get on in the world!” The huntsman was ready, and went with him, and they came to seven windmills whose sails were turning round with great speed, and yet no wind was blowing either on the right or the left, and no leaf was stirring. Then said the man, “I know not what is driving the windmills, not a breath of air is stirring,” and he went onwards with his servants, and when they had walked two miles they saw a man sitting on a tree who was shutting one nostril, and blowing out of the other. “Good gracious! what are you doing up there?” He answered, “Two miles from here are seven windmills; look, I am blowing them till they turn round.” “Oh, come with me,” said the man. “If we four are together, we shall carry the whole world before us!” Then the blower came down and went with him, and after a while they saw a man who was standing on one leg and had taken off the other, and laid it beside him. Then the master said, “You have arranged things very comfortably to have a rest.” “I am a runner,” he replied, “and to stop myself running far too fast, I have taken off one of my legs, for if I run with both, I go quicker than any bird can fly.” “Oh, go with me. If we five are together, we shall carry the whole world before us.” So he went with them, and it was not long before they met a man who wore a cap, but had put it quite on one ear. Then the master said to him, “Gracefully, gracefully, don’t stick your cap on one ear, you look just like a tom-fool!” “I must not wear it otherwise,” said he, “for if I set my hat straight, a terrible frost comes on, and all the birds in the air are frozen, and drop dead on the ground.” “Oh, come with me,” said the master. “If we six are together, we can carry the whole world before us.”

Now the six came to a town where the King had proclaimed that whosoever ran a race with his daughter and won the victory, should be her husband, but whosoever lost it, must lose his head. Then the man presented himself and said, “I will, however, let my servant run for me.” The King replied, “Then his life also must be staked, so that his head and thine are both set on the victory.” When that was settled and made secure, the man buckled the other leg on the runner, and said to him, “Now be nimble, and help us to win.” It was fixed that the one who was first to bring some water from a far distant well was to be the victor. The runner received a pitcher, and the King’s daughter one too, and they began to run at the same time, but in an instant, when the King’s daughter had got a very little way, the people who were looking on could see no more of the runner, and it was just as if the wind had whistled by. In a short time he reached the well, filled his pitcher with water, and turned back. Half-way home, however, he was overcome with fatigue, and set his pitcher down, lay down himself, and fell asleep. He had, however, made a pillow of a horse’s skull which was lying on the ground, in order that he might lie uncomfortably, and soon wake up again. In the meantime the King’s daughter, who could also run very well quite as well as any ordinary mortal can had reached the well, and was hurrying back with her pitcher full of water, and when she saw the runner lying there asleep, she was glad and said, “My enemy is delivered over into my hands,” emptied his pitcher, and ran on. And now all would have been lost if by good luck the huntsman had not been standing at the top of the castle, and had not seen everything with his sharp eyes. Then said he, “The King’s daughter shall still not prevail against us;” and he loaded his gun, and shot so cleverly, that he shot the horse’s skull away from under the runner’s head without hurting him. Then the runner awoke, leapt up, and saw that his pitcher was empty, and that the King’s daughter was already far in advance. He did not lose heart, however, but ran back to the well with his pitcher, again drew some water, and was at home again, ten minutes before the King’s daughter. “Behold!” said he, “I have not bestirred myself till now, it did not deserve to be called running before.”

But it pained the King, and still more his daughter, that she should be carried off by a common disbanded soldier like that; so they took counsel with each other how to get rid of him and his companions. Then said the King to her, “I have thought of a way; don’t be afraid, they shall not come back again.” And he said to them, “You shall now make merry together, and eat and drink,” and he conducted them to a room which had a floor of iron, and the doors also were of iron, and the windows were guarded with iron bars. There was a table in the room covered with delicious food, and the King said to them, “Go in, and enjoy yourselves.” And when they were inside, he ordered the doors to be shut and bolted. Then he sent for the cook, and commanded him to make a fire under the room until the iron became red-hot. This the cook did, and the six who were sitting at table began to feel quite warm, and they thought the heat was caused by the food; but as it became still greater, and they wanted to get out, and found that the doors and windows were bolted, they became aware that the King must have an evil intention, and wanted to suffocate them. “He shall not succeed, however,” said the one with the cap. “I will cause a frost to come, before which the fire shall be ashamed, and creep away.” Then he put his cap on straight, and immediately there came such a frost that all heat disappeared, and the food on the dishes began to freeze. When an hour or two had passed by, and the King believed that they had perished in the heat, he had the doors opened to behold them himself. But when the doors were opened, all six were standing there, alive and well, and said that they should very much like to get out to warm themselves, for the very food was fast frozen to the dishes with the cold. Then, full of anger, the King went down to the cook, scolded him, and asked why he had not done what he had been ordered to do. But the cook replied, “There is heat enough there, just look yourself.” Then the King saw that a fierce fire was burning under the iron room, and perceived that there was no getting the better of the six in this way.

Again the King considered how to get rid of his unpleasant guests, and caused their chief to be brought and said, “If thou wilt take gold and renounce my daughter, thou shalt have as much as thou wilt.”

“Oh, yes, Lord King,” he answered, “give me as much as my servant can carry, and I will not ask for your daughter.”

On this the King was satisfied, and the other continued, “In fourteen days, I will come and fetch it.” Thereupon he summoned together all the tailors in the whole kingdom, and they were to sit for fourteen days and sew a sack. And when it was ready, the strong one who could tear up trees had to take it on his back, and go with it to the King. Then said the King, “Who can that strong fellow be who is carrying a bundle of linen on his back that is as big as a house?” and he was alarmed and said, “What a lot of gold he can carry away!” Then he commanded a ton of gold to be brought; it took sixteen of his strongest men to carry it, but the strong one snatched it up in one hand, put it in his sack, and said, “Why don’t you bring more at the same time? that hardly covers the bottom!” Then, little by little, the King caused all his treasure to be brought thither, and the strong one pushed it into the sack, and still the sack was not half full with it. “Bring more,” cried he, “these few crumbs don’t fill it.” Then seven thousand carts with gold had to be gathered together in the whole kingdom, and the strong one thrust them and the oxen harnessed to them into his sack. “I will examine it no longer,” said he, “but will just take what comes, so long as the sack is but full.” When all that was inside, there was still room for a great deal more; Then he said, “I will just make an end of the thing; people do sometimes tie up a sack even when it is not full.” So he took it on his back, and went away with his comrades. When the King now saw how one single man was carrying away the entire wealth of the country, he became enraged, and bade his horsemen mount and pursue the six, and ordered them to take the sack away from the strong one. Two regiments speedily overtook the six, and called out, “You are prisoners, put down the sack with the gold, or you will all be cut to pieces!” “What say you?” cried the blower, “that we are prisoners! Rather than that should happen, all of you shall dance about in the air.” And he closed one nostril, and with the other blew on the two regiments. Then they were driven away from each other, and carried into the blue sky over all the mountains one here, the other there. One sergeant cried for mercy; he had nine wounds, and was a brave fellow who did not deserve ill treatment. The blower stopped a little so that he came down without injury, and then the blower said to him, “Now go home to thy King, and tell him he had better send some more horsemen, and I will blow them all into the air.” When the King was informed of this he said, “Let the rascals go. They have the best of it.” Then the six conveyed the riches home, divided it amongst them, and lived in content until their death.

The Wolf and the Man

Once on a time the fox was talking to the wolf of the strength of man; how no animal could withstand him, and how all were obliged to employ cunning in order to preserve themselves from him. Then the wolf answered, “If I had but the chance of seeing a man for once, I would set on him notwithstanding.” “I can help thee to do that,” said the fox. “Come to me early to-morrow morning, and I will show thee one.” The wolf presented himself betimes, and the fox took him out on the road by which the huntsmen went daily. First came an old discharged soldier. “Is that a man?” inquired the wolf. “No,” answered the fox, “that was one.” Afterwards came a little boy who was going to school. “Is that a man?” “No, that is going to be one.” At length came a hunter with his double-barrelled gun at his back, and hanger by his side. Said the fox to the wolf, “Look, there comes a man, thou must attack him, but I will take myself off to my hole.” The wolf then rushed on the man. When the huntsman saw him he said, “It is a pity that I have not loaded with a bullet,” aimed, and fired his small shot in his face. The wolf pulled a very wry face, but did not let himself be frightened, and attacked him again, on which the huntsman gave him the second barrel. The wolf swallowed his pain, and rushed on the huntsman, but he drew out his bright hanger, and gave him a few cuts with it right and left, so that, bleeding everywhere, he ran howling back to the fox. “Well, brother wolf,” said the fox, “how hast thou got on with man?” “Ah!” replied the wolf, “I never imagined the strength of man to be what it is! First, he took a stick from his shoulder, and blew into it, and then something flew into my face which tickled me terribly; then he breathed once more into the stick, and it flew into my nose like lightning and hail; when I was quite close, he drew a white rib out of his side, and he beat me so with it that I was all but left lying dead.” “See what a braggart thou art!” said the fox. “Thou throwest thy hatchet so far that thou canst not fetch it back again!”

The Wolf and the Fox

The wolf had the fox with him, and whatsoever the wolf wished, that the fox was compelled to do, for he was the weaker, and he would gladly have been rid of his master. It chanced that once as they were going through the forest, the wolf said, “Red-fox, get me something to eat, or else I will eat thee thyself.” Then the fox answered, “I know a farm-yard where there are two young lambs; if thou art inclined, we will fetch one of them.” That suited the wolf, and they went thither, and the fox stole the little lamb, took it to the wolf, and went away. The wolf devoured it, but was not satisfied with one; he wanted the other as well, and went to get it. As, however, he did it so awkwardly, the mother of the little lamb heard him, and began to cry out terribly, and to bleat so that the farmer came running there. They found the wolf, and beat him so mercilessly, that he went to the fox limping and howling. “Thou hast misled me finely,” said he; “I wanted to fetch the other lamb, and the country folks surprised me, and have beaten me to a jelly.” The fox replied, “Why art thou such a glutton?”

Next day they again went into the country, and the greedy wolf once more said, “Red-fox, get me something to eat, or I will eat thee thyself.” Then answered the fox, “I know a farm-house where the wife is baking pancakes to-night; we will get some of them for ourselves.” They went there, and the fox slipped round the house, and peeped and sniffed about until he discovered where the dish was, and then drew down six pancakes and carried them to the wolf. “There is something for thee to eat,” said he to him, and then went his way. The wolf swallowed down the pancakes in an instant, and said, “They make one want more,” and went thither and tore the whole dish down so that it broke in pieces. This made such a great noise that the woman came out, and when she saw the wolf she called the people, who hurried there, and beat him as long as their sticks would hold together, till with two lame legs, and howling loudly, he got back to the fox in the forest. “How abominably thou hast misled me!” cried he, “the peasants caught me, and tanned my skin for me.” But the fox replied, “Why art thou such a glutton?”

On the third day, when they were out together, and the wolf could only limp along painfully, he again said, “Red-fox, get me something to eat, or I will eat thee thyself.” The fox answered, “I know a man who has been killing, and the salted meat is lying in a barrel in the cellar; we will get that.” Said the wolf, “I will go when thou dost, that thou mayest help me if I am not able to get away.” “I am willing,” said the fox, and showed him the by-paths and ways by which at length they reached the cellar. There was meat in abundance, and the wolf attacked it instantly and thought, “There is plenty of time before I need leave off!” The fox liked it also, but looked about everywhere, and often ran to the hole by which they had come in, and tried if his body was still thin enough to slip through it. The wolf said, “Dear fox, tell me why thou art running here and there so much, and jumping in and out?”

“I must see that no one is coming,” replied the crafty fellow. “Don’t eat too much!” Then said the wolf, “I shall not leave until the barrel is empty.” In the meantime the farmer, who had heard the noise of the fox’s jumping, came into the cellar. When the fox saw him he was out of the hole at one bound. The wolf wanted to follow him, but he had made himself so fat with eating that he could no longer get through, but stuck fast. Then came the farmer with a cudgel and struck him dead, but the fox bounded into the forest, glad to be rid of the old glutton.

The Fox and His Cousin

The she-wolf brought forth a young one, and invited the fox to be godfather. “After all, he is a near relative of ours,” said she, “he has a good understanding, and much talent; he can instruct my little son, and help him forward in the world.” The fox, too, appeared quite honest, and said, “Worthy Mrs. Gossip, I thank you for the honour which you are doing me; I will, however, conduct myself in such a way that you shall be repaid for it.” He enjoyed himself at the feast, and made merry; afterwards he said, “Dear Mrs. Gossip, it is our duty to take care of the child, it must have good food that it may be strong. I know a sheep-fold from which we might fetch a nice morsel.” The wolf was pleased with the ditty, and she went out with the fox to the farm-yard. He pointed out the fold from afar, and said, “You will be able to creep in there without being seen, and in the meantime I will look about on the other side to see if I can pick up a chicken.” He, however, did not go there, but sat down at the entrance to the forest, stretched his legs and rested. The she-wolf crept into the stable. A dog was lying there, and it made such a noise that the peasants came running out, caught Gossip Wolf, and poured a strong burning mixture, which had been prepared for washing, over her skin. At last she escaped, and dragged herself outside. There lay the fox, who pretended to be full of complaints, and said, “Ah, dear Mistress Gossip, how ill I have fared, the peasants have fallen on me, and have broken every limb I have; if you do not want me to lie where I am and perish, you must carry me away.” The she-wolf herself was only able to go away slowly, but she was in such concern about the fox that she took him on her back, and slowly carried him perfectly safe and sound to her house. Then the fox cried to her, “Farewell, dear Mistress Gossip, may the roasting you have had do you good,” laughed heartily at her, and bounded off.

The Fox and the Cat

It happened that the cat met the fox in a forest, and as she thought to herself, “He is clever and full of experience, and much esteemed in the world,” she spoke to him in a friendly way. “Good-day, dear Mr. Fox, how are you? How is all with you? How are you getting through this dear season?” The fox, full of all kinds of arrogance, looked at the cat from head to foot, and for a long time did not know whether he would give any answer or not. At last he said, “Oh, thou wretched beard-cleaner, thou piebald fool, thou hungry mouse-hunter, what canst thou be thinking of? Dost thou venture to ask how I am getting on? What hast thou learnt? How many arts dost thou understand?” “I understand but one,” replied the cat, modestly. “What art is that?” asked the fox. “When the hounds are following me, I can spring into a tree and save myself.” “Is that all?” said the fox. “I am master of a hundred arts, and have into the bargain a sackful of cunning. Thou makest me sorry for thee; come with me, I will teach thee how people get away from the hounds.” Just then came a hunter with four dogs. The cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and sat down on top of it, where the branches and foliage quite concealed her. “Open your sack, Mr. Fox, open your sack,” cried the cat to him, but the dogs had already seized him, and were holding him fast. “Ah, Mr. Fox,” cried the cat. “You with your hundred arts are left in the lurch! Had you been able to climb like me, you would not have lost your life.”

The Pink

There was once on a time a Queen to whom God had given no children. Every morning she went into the garden and prayed to God in heaven to bestow on her a son or a daughter. Then an angel from heaven came to her and said, “Be at rest, thou shalt have a son with the power of wishing, so that whatsoever in the world he wishes for, that shall he have.” Then she went to the King, and told him the joyful tidings, and when the time was come she gave birth to a son, and the King was filled with gladness. Every morning she went with the child to the garden where the wild beasts were kept, and washed herself there in a clear stream. It happened once when the child was a little older, that it was lying in her arms and she fell asleep. Then came the old cook, who knew that the child had the power of wishing, and stole it away, and he took a hen, and cut it in pieces, and dropped some of its blood on the Queen’s apron and on her dress. Then he carried the child away to a secret place, where a nurse was obliged to suckle it, and he ran to the King and accused the Queen of having allowed her child to be taken from her by the wild beasts. When the King saw the blood on her apron, he believed this, fell into such a passion that he ordered a high tower to be built, in which neither sun nor moon could be seen, and had his wife put into it, and walled up. Here she was to stay for seven years without meat or drink, and die of hunger. But God sent two angels from heaven in the shape of white doves, which flew to her twice a day, and carried her food until the seven years were over.

The cook, however, thought to himself, “If the child has the power of wishing, and I am here, he might very easily get me into trouble.” So he left the palace and went to the boy, who was already big enough to speak, and said to him, “Wish for a beautiful palace for thyself with a garden, and all else that pertains to it.” Scarcely were the words out of the boy’s mouth, when everything was there that he had wished for. After a while the cook said to him, “It is not well for thee to be so alone, wish for a pretty girl as a companion.” Then the King’s son wished for one, and she immediately stood before him, and was more beautiful than any painter could have painted her. The two played together, and loved each other with all their hearts, and the old cook went out hunting like a nobleman. The thought, however, occurred to him that the King’s son might some day wish to be with his father, and thus bring him into great peril. So he went out and took the maiden aside, and said, “To-night when the boy is asleep, go to his bed and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if thou dost not do it, thou shalt lose thy life.” Thereupon he went away, and when he returned next day she had not done it, and said, “Why should I shed the blood of an innocent boy who has never harmed any one?” The cook once more said, “If thou dost not do it, it shall cost thee thy own life.” When he had gone away, she had a little hind brought to her, and ordered her to be killed, and took her heart and tongue, and laid them on a plate, and when she saw the old man coming, she said to the boy, “Lie down in thy bed, and draw the clothes over thee.” Then the wicked wretch came in and said, “Where are the boy’s heart and tongue?” The girl reached the plate to him, but the King’s son threw off the quilt, and said, “Thou old sinner, why didst thou want to kill me? Now will I pronounce thy sentence. Thou shalt become a black poodle and have a gold collar round thy neck, and shalt eat burning coals, till the flames burst forth from thy throat.” And when he had spoken these words, the old man was changed into a poodle dog, and had a gold collar round his neck, and the cooks were ordered to bring up some live coals, and these he ate, until the flames broke forth from his throat. The King’s son remained there a short while longer, and he thought of his mother, and wondered if she were still alive. At length he said to the maiden, “I will go home to my own country; if thou wilt go with me, I will provide for thee.” “Ah,” she replied, “the way is so long, and what shall I do in a strange land where I am unknown?” As she did not seem quite willing, and as they could not be parted from each other, he wished that she might be changed into a beautiful pink, and took her with him. Then he went away to his own country, and the poodle had to run after him. He went to the tower in which his mother was confined, and as it was so high, he wished for a ladder which would reach up to the very top. Then he mounted up and looked inside, and cried, “Beloved mother, Lady Queen, are you still alive, or are you dead?” She answered, “I have just eaten, and am still satisfied,” for she thought the angels were there. Said he, “I am your dear son, whom the wild beasts were said to have torn from your arms; but I am alive still, and will speedily deliver you.” Then he descended again, and went to his father, and caused himself to be announced as a strange huntsman, and asked if he could give him a place. The King said yes, if he was skilful and could get game for him, he should come to him, but that deer had never taken up their quarters in any part of the district or country. Then the huntsman promised to procure as much game for him as he could possibly use at the royal table. So he summoned all the huntsmen together, and bade them go out into the forest with him. And he went with them and made them form a great circle, open at one end where he stationed himself, and began to wish. Two hundred deer and more came running inside the circle at once, and the huntsmen shot them. Then they were all placed on sixty country carts, and driven home to the King, and for once he was able to deck his table with game, after having had none at all for years.

Now the King felt great joy at this, and commanded that his entire household should eat with him next day, and made a great feast. When they were all assembled together, he said to the huntsmen, “As thou art so clever, thou shalt sit by me.” He replied, “Lord King, your majesty must excuse me, I am a poor huntsman.” But the King insisted on it, and said, “Thou shalt sit by me,” until he did it. Whilst he was sitting there, he thought of his dearest mother, and wished that one of the King’s principal servants would begin to speak of her, and would ask how it was faring with the Queen in the tower, and if she were alive still, or had perished. Hardly had he formed the wish than the marshal began, and said, “Your majesty, we live joyously here, but how is the Queen living in the tower? Is she still alive, or has she died?” But the King replied, “She let my dear son be torn to pieces by wild beasts; I will not have her named.” Then the huntsman arose and said, “Gracious lord father, she is alive still, and I am her son, and I was not carried away by wild beasts, but by that wretch the old cook, who tore me from her arms when she was asleep, and sprinkled her apron with the blood of a chicken.” Thereupon he took the dog with the golden collar, and said, “That is the wretch!” and caused live coals to be brought, and these the dog was compelled to devour before the sight of all, until flames burst forth from its throat. On this the huntsman asked the King if he would like to see the dog in his true shape, and wished him back into the form of the cook, in the which he stood immediately, with his white apron, and his knife by his side. When the King saw him he fell into a passion, and ordered him to be cast into the deepest dungeon. Then the huntsman spoke further and said, “Father, will you see the maiden who brought me up so tenderly and who was afterwards to murder me, but did not do it, though her own life depended on it?” The King replied, “Yes, I would like to see her.” The son said, “Most gracious father, I will show her to you in the form of a beautiful flower,” and he thrust his hand into his pocket and brought forth the pink, and placed it on the royal table, and it was so beautiful that the King had never seen one to equal it. Then the son said, “Now will I show her to you in her own form,” and wished that she might become a maiden, and she stood there looking so beautiful that no painter could have made her look more so.

And the King sent two waiting-maids and two attendants into the tower, to fetch the Queen and bring her to the royal table. But when she was led in she ate nothing, and said, “The gracious and merciful God who has supported me in the tower, will speedily deliver me.” She lived three days more, and then died happily, and when she was buried, the two white doves which had brought her food to the tower, and were angels of heaven, followed her body and seated themselves on her grave. The aged King ordered the cook to be torn in four pieces, but grief consumed the King’s own heart, and he soon died. His son married the beautiful maiden whom he had brought with him as a flower in his pocket, and whether they are still alive or not, is known to God.

Clever Grethel

There was once a cook named Grethel, who wore shoes with red rosettes, and when she walked out with them on, she turned herself this way and that, and thought, “You certainly are a pretty girl!” And when she came home she drank, in her gladness of heart, a draught of wine, and as wine excites a desire to eat, she tasted the best of whatever she was cooking until she was satisfied, and said, “The cook must know what the food is like.”

It came to pass that the master one day said to her, “Grethel, there is a guest coming this evening; prepare me two fowls very daintily.” “I will see to it, master,” answered Grethel. She killed two fowls, scalded them, plucked them, put them on the spit, and towards evening set them before the fire, that they might roast. The fowls began to turn brown, and were nearly ready, but the guest had not yet arrived. Then Grethel called out to her master, “If the guest does not come, I must take the fowls away from the fire, but it will be a sin and a shame if they are not eaten directly, when they are juiciest.” The master said, “I will run myself, and fetch the guest.” When the master had turned his back, Grethel laid the spit with the fowls on one side, and thought, “Standing so long by the fire there, makes one hot and thirsty; who knows when they will come? Meanwhile, I will run into the cellar, and take a drink.” She ran down, set a jug, said, “God bless it to thy use, Grethel,” and took a good drink, and took yet another hearty draught.

Then she went and put the fowls down again to the fire, basted them, and drove the spit merrily round. But as the roast meat smelt so good, Grethel thought, “Something might be wrong, it ought to be tasted!” She touched it with her finger, and said, “Ah! how good fowls are! It certainly is a sin and a shame that they are not eaten directly!” She ran to the window, to see if the master was not coming with his guest, but she saw no one, and went back to the fowls and thought, “One of the wings is burning! I had better take it off and eat it.” So she cut it off, ate it, and enjoyed it, and when she had done, she thought, “the other must go down too, or else master will observe that something is missing.” When the two wings were eaten, she went and looked for her master, and did not see him. It suddenly occurred to her, “Who knows? They are perhaps not coming at all, and have turned in somewhere.” Then she said, “Hallo, Grethel, enjoy yourself, one fowl has been cut into, take another drink, and eat it up entirely; when it is eaten you will have some peace, why should God’s good gifts be spoilt?” So she ran into the cellar again, took an enormous drink and ate up the one chicken in great glee. When one of the chickens was swallowed down, and still her master did not come, Grethel looked at the other and said, “Where one is, the other should be likewise, the two go together; what’s right for the one is right for the other; I think if I were to take another draught it would do me no harm.” So she took another hearty drink, and let the second chicken rejoin the first.

While she was just in the best of the eating, her master came and cried, hurry up, “Haste thee, Grethel, the guest is coming directly after me!” “Yes, sir, I will soon serve up,” answered Grethel. Meantime the master looked to see that the table was properly laid, and took the great knife, wherewith he was going to carve the chickens, and sharpened it on the steps. Presently the guest came, and knocked politely and courteously at the house-door. Grethel ran, and looked to see who was there, and when she saw the guest, she put her finger to her lips and said, “Hush! hush! get away as quickly as you can, if my master catches you it will be the worse for you; he certainly did ask you to supper, but his intention is to cut off your two ears. Just listen how he is sharpening the knife for it!” The guest heard the sharpening, and hurried down the steps again as fast as he could. Grethel was not idle; she ran screaming to her master, and cried, “You have invited a fine guest!” “Eh, why, Grethel? What do you mean by that?” “Yes,” said she, “he has taken the chickens which I was just going to serve up, off the dish, and has run away with them!” “That’s a nice trick!” said her master, and lamented the fine chickens. “If he had but left me one, so that something remained for me to eat.” He called to him to stop, but the guest pretended not to hear. Then he ran after him with the knife still in his hand, crying, “Just one, just one,” meaning that the guest should leave him just one chicken, and not take both. The guest, however, thought no otherwise than that he was to give up one of his ears, and ran as if fire were burning under him, in order to take them both home with him.

The Old Man and His Grandson

There was once a very old man, whose eyes had become dim, his ears dull of hearing, his knees trembled, and when he sat at table he could hardly hold the spoon, and spilt the broth upon the table-cloth or let it run out of his mouth. His son and his son’s wife were disgusted at this, so the old grandfather at last had to sit in the corner behind the stove, and they gave him his food in an earthenware bowl, and not even enough of it. And he used to look towards the table with his eyes full of tears. Once, too, his trembling hands could not hold the bowl, and it fell to the ground and broke. The young wife scolded him, but he said nothing and only sighed. Then they bought him a wooden bowl for a few half-pence, out of which he had to eat.

They were once sitting thus when the little grandson of four years old began to gather together some bits of wood upon the ground. “What are you doing there?” asked the father. “I am making a little trough,” answered the child, “for father and mother to eat out of when I am big.”

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while, and presently began to cry. Then they took the old grandfather to the table, and henceforth always let him eat with them, and likewise said nothing if he did spill a little of anything.

The Water-Nix

A little brother and sister were once playing by a well, and while they were thus playing, they both fell in. A water-nix lived down below, who said, “Now I have got you, now you shall work hard for me!” and carried them off with her. She gave the girl dirty tangled flax to spin, and she had to fetch water in a bucket with a hole in it, and the boy had to hew down a tree with a blunt axe, and they got nothing to eat but dumplings as hard as stones. Then at last the children became so impatient, that they waited until one Sunday, when the nix was at church, and ran away. But when church was over, the nix saw that the birds were flown, and followed them with great strides. The children saw her from afar, and the girl threw a brush behind her which formed an immense hill of bristles, with thousands and thousands of spikes, over which the nix was forced to scramble with great difficulty; at last, however, she got over. When the children saw this, the boy threw behind him a comb which made a great hill of combs with a thousand times a thousand teeth, but the nix managed to keep herself steady on them, and at last crossed over that. Then the girl threw behind her a looking-glass which formed a hill of mirrors, and was so slippery that it was impossible for the nix to cross it. Then she thought, “I will go home quickly and fetch my axe, and cut the hill of glass in half.” Long before she returned, however, and had hewn through the glass, the children had escaped to a great distance, and the water-nix was obliged to betake herself to her well again.

The Death of the Little Hen

Once upon a time the little hen went with the little cock to the nut-hill, and they agreed together that whichsoever of them found a kernel of a nut should share it with the other. Then the hen found a large, large nut, but said nothing about it, intending to eat the kernel herself. The kernel, however, was so large that she could not swallow it, and it remained sticking in her throat, so that she was alarmed lest she should be choked. Then she cried, “Cock, I entreat thee to run as fast thou canst, and fetch me some water, or I shall choke.” The little cock did run as fast as he could to the spring, and said, “Stream, thou art to give me some water; the little hen is lying on the nut-hill, and she has swallowed a large nut, and is choking.” The well answered, “First run to the bride, and get her to give thee some red silk.” The little cock ran to the bride and said, “Bride, you are to give me some red silk; I want to give red silk to the well, the well is to give me some water, I am to take the water to the little hen who is lying on the nut-hill and has swallowed a great nut-kernel, and is choking with it.” The bride answered, “First run and bring me my little wreath which is hanging to a willow.” So the little cock ran to the willow, and drew the wreath from the branch and took it to the bride, and the bride gave him some water for it. Then the little cock took the water to the hen, but when he got there the hen had choked in the meantime, and lay there dead and motionless. Then the cock was so distressed that he cried aloud, and every animal came to lament the little hen, and six mice built a little carriage to carry her to her grave, and when the carriage was ready they harnessed themselves to it, and the cock drove. On the way, however, they met the fox, who said, “Where art thou going, little cock?” “I am going to bury my little hen.” “May I drive with thee?” “Yes, but seat thyself at the back of the carriage, for in the front my little horses could not drag thee.” Then the fox seated himself at the back, and after that the wolf, the bear, the stag, the lion, and all the beasts of the forest did the same. Then the procession went onwards, and they reached the stream. “How are we to get over?” said the little cock. A straw was lying by the stream, and it said, “I will lay myself across, and you shall drive over me.” But when the six mice came to the bridge, the straw slipped and fell into the water, and the six mice all fell in and were drowned. Then they were again in difficulty, and a coal came and said, “I am large enough, I will lay myself across and you shall drive over me.” So the coal also laid itself across the water, but unhappily just touched it, on which the coal hissed, was extinguished and died. When a stone saw that, it took pity on the little cock, wished to help him, and laid itself over the water. Then the cock drew the carriage himself, but when he got it over and reached the other shore with the dead hen, and was about to draw over the others who were sitting behind as well, there were too many of them, the carriage ran back, and they all fell into the water together, and were drowned. Then the little cock was left alone with the dead hen, and dug a grave for her and laid her in it, and made a mound above it, on which he sat down and fretted until he died too, and then every one was dead.

Brother Lustig

There was one on a time a great war, and when it came to an end, many soldiers were discharged. Then Brother Lustig also received his dismissal, and besides that, nothing but a small loaf of contract-bread, and four kreuzers in money, with which he departed. St. Peter had, however, placed himself in his way in the shape of a poor beggar, and when Brother Lustig came up, he begged alms of him. Brother Lustig replied, “Dear beggar-man, what am I to give you? I have been a soldier, and have received my dismissal, and have nothing but this little loaf of contract-bread, and four kreuzers of money; when that is gone, I shall have to beg as well as you. Still I will give you something.” Thereupon he divided the loaf into four parts, and gave the apostle one of them, and a kreuzer likewise. St. Peter thanked him, went onwards, and threw himself again in the soldier’s way as a beggar, but in another shape; and when he came up begged a gift of him as before. Brother Lustig spoke as he had done before, and again gave him a quarter of the loaf and one kreuzer. St. Peter thanked him, and went onwards, but for the third time placed himself in another shape as a beggar on the road, and spoke to Brother Lustig. Brother Lustig gave him also the third quarter of bread and the third kreuzer. St. Peter thanked him, and Brother Lustig went onwards, and had but a quarter of the loaf, and one kreuzer. With that he went into an inn, ate the bread, and ordered one kreuzer’s worth of beer. When he had had it, he journeyed onwards, and then St. Peter, who had assumed the appearance of a discharged soldier, met and spoke to him thus: “Good day, comrade, canst thou not give me a bit of bread, and a kreuzer to get a drink?” “Where am I to procure it?” answered Brother Lustig; “I have been discharged, and I got nothing but a loaf of ammunition-bread and four kreuzers in money. I met three beggars on the road, and I gave each of them a quarter of my bread, and one kreuzer. The last quarter I ate in the inn, and had a drink with the last kreuzer. Now my pockets are empty, and if thou also hast nothing we can go a-begging together.” “No,” answered St. Peter, “we need not quite do that. I know a little about medicine, and I will soon earn as much as I require by that.” “Indeed,” said Brother Lustig, “I know nothing of that, so I must go and beg alone.” “Just come with me,” said St. Peter, “and if I earn anything, thou shalt have half of it.” “All right,” said Brother Lustig, so they went away together.

Then they came to a peasant’s house inside which they heard loud lamentations and cries; so they went in, and there the husband was lying sick unto death, and very near his end, and his wife was crying and weeping quite loudly. “Stop that howling and crying,” said St. Peter, “I will make the man well again,” and he took a salve out of his pocket, and healed the sick man in a moment, so that he could get up, and was in perfect health. In great delight the man and his wife said, “How can we reward you? What shall we give you?” But St. Peter would take nothing, and the more the peasant folks offered him, the more he refused. Brother Lustig, however, nudged St. Peter, and said, “Take something; sure enough we are in need of it.” At length the woman brought a lamb and said to St. Peter that he really must take that, but he would not. Then Brother Lustig gave him a poke in the side, and said, “Do take it, you stupid fool; we are in great want of it!” Then St. Peter said at last, “Well, I will take the lamb, but I won’t carry it; if thou wilt insist on having it, thou must carry it.” “That is nothing,” said Brother Lustig. “I will easily carry it,” and took it on his shoulder. Then they departed and came to a wood, but Brother Lustig had begun to feel the lamb heavy, and he was hungry, so he said to St. Peter, “Look, that’s a good place, we might cook the lamb there, and eat it.” “As you like,” answered St. Peter, “but I can’t have anything to do with the cooking; if thou wilt cook, there is a kettle for thee, and in the meantime I will walk about a little until it is ready. Thou must, however, not begin to eat until I have come back, I will come at the right time.” “Well, go, then,” said Brother Lustig, “I understand cookery, I will manage it.” Then St. Peter went away, and Brother Lustig killed the lamb, lighted a fire, threw the meat into the kettle, and boiled it. The lamb was, however, quite ready, and the apostle Peter had not come back, so Brother Lustig took it out of the kettle, cut it up, and found the heart. “That is said to be the best part,” said he, and tasted it, but at last he ate it all up. At length St. Peter returned and said, “Thou mayst eat the whole of the lamb thyself, I will only have the heart, give me that.” Then Brother Lustig took a knife and fork, and pretended to look anxiously about amongst the lamb’s flesh, but not to be able to find the heart, and at last he said abruptly, “There is none here.” “But where can it be?” said the apostle. “I don’t know,” replied Brother Lustig, “but look, what fools we both are, to seek for the lamb’s heart, and neither of us to remember that a lamb has no heart!” “Oh,” said St. Peter, “that is something quite new! Every animal has a heart, why is a lamb to have none?” “No, be assured, my brother,” said Brother Lustig, “that a lamb has no heart; just consider it seriously, and then you will see that it really has none.” “Well, it is all right,” said St. Peter, “if there is no heart, then I want none of the lamb; thou mayst eat it alone.” “What I can’t eat now, I will carry away in my knapsack,” said Brother Lustig, and he ate half the lamb, and put the rest in his knapsack.

They went farther, and then St. Peter caused a great stream of water to flow right across their path, and they were obliged to pass through it. Said St. Peter, “Do thou go first.” “No,” answered Brother Lustig, “thou must go first,” and he thought, “if the water is too deep I will stay behind.” Then St. Peter strode through it, and the water just reached to his knee. So Brother Lustig began to go through also, but the water grew deeper and reached to his throat. Then he cried, “Brother, help me!” St. Peter said, “Then wilt thou confess that thou hast eaten the lamb’s heart?” “No,” said he, “I have not eaten it.” Then the water grew deeper still and rose to his mouth. “Help me, brother,” cried the soldier. St. Peter said, “Then wilt thou confess that thou hast eaten the lamb’s heart?” “No,” he replied, “I have not eaten it.” St. Peter, however, would not let him be drowned, but made the water sink and helped him through it.

Then they journeyed onwards, and came to a kingdom where they heard that the King's daughter lay sick unto death. "Hollo, brother!" said the soldier to St. Peter, "this is a chance for us; if we can heal her we shall be provided for, for life!" But St. Peter was not half quick enough for him, "Come, lift your legs, my dear brother," said he, "that we may get there in time." But St. Peter walked slower and slower, though Brother Lustig did all he could to drive and push him on, and at last they heard that the princess was dead. "Now we are done for!" said Brother Lustig; "that comes of thy sleepy way of walking!" "Just be quiet," answered St. Peter, "I can do more than cure sick people; I can bring dead ones to life again." "Well, if thou canst do that," said Brother Lustig, "it's all right, but thou shouldst earn at least half the kingdom for us by that." Then they went to the royal palace, where every one was in great grief, but St. Peter told the King that he would restore his daughter to life. He was taken to her, and said, "Bring me a kettle and some water," and when that was brought, he bade everyone go out, and allowed no one to remain with him but Brother Lustig. Then he cut off all the dead girl's limbs, and threw them in the water, lighted a fire beneath the kettle, and boiled them. And when the flesh had fallen away from the bones, he took out the beautiful white bones, and laid them on a table, and arranged them together in their natural order. When he had done that, he stepped forward and said three times, "In the name of the holy Trinity, dead woman, arise." And at the third time, the princess arose, living, healthy and beautiful. Then the King was in the greatest joy, and said to St. Peter, "Ask for thy reward; even if it were half my kingdom, I would give it thee." But St. Peter said, "I want nothing for it." "Oh, thou tomfool!" thought Brother Lustig to himself, and nudged his comrade's side, and said, "Don't be so stupid! If thou hast no need of anything, I have." St. Peter, however, would have nothing, but as the King saw that the other would very much like to have something, he ordered his treasurer to fill Brother Lustig's knapsack with gold. Then they went on their way, and when they came to a forest, St. Peter said to Brother Lustig, "Now, we will divide the gold." "Yes," he replied, "we will." So St. Peter divided the gold, and divided it into three heaps. Brother Lustig thought to himself, "What craze has he got in his head now? He is making three shares, and there are only two of us!" But St. Peter said, "I have divided it exactly; there is one share for me, one for thee, and one for him who ate the lamb's heart."

"Oh, I ate that!" replied Brother Lustig, and hastily swept up the gold. "You may trust what I say." "But how can that be true," said St. Peter, "when a lamb has no heart?" "Eh, what, brother, what can you be thinking of? Lambs have hearts like other animals, why should only they have none?" "Well, so be it," said St. Peter, "keep the gold to yourself, but I will stay with you no longer; I will go my way alone." "As you like, dear brother," answered Brother Lustig. "Farewell."

Then St. Peter went a different road, but Brother Lustig thought, "It is a good thing that he has taken himself off, he is certainly a strange saint, after all.” Then he had money enough, but did not know how to manage it, squandered it, gave it away, and and when some time had gone by, once more had nothing. Then he arrived in a certain country where he heard that a King’s daughter was dead. “Oh, ho!” thought he, “that may be a good thing for me; I will bring her to life again, and see that I am paid as I ought to be.” So he went to the King, and offered to raise the dead girl to life again. Now the King had heard that a discharged soldier was traveling about and bringing dead persons to life again, and thought that Brother Lustig was the man; but as he had no confidence in him, he consulted his councillors first, who said that he might give it a trial as his daughter was dead. Then Brother Lustig ordered water to be brought to him in a kettle, bade every one go out, cut the limbs off, threw them in the water and lighted a fire beneath, just as he had seen St. Peter do. The water began to boil, the flesh fell off, and then he took the bones out and laid them on the table, but he did not know the order in which to lay them, and placed them all wrong and in confusion. Then he stood before them and said, “In the name of the most holy Trinity, dead maiden, I bid thee arise,” and he said this thrice, but the bones did not stir. So he said it thrice more, but also in vain: “Confounded girl that you are, get up!” cried he, “Get up, or it shall be worse for you!” When he had said that, St. Peter suddenly appeared in his former shape as a discharged soldier; he entered by the window and said, “Godless man, what art thou doing? How can the dead maiden arise, when thou hast thrown about her bones in such confusion?” “Dear brother, I have done everything to the best of my ability,” he answered. “This once, I will help thee out of thy difficulty, but one thing I tell thee, and that is that if ever thou undertakest anything of the kind again, it will be the worse for thee, and also that thou must neither demand nor accept the smallest thing from the King for this!” Thereupon St. Peter laid the bones in their right order, said to the maiden three times, “In the name of the most holy Trinity, dead maiden, arise,” and the King’s daughter arose, healthy and beautiful as before. Then St. Peter went away again by the window, and Brother Lustig was rejoiced to find that all had passed off so well, but was very much vexed to think that after all he was not to take anything for it. “I should just like to know,” thought he, “what fancy that fellow has got in his head, for what he gives with one hand he takes away with the other there is no sense whatever in it!” Then the King offered Brother Lustig whatsoever he wished to have, but he did not dare to take anything; however, by hints and cunning, he contrived to make the King order his knapsack to be filled with gold for him, and with that he departed. When he got out, St. Peter was standing by the door, and said, “Just look what a man thou art; did I not forbid thee to take anything, and there thou hast thy knapsack full of gold!” “How can I help that,” answered Brother Lustig, “if people will put it in for me?” “Well, I tell thee this, that if ever thou settest about anything of this kind again thou shalt suffer for it!” “Eh, brother, have no fear, now I have money, why should I trouble myself with washing bones?” “Faith,” said St. Peter, “the gold will last a long time! In order that after this thou mayst never tread in forbidden paths, I will bestow on thy knapsack this property, namely, that whatsoever thou wishest to have inside it, shall be there. Farewell, thou wilt now never see me more." "Good-bye," said Brother Lustig, and thought to himself, "I am very glad that thou hast taken thyself off, thou strange fellow; I shall certainly not follow thee." But of the magical power which had been bestowed on his knapsack, he thought no more.

Brother Lustig travelled about with his money, and squandered and wasted what he had as before. When at last he had no more than four kreuzers, he passed by an inn and thought, "The money must go," and ordered three kreuzers' worth of wine and one kreuzer's worth of bread for himself. As he was sitting there drinking, the smell of roast goose made its way to his nose. Brother Lustig looked about and peeped, and saw that the host had two geese standing in the oven. Then he remembered that his comrade had said that whatsoever he wished to have in his knapsack should be there, so he said, "Oh, ho! I must try that with the geese." So he went out, and when he was outside the door, he said, "I wish those two roasted geese out of the oven and in my knapsack," and when he had said that, he unbuckled it and looked in, and there they were inside it. "Ah, that's right!" said he, "now I am a made man!" and went away to a meadow and took out the roast meat. When he was in the midst of his meal, two journeymen came up and looked at the second goose, which was not yet touched, with hungry eyes. Brother Lustig thought to himself, "One is enough for me," and called the two men up and said, "Take the goose, and eat it to my health." They thanked him, and went with it to the inn, ordered themselves a half bottle of wine and a loaf, took out the goose which had been given them, and began to eat. The hostess saw them and said to her husband, "Those two are eating a goose; just look and see if it is not one of ours, out of the oven." The landlord ran thither, and behold the oven was empty! "What!" cried he, "you thievish crew, you want to eat goose as cheap as that? Pay for it this moment; or I will wash you well with green hazel-sap." The two said, "We are no thieves, a discharged soldier gave us the goose, outside there in the meadow." "You shall not throw dust in my eyes that way! the soldier was here but he went out by the door, like an honest fellow. I looked after him myself; you are the thieves and shall pay!" But as they could not pay, he took a stick, and cudgeled them out of the house.

Brother Lustig went his way and came to a place where there was a magnificent castle, and not far from it a wretched inn. He went to the inn and asked for a night's lodging, but the landlord turned him away, and said, "There is no more room here, the house is full of noble guests." "It surprises me that they should come to you and not go to that splendid castle," said Brother Lustig. "Ah, indeed," replied the host, "but it is no slight matter to sleep there for a night; no one who has tried it so far, has ever come out of it alive."

"If others have tried it," said Brother Lustig, "I will try it too."

"Leave it alone," said the host, "it will cost you your neck." "It won't kill me at once," said Brother Lustig, "just give me the key, and some good food and wine." So the host gave him the key, and food and wine, and with this Brother Lustig went into the castle, enjoyed his supper, and at length, as he was sleepy, he lay down on the ground, for there was no bed. He soon fell asleep, but during the night was disturbed by a great noise, and when he awoke, he saw nine ugly devils in the room, who had made a circle, and were dancing around him. Brother Lustig said, "Well, dance as long as you like, but none of you must come too close." But the devils pressed continually nearer to him, and almost stepped on his face with their hideous feet. "Stop, you devils' ghosts," said he, but they behaved still worse. Then Brother Lustig grew angry, and cried, "Hola! but I will soon make it quiet," and got the leg of a chair and struck out into the midst of them with it. But nine devils against one soldier were still too many, and when he struck those in front of him, the others seized him behind by the hair, and tore it unmercifully. "Devils' crew," cried he, "it is getting too bad, but wait. Into my knapsack, all nine of you!" In an instant they were in it, and then he buckled it up and threw it into a corner. After this all was suddenly quiet, and Brother Lustig lay down again, and slept till it was bright day. Then came the inn-keeper, and the nobleman to whom the castle belonged, to see how he had fared; but when they perceived that he was merry and well they were astonished, and asked, "Have the spirits done you no harm, then?" "The reason why they have not," answered Brother Lustig, "is because I have got the whole nine of them in my knapsack! You may once more inhabit your castle quite tranquilly, none of them will ever haunt it again." The nobleman thanked him, made him rich presents, and begged him to remain in his service, and he would provide for him as long as he lived. "No," replied Brother Lustig, "I am used to wandering about, I will travel farther." Then he went away, and entered into a smithy, laid the knapsack, which contained the nine devils on the anvil, and asked the smith and his apprentices to strike it. So they smote with their great hammers with all their strength, and the devils uttered howls which were quite pitiable. When he opened the knapsack after this, eight of them were dead, but one which had been lying in a fold of it, was still alive, slipped out, and went back again to hell. Thereupon Brother Lustig travelled a long time about the world, and those who know them can tell many a story about him, but at last he grew old, and thought of his end, so he went to a hermit who was known to be a pious man, and said to him, "I am tired of wandering about, and want now to behave in such a manner that I shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven." The hermit replied, "There are two roads, one is broad and pleasant, and leads to hell, the other is narrow and rough, and leads to heaven." "I should be a fool," thought Brother Lustig, "if I were to take the narrow, rough road." So he set out and took the broad and pleasant road, and at length came to a great black door, which was the door of Hell. Brother Lustig knocked, and the door-keeper peeped out to see who was there. But when he saw Brother Lustig, he was terrified, for he was the very same ninth devil who had been shut up in the knapsack, and had escaped from it with a black eye. So he pushed the bolt in again as quickly as he could, ran to the devil's lieutenant, and said, “There is a fellow outside with a knapsack, who wants to come in, but as you value your lives don’t allow him to enter, or he will wish the whole of hell into his knapsack. He once gave me a frightful hammering when I was inside it.” So they called out to Brother Lustig that he was to go away again, for he should not get in there! “If they won’t have me here,” thought he, “I will see if I can find a place for myself in heaven, for I must be somewhere.” So he turned about and went onwards until he came to the door of Heaven, where he knocked. St. Peter was sitting hard by as door-keeper. Brother Lustig recognised him at once, and thought, “Here I find an old friend, I shall get on better.” But St. Peter said, “I really believe that thou wantest to come into Heaven.” “Let me in, brother; I must get in somewhere; if they would have taken me into Hell, I should not have come here.” “No,” said St. Peter, “thou shalt not enter.” “Then if thou wilt not let me in, take thy knapsack back, for I will have nothing at all from thee.” “Give it here, then,” said St. Peter. Then Brother Lustig gave him the knapsack into Heaven through the bars, and St. Peter took it, and hung it beside his seat. Then said Brother Lustig, “And now I wish myself inside my knapsack,” and in a second he was in it, and in Heaven, and St. Peter was forced to let him stay there.

Gambling Hansel

Once upon a time there was a man who did nothing but gamble, and for that reason people never called him anything but Gambling Hansel, and as he never ceased to gamble, he played away his house and all that he had. Now the very day before his creditors were to take his house from him, came the Lord and St. Peter, and asked him to give them shelter for the night. Then Gambling Hansel said, "For my part, you may stay the night, but I cannot give you a bed or anything to eat." So the Lord said he was just to take them in, and they themselves would buy something to eat, to which Gambling Hansel made no objection. Thereupon St. Peter gave him three groschen, and said he was to go to the baker's and fetch some bread. So Gambling Hansel went, but when he reached the house where the other gambling vagabonds were gathered together, they, although they had won all that he had, greeted him clamorously, and said, "Hansel, do come in." "Oh," said he, "do you want to win the three groschen too?" On this they would not let him go. So he went in, and played away the three groschen also. Meanwhile St. Peter and the Lord were waiting, and as he was so long in coming, they set out to meet him. When Gambling Hansel came, however, he pretended that the money had fallen into the gutter, and kept raking about in it all the while to find it, but our Lord already knew that he had lost it in play. St. Peter again gave him three groschen, and now he did not allow himself to be led away once more, but fetched them the loaf. Our Lord then inquired if he had no wine, and he said, "Alack, sir, the casks are all empty!" But the Lord said he was to go down into the cellar, for the best wine was still there. For a long time he would not believe this, but at length he said, "Well, I will go down, but I know that there is none there." When he turned the tap, however, lo and behold, the best of wine ran out! So he took it to them, and the two passed the night there. Early next day our Lord told Gambling Hansel that he might beg three favours. The Lord expected that he would ask to go to Heaven; but Gambling Hansel asked for a pack of cards with which he could win everything, for dice with which he would win everything, and for a tree whereon every kind of fruit would grow, and from which no one who had climbed up, could descend until he bade him do so. The Lord gave him all that he had asked, and departed with St. Peter.

And now Gambling Hansel at once set about gambling in real earnest, and before long he had gained half the world. Upon this St. Peter said to the Lord, "Lord, this thing must not go on, he will win, and thou lose, the whole world. We must send Death to him." When Death appeared, Gambling Hansel had just seated himself at the gaming-table, and Death said, "Hansel, come out a while." But Gambling Hansel said, "Just wait a little until the game is done, and in the meantime get up into that tree out there, and gather a little fruit that we may have something to munch on our way." Thereupon Death climbed up, but when he wanted to come down again, he could not, and Gambling Hansel left him up there for seven years, during which time no one died.

So St. Peter said to the Lord, “Lord, this thing must not go on. People no longer die; we must go ourselves.” And they went themselves, and the Lord commanded Hansel to let Death come down. So Hansel went at once to Death and said to him, “Come down,” and Death took him directly and put an end to him. They went away together and came to the next world, and then Gambling Hansel made straight for the door of Heaven, and knocked at it. “Who is there?” “Gambling Hansel.” “Ah, we will have nothing to do with him! Begone!” So he went to the door of Purgatory, and knocked once more. “Who is there?” “Gambling Hansel.” “Ah, there is quite enough weeping and wailing here without him. We do not want to gamble, just go away again.” Then he went to the door of Hell, and there they let him in. There was, however, no one at home but old Lucifer and the crooked devils who had just been doing their evil work in the world. And no sooner was Hansel there than he sat down to gamble again. Lucifer, however, had nothing to lose, but his mis-shapen devils, and Gambling Hansel won them from him, as with his cards he could not fail to do. And now he was off again with his crooked devils, and they went to Hohenfuert and pulled up a hop-pole, and with it went to Heaven and began to thrust the pole against it, and Heaven began to crack. So again St. Peter said, “Lord, this thing cannot go on, we must let him in, or he will throw us down from Heaven.” And they let him in. But Gambling Hansel instantly began to play again, and there was such a noise and confusion that there was no hearing what they themselves were saying. Therefore St. Peter once more said, “Lord, this cannot go on, we must throw him down, or he will make all Heaven rebellious.” So they went to him at once, and threw him down, and his soul broke into fragments, and went into the gambling vagabonds who are living this very day.

Hans in Luck

Hans had served his master for seven years, so he said to him, “Master, my time is up; now I should be glad to go back home to my mother; give me my wages.” The master answered, “You have served me faithfully and honestly; as the service was so shall the reward be;” and he gave Hans a piece of gold as big as his head. Hans pulled his handkerchief out of his pocket, wrapped up the lump in it, put it on his shoulder, and set out on the way home.

As he went on, always putting one foot before the other, he saw a horseman trotting quickly and merrily by on a lively horse. “Ah!” said Hans quite loud, “what a fine thing it is to ride! There you sit as on a chair; you stumble over no stones, you save your shoes, and get on, you don’t know how.”

The rider, who had heard him, stopped and called out, “Hollo! Hans, why do you go on foot, then?”

“I must,” answered he, “for I have this lump to carry home; it is true that it is gold, but I cannot hold my head straight for it, and it hurts my shoulder.”

“I will tell you what,” said the rider, “we will exchange: I will give you my horse, and you can give me your lump.”

“With all my heart,” said Hans, “but I can tell you, you will have to crawl along with it.”

The rider got down, took the gold, and helped Hans up; then gave him the bridle tight in his hands and said, “If you want to go at a really good pace, you must click your tongue and call out, “Jup! Jup!”

Hans was heartily delighted as he sat upon the horse and rode away so bold and free. After a little while he thought that it ought to go faster, and he began to click with his tongue and call out, “Jup! Jup!” The horse put himself into a sharp trot, and before Hans knew where he was, he was thrown off and lying in a ditch which separated the field from the highway. The horse would have gone off too if it had not been stopped by a countryman, who was coming along the road and driving a cow before him.

Hans got his limbs together and stood up on his legs again, but he was vexed, and said to the countryman, “It is a poor joke, this riding, especially when one gets hold of a mare like this, that kicks and throws one off, so that one has a chance of breaking one’s neck. Never again will I mount it. Now I like your cow, for one can walk quietly behind her, and have, over and above, one’s milk, butter and cheese every day without fail. What would I not give to have such a cow.” “Well,” said the countryman, “if it would give you so much pleasure, I do not mind giving the cow for the horse.” Hans agreed with the greatest delight; the countryman jumped upon the horse, and rode quickly away.

Hans drove his cow quietly before him, and thought over his lucky bargain. “If only I have a morsel of bread — and that can hardly fail me — I can eat butter and cheese with it as often as I like; if I am thirsty, I can milk my cow and drink the milk. Good heart, what more can I want?”

When he came to an inn he made a halt, and in his great content ate up what he had with him — his dinner and supper — and all he had, and with his last few farthings had half a glass of beer. Then he drove his cow onwards along the road to his mother's village.

As it drew nearer mid-day, the heat was more oppressive, and Hans found himself upon a moor which it took about an hour to cross. He felt it very hot and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth with thirst. "I can find a cure for this," thought Hans; "I will milk the cow now and refresh myself with the milk." He tied her to a withered tree, and as he had no pail he put his leather cap underneath; but try as he would, not a drop of milk came. And as he set himself to work in a clumsy way, the impatient beast at last gave him such a blow on his head with its hind foot, that he fell on the ground, and for a long time could not think where he was.

By good fortune a butcher just then came along the road with a wheel-barrow, in which lay a young pig. "What sort of a trick is this?" cried he, and helped the good Hans up. Hans told him what had happened. The butcher gave him his flask and said, "Take a drink and refresh yourself. The cow will certainly give no milk, it is an old beast; at the best it is only fit for the plough, or for the butcher." "Well, well," said Hans, as he stroked his hair down on his head, "who would have thought it? Certainly it is a fine thing when one can kill a beast like that at home; what meat one has! But I do not care much for beef, it is not juicy enough for me. A young pig like that now is the thing to have, it tastes quite different; and then there are the sausages!"

"Hark ye, Hans," said the butcher, "out of love for you I will exchange, and will let you have the pig for the cow." "Heaven repay you for your kindness!" said Hans as he gave up the cow, whilst the pig was unbound from the barrow, and the cord by which it was tied was put in his hand.

Hans went on, and thought to himself how everything was going just as he wished; if he did meet with any vexation it was immediately set right. Presently there joined him a lad who was carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They said good morning to each other, and Hans began to tell of his good luck, and how he had always made such good bargains. The boy told him that he was taking the goose to a christening-feast. "Just lift her," added he, and laid hold of her by the wings; "how heavy she is — she has been fattened up for the last eight weeks. Whoever has a bit of her when she is roasted will have to wipe the fat from both sides of his mouth." "Yes," said Hans, as he weighed her in one hand, "she is a good weight, but my pig is no bad one."

Meanwhile the lad looked suspiciously from one side to the other, and shook his head. "Look here," he said at length, "it may not be all right with your pig. In the village through which I passed, the Mayor himself had just had one stolen out of its sty. I fear — I fear that you have got hold of it there. They have sent out some people and it would be a bad business if they caught you with the pig; at the very least, you would be shut up in the dark hole."

The good Hans was terrified. “Goodness!” he said, “help me out of this fix; you know more about this place than I do, take my pig and leave me your goose.” “I shall risk something at that game,” answered the lad, “but I will not be the cause of your getting into trouble.” So he took the cord in his hand, and drove away the pig quickly along a by-path.

The good Hans, free from care, went homewards with the goose under his arm. “When I think over it properly,” said he to himself, “I have even gained by the exchange; first there is the good roast-meat, then the quantity of fat which will drip from it, and which will give me dripping for my bread for a quarter of a year, and lastly the beautiful white feathers; I will have my pillow stuffed with them, and then indeed I shall go to sleep without rocking. How glad my mother will be!”

As he was going through the last village, there stood a scissors-grinder with his barrow; as his wheel whirred he sang —

“I sharpen scissors and quickly grind,
My coat blows out in the wind behind.”

Hans stood still and looked at him; at last he spoke to him and said, “All’s well with you, as you are so merry with your grinding.” “Yes,” answered the scissors-grinder, “the trade has a golden foundation. A real grinder is a man who as often as he puts his hand into his pocket finds gold in it. But where did you buy that fine goose?”

“I did not buy it, but exchanged my pig for it.”

“And the pig?”

“That I got for a cow.”

“And the cow?”

“I took that instead of a horse.”

“And the horse?”

“For that I gave a lump of gold as big as my head.”

“And the gold?”

“Well, that was my wages for seven years’ service.”

“You have known how to look after yourself each time,” said the grinder. “If you can only get on so far as to hear the money jingle in your pocket whenever you stand up, you will have made your fortune.”

“How shall I manage that?” said Hans. “You must be a grinder, as I am; nothing particular is wanted for it but a grindstone, the rest finds itself. I have one here; it is certainly a little worn, but you need not give me anything for it but your goose; will you do it?”

“How can you ask?” answered Hans. “I shall be the luckiest fellow on earth; if I have money whenever I put my hand in my pocket, what need I trouble about any longer?” and he handed him the goose and received the grindstone in exchange. “Now,” said the grinder, as he took up an ordinary heavy stone that lay by him, “here is a strong stone for you into the bargain; you can hammer well upon it, and straighten your old nails. Take it with you and keep it carefully.”

Hans loaded himself with the stones, and went on with a contented heart; his eyes shone with joy. “I must have been born with a caul,” he cried; “everything I want happens to me just as if I were a Sunday-child.”

Meanwhile, as he had been on his legs since daybreak, he began to feel tired. Hunger also tormented him, for in his joy at the bargain by which he got the cow he had eaten up all his store of food at once. At last he could only go on with great trouble, and was forced to stop every minute; the stones, too, weighed him down dreadfully. Then he could not help thinking how nice it would be if he had not to carry them just then.

He crept like a snail to a well in a field, and there he thought that he would rest and refresh himself with a cool draught of water, but in order that he might not injure the stones in sitting down, he laid them carefully by his side on the edge of the well. Then he sat down on it, and was to stoop and drink, when he made a slip, pushed against the stones, and both of them fell into the water. When Hans saw them with his own eyes sinking to the bottom, he jumped for joy, and then knelt down, and with tears in his eyes thanked God for having shown him this favour also, and delivered him in so good a way, and without his having any need to reproach himself, from those heavy stones which had been the only things that troubled him.

“There is no man under the sun so fortunate as I,” he cried out. With a light heart and free from every burden he now ran on until he was with his mother at home.

Hans Married

There was once upon a time a young peasant named Hans, whose uncle wanted to find him a rich wife. He therefore seated Hans behind the stove, and had it made very hot. Then he fetched a pot of milk and plenty of white bread, gave him a bright newly-coined farthing in his hand, and said, “Hans, hold that farthing fast, crumble the white bread into the milk, and stay where you are, and do not stir from that spot till I come back.” “Yes,” said Hans, “I will do all that.” Then the wooer put on a pair of old patched trousers, went to a rich peasant’s daughter in the next village, and said, “Won’t you marry my nephew Hans — you will get an honest and sensible man who will suit you?” The covetous father asked, “How is it with regard to his means? Has he bread to break?” “Dear friend,” replied the wooer, “my young nephew has a snug berth, a nice bit of money in hand, and plenty of bread to break, besides he has quite as many patches as I have,” (and as he spoke, he slapped the patches on his trousers, but in that district small pieces of land were called patches also.) “If you will give yourself the trouble to go home with me, you shall see at once that all is as I have said.” Then the miser did not want to lose this good opportunity, and said, “If that is the case, I have nothing further to say against the marriage.”

So the wedding was celebrated on the appointed day, and when the young wife went out of doors to see the bridegroom’s property, Hans took off his Sunday coat and put on his patched smock-frock and said, “I might spoil my good coat.” Then together they went out and wherever a boundary line came in sight, or fields and meadows were divided from each other, Hans pointed with his finger and then slapped either a large or a small patch on his smock-frock, and said, “That patch is mine, and that too, my dearest, just look at it,” meaning thereby that his wife should not stare at the broad land, but look at his garment, which was his own.

“Were you indeed at the wedding?” “Yes, indeed I was there, and in full dress. My head-dress was of snow; then the sun came out, and it was melted. My coat was of cobwebs, and I had to pass by some thorns which tore it off me, my shoes were of glass, and I pushed against a stone and they said, “Klink,” and broke in two.

The Gold-Children

There was once a poor man and a poor woman who had nothing but a little cottage, and who earned their bread by fishing, and always lived from hand to mouth. But it came to pass one day when the man was sitting by the water-side, and casting his net, that he drew out a fish entirely of gold. As he was looking at the fish, full of astonishment, it began to speak and said, “Hark you, fisherman, if you will throw me back again into the water, I will change your little hut into a splendid castle.” Then the fisherman answered, “Of what use is a castle to me, if I have nothing to eat?” The gold fish continued, “That shall be taken care of, there will be a cupboard in the castle in which, when you open it, shall be dishes of the most delicate meats, and as many of them as you can desire.” “If that be true,” said the man, “then I can well do you a favour.” “Yes,” said the fish, “there is, however, the condition that you shall disclose to no one in the world, whosoever he may be, whence your good luck has come, if you speak but one single word, all will be over.” Then the man threw the wonderful fish back again into the water, and went home. But where his hovel had formerly stood, now stood a great castle. He opened wide his eyes, entered, and saw his wife dressed in beautiful clothes, sitting in a splendid room, and she was quite delighted, and said, “Husband, how has all this come to pass? It suits me very well.” “Yes,” said the man, “it suits me too, but I am frightfully hungry, just give me something to eat.” Said the wife, “But I have got nothing and don’t know where to find anything in this new house.” “There is no need of your knowing,” said the man, “for I see yonder a great cupboard, just unlock it.” When she opened it, there stood cakes, meat, fruit, wine, quite a bright prospect.

Then the woman cried joyfully, “What more can you want, my dear?” and they sat down, and ate and drank together. When they had had enough, the woman said, “But husband, whence come all these riches?” “Alas,” answered he, “do not question me about it, for I dare not tell you anything; if I disclose it to any one, then all our good fortune will fly.” “Very good,” said she, “if I am not to know anything, then I do not want to know anything.” However, she was not in earnest; she never rested day or night, and she goaded her husband until in his impatience he revealed that all was owing to a wonderful golden fish which he had caught, and to which in return he had given its liberty. And as soon as the secret was out, the splendid castle with the cupboard immediately disappeared, they were once more in the old fisherman’s hut, and the man was obliged to follow his former trade and fish. But fortune would so have it, that he once more drew out the golden fish. “Listen,” said the fish, “if you will throw me back into the water again, I will once more give you the castle with the cupboard full of roast and boiled meats; only be firm, for your life’s sake don’t reveal from whom you have it, or you will lose it all again!” “I will take good care,” answered the fisherman, and threw the fish back into the water. Now at home everything was once more in its former magnificence, and the wife was overjoyed at their good fortune, but curiosity left her no peace, so that after a couple of days she began to ask again how it had come to pass, and how he had managed to secure it. The man kept silence for a short time, but at last she made him so angry that he broke out, and betrayed the secret. In an instant the castle disappeared, and they were back again in their old hut. “Now you have got what you want,” said he; “and we can gnaw at a bare bone again.” “Ah,” said the woman, “I had rather not have riches if I am not to know from whom they come, for then I have no peace.”

The man went back to fish, and after a while he chanced to draw out the gold fish for a third time. “Listen,” said the fish, “I see very well that I am fated to fall into your hands, take me home and cut me into six pieces; give your wife two of them to eat, two to your horse and bury two of them in the ground, then they will bring you a blessing.” The fisherman took the fish home with him, and did as it had bidden him. It came to pass, however, that from the two pieces that were buried in the ground two golden lilies sprang up, that the horse had two golden foals, and the fisherman’s wife bore two children who were made entirely of gold. The children grew up, became tall and handsome, and the lilies and horses grew likewise. Then they said, “Father, we want to mount our golden steeds and travel out in the world.” But he answered sorrowfully, “How shall I bear it if you go away, and I know not how it fares with you?” Then they said, “The two golden lilies remain here. By them you can see how it is with us; if they are fresh, then we are in health; if they are withered, we are ill; if they perish, then we are dead.” So they rode forth and came to an inn, in which were many people, and when they perceived the gold-children they began to laugh, and jeer. When one of them heard the mocking he felt ashamed and would not go out into the world, but turned back and went home again to his father. But the other rode forward and reached a great forest. As he was about to enter it, the people said, It is not safe for you to ride through, the wood is full of robbers who would treat you badly. You will fare ill, and when they see that you are all of gold, and your horse likewise, they will assuredly kill you.’

But he would not allow himself to be frightened, and said, “I must and will ride through it.” Then he took bear-skins and covered himself and his horse with them, so that the gold was no more to be seen, and rode fearlessly into the forest. When he had ridden onward a little he heard a rustling in the bushes, and heard voices speaking together. From one side came cries of, “There is one,” but from the other, “Let him go, ’tis an idle fellow, as poor and bare as a church-mouse, what should we gain from him?”

So the gold-child rode joyfully through the forest, and no evil befell him. One day he entered a village wherein he saw a maiden, who was so beautiful that he did not believe that any more beautiful than she existed in the world. And as such a mighty love took possession of him, he went up to her and said, “I love thee with my whole heart, wilt thou be my wife?” He, too, pleased the maiden so much that she agreed and said, “Yes, I will be thy wife, and be true to thee my whole life long.” Then they were married, and just as they were in the greatest happiness, home came the father of the bride, and when he saw that his daughter's wedding was being celebrated, he was astonished, and said, “Where is the bridegroom?” They showed him the gold-child, who, however, still wore his bear-skins. Then the father said wrathfully, “A vagabond shall never have my daughter!” and was about to kill him. Then the bride begged as hard as she could, and said, “He is my husband, and I love him with all my heart!” until at last he allowed himself to be appeased. Nevertheless the idea never left his thoughts, so that next morning he rose early, wishing to see whether his daughter's husband was a common ragged beggar. But when he peeped in, he saw a magnificent golden man in the bed, and the cast-off bear-skins lying on the ground. Then he went back and thought, “What a good thing it was that I restrained my anger! I should have committed a great crime.” But the gold-child dreamed that he rode out to hunt a splendid stag, and when he awoke in the morning, he said to his wife, “I must go out hunting.” She was uneasy, and begged him to stay there, and said, “You might easily meet with a great misfortune,” but he answered, “I must and will go.”

Thereupon he got up, and rode forth into the forest, and it was not long before a fine stag crossed his path exactly according to his dream. He aimed and was about to shoot it, when the stag ran away. He gave chase over hedges and ditches for the whole day without feeling tired, but in the evening the stag vanished from his sight, and when the gold-child looked round him, he was standing before a little house, wherein was a witch. He knocked, and a little old woman came out and asked, “What are you doing so late in the midst of the great forest?” “Have you not seen a stag?” “Yes,” answered she, “I know the stag well,” and thereupon a little dog which had come out of the house with her, barked at the man violently. “Wilt thou be silent, thou odious toad,” said he, “or I will shoot thee dead.” Then the witch cried out in a passion, “What! will you slay my little dog?” and immediately transformed him, so that he lay like a stone, and his bride awaited him in vain and thought, “That which I so greatly dreaded, which lay so heavily on my heart, has come upon him!” But at home the other brother was standing by the gold-lilies, when one of them suddenly drooped. “Good heavens!” said he, “my brother has met with some great misfortune! I must away to see if I can possibly rescue him.” Then the father said, “Stay here, if I lose you also, what shall I do?” But he answered, “I must and will go forth!”

Then he mounted his golden horse, and rode forth and entered the great forest, where his brother lay turned to stone. The old witch came out of her house and called him, wishing to entrap him also, but he did not go near her, and said, “I will shoot you, if you will not bring my brother to life again.” She touched the stone, though very unwillingly, with her forefinger, and he was immediately restored to his human shape. But the two gold-children rejoiced when they saw each other again, kissed and caressed each other, and rode away together out of the forest, the one home to his bride, and the other to his father. The father then said, “I knew well that you had rescued your brother, for the golden lily suddenly rose up and blossomed out again.”

Then they lived happily, and all prospered with them until their death.

The Fox and the Geese

The fox once came to a meadow in which was a flock of fine fat geese, on which he smiled and said, “I come in the nick of time, you are sitting together quite beautifully, so that I can eat you up one after the other.” The geese cackled with terror, sprang up, and began to wail and beg piteously for their lives. But the fox would listen to nothing, and said, “There is no mercy to be had! You must die.” At length one of them took heart and said, “If we poor geese are to yield up our vigorous young lives, show us the only possible favour and allow us one more prayer, that we may not die in our sins, and then we will place ourselves in a row, so that you can always pick yourself out the fattest.” “Yes,” said the fox, “that is reasonable, and a pious request. Pray away, I will wait till you are done.” Then the first began a good long prayer, for ever saying, “Ga! Ga!” and as she would make no end, the second did not wait until her turn came, but began also, “Ga! Ga!” The third and fourth followed her, and soon they were all cackling together.

When they have done praying, the story shall be continued further, but at present they are still praying without stopping.”

The Poor Man and the Rich Man

In olden times, when the Lord himself still used to walk about on this earth amongst men, it once happened that he was tired and overtaken by the darkness before he could reach an inn. Now there stood on the road before him two houses facing each other; the one large and beautiful, the other small and poor. The large one belonged to a rich man, and the small one to a poor man.

Then the Lord thought, “I shall be no burden to the rich man, I will stay the night with him.” When the rich man heard some one knocking at his door, he opened the window and asked the stranger what he wanted. The Lord answered, “I only ask for a night’s lodging.”

Then the rich man looked at the traveler from head to foot, and as the Lord was wearing common clothes, and did not look like one who had much money in his pocket, he shook his head, and said, “No, I cannot take you in, my rooms are full of herbs and seeds; and if I were to lodge everyone who knocked at my door, I might very soon go begging myself. Go somewhere else for a lodging,” and with this he shut down the window and left the Lord standing there.

So the Lord turned his back on the rich man, and went across to the small house and knocked. He had hardly done so when the poor man opened the little door and bade the traveler come in. “Pass the night with me, it is already dark,” said he; “you cannot go any further to-night.” This pleased the Lord, and he went in. The poor man’s wife shook hands with him, and welcomed him, and said he was to make himself at home and put up with what they had got; they had not much to offer him, but what they had they would give him with all their hearts. Then she put the potatoes on the fire, and while they were boiling, she milked the goat, that they might have a little milk with them. When the cloth was laid, the Lord sat down with the man and his wife, and he enjoyed their coarse food, for there were happy faces at the table. When they had had supper and it was bed-time, the woman called her husband apart and said, “Hark you, dear husband, let us make up a bed of straw for ourselves to-night, and then the poor traveler can sleep in our bed and have a good rest, for he has been walking the whole day through, and that makes one weary.” “With all my heart,” he answered, “I will go and offer it to him;” and he went to the stranger and invited him, if he had no objection, to sleep in their bed and rest his limbs properly. But the Lord was unwilling to take their bed from the two old folks; however, they would not be satisfied, until at length he did it and lay down in their bed, while they themselves lay on some straw on the ground.

Next morning they got up before daybreak, and made as good a breakfast as they could for the guest. When the sun shone in through the little window, and the Lord had got up, he again ate with them, and then prepared to set out on his journey.

But as he was standing at the door he turned round and said, “As you are so kind and good, you may wish three things for yourselves and I will grant them.” Then the man said, “What else should I wish for but eternal happiness, and that we two, as long as we live, may be healthy and have every day our daily bread; for the third wish, I do not know what to have.” And the Lord said to him, “Will you wish for a new house instead of this old one?” “Oh, yes,” said the man; “if I can have that, too, I should like it very much.” And the Lord fulfilled his wish, and changed their old house into a new one, again gave them his blessing, and went on.

The sun was high when the rich man got up and leaned out of his window and saw, on the opposite side of the way, a new clean-looking house with red tiles and bright windows where the old hut used to be. He was very much astonished, and called his wife and said to her, “Tell me, what can have happened? Last night there was a miserable little hut standing there, and to-day there is a beautiful new house. Run over and see how that has come to pass.”

So his wife went and asked the poor man, and he said to her, “Yesterday evening a traveler came here and asked for a night’s lodging, and this morning when he took leave of us he granted us three wishes — eternal happiness, health during this life and our daily bread as well, and besides this, a beautiful new house instead of our old hut.”

When the rich man’s wife heard this, she ran back in haste and told her husband how it had happened. The man said, “I could tear myself to pieces! If I had but known that! That traveler came to our house too, and wanted to sleep here, and I sent him away.” “Quick!” said his wife, “get on your horse. You can still catch the man up, and then you must ask to have three wishes granted to you.”

The rich man followed the good counsel and galloped away on his horse, and soon came up with the Lord. He spoke to him softly and pleasantly, and begged him not to take it amiss that he had not let him in directly; he was looking for the front-door key, and in the meantime the stranger had gone away, if he returned the same way he must come and stay with him. “Yes,” said the Lord; “if I ever come back again, I will do so.” Then the rich man asked if might not wish for three things too, as his neighbor had done? “Yes,” said the Lord, he might, but it would not be to his advantage, and he had better not wish for anything; but the rich man thought that he could easily ask for something which would add to his happiness, if he only knew that it would be granted. So the Lord said to him, “Ride home, then, and three wishes which you shall form, shall be fulfilled.”

The rich man had now gained what he wanted, so he rode home, and began to consider what he should wish for. As he was thus thinking he let the bridle fall, and the horse began to caper about, so that he was continually disturbed in his meditations, and could not collect his thoughts at all. He patted its neck, and said, “Gently, Lisa,” but the horse only began new tricks. Then at last he was angry, and cried quite impatiently, “I wish your neck was broken!” Directly he had said the words, down the horse fell on the ground, and there it lay dead and never moved again. And thus was his first wish fulfilled. As he was miserly by nature, he did not like to leave the harness lying there; so he cut it off, and put it on his back; and now he had to go on foot. “I have still two wishes left,” said he, and comforted himself with that thought.

And now as he was walking slowly through the sand, and the sun was burning hot at noon-day, he grew quite hot-tempered and angry. The saddle hurt his back, and he had not yet any idea what to wish for. “If I were to wish for all the riches and treasures in the world,” said he to himself, “I should still to think of all kinds of other things later on, I know that, beforehand. But I will manage so that there is nothing at all left me to wish for afterwards.” Then he sighed and said, “Ah, if I were but that Bavarian peasant, who likewise had three wishes granted to him, and knew quite well what to do, and in the first place wished for a great deal of beer, and in the second for as much beer as he was able to drink, and in the third for a barrel of beer into the bargain.”

Many a time he thought he had found it, but then it seemed to him to be, after all, too little. Then it came into his mind, what an easy life his wife had, for she stayed at home in a cool room and enjoyed herself. This really did vex him, and before he was aware, he said, “I just wish she was sitting there on this saddle, and could not get off it, instead of my having to drag it along on my back.” And as the last word was spoken, the saddle disappeared from his back, and he saw that his second wish had been fulfilled. Then he really did feel warm. He began to run and wanted to be quite alone in his own room at home, to think of something really large for his last wish. But when he arrived there and opened the parlour-door, he saw his wife sitting in the middle of the room on the saddle, crying and complaining, and quite unable to get off it. So he said, “Do bear it, and I will wish for all the riches on earth for thee, only stay where thou art.” She, however, called him a fool, and said, “What good will all the riches on earth do me, if I am to sit on this saddle? Thou hast wished me on it, so thou must help me off.” So whether he would or not, he was forced to let his third wish be that she should be quit of the saddle, and able to get off it, and immediately the wish was fulfilled. So he got nothing by it but vexation, trouble, abuse, and the loss of his horse; but the poor people lived happily, quietly, and piously until their happy death.

The Singing, Springing Lark

There was once on a time a man who was about to set out on a long journey, and on parting he asked his three daughters what he should bring back with him for them. Whereupon the eldest wished for pearls, the second wished for diamonds, but the third said, “Dear father, I should like a singing, soaring lark.” The father said, “Yes, if I can get it, you shall have it,” kissed all three, and set out. Now when the time had come for him to be on his way home again, he had brought pearls and diamonds for the two eldest, but he had sought everywhere in vain for a singing, soaring lark for the youngest, and he was very unhappy about it, for she was his favorite child. Then his road lay through a forest, and in the midst of it was a splendid castle, and near the castle stood a tree, but quite on the top of the tree, he saw a singing, soaring lark. “Aha, you come just at the right moment!” he said, quite delighted, and called to his servant to climb up and catch the little creature. But as he approached the tree, a lion leapt from beneath it, shook himself, and roared till the leaves on the trees trembled. “He who tries to steal my singing, soaring lark,” he cried, “will I devour.” Then the man said, “I did not know that the bird belonged to thee. I will make amends for the wrong I have done and ransom myself with a large sum of money, only spare my life.” The lion said, “Nothing can save thee, unless thou wilt promise to give me for mine own what first meets thee on thy return home; and if thou wilt do that, I will grant thee thy life, and thou shalt have the bird for thy daughter, into the bargain.” But the man hesitated and said, “That might be my youngest daughter, she loves me best, and always runs to meet me on my return home.” The servant, however, was terrified and said, “Why should your daughter be the very one to meet you, it might as easily be a cat, or dog?” Then the man allowed himself to be over-persuaded, took the singing, soaring lark, and promised to give the lion whatsoever should first meet him on his return home.

When he reached home and entered his house, the first who met him was no other than his youngest and dearest daughter, who came running up, kissed and embraced him, and when she saw that he had brought with him a singing, soaring lark, she was beside herself with joy. The father, however, could not rejoice, but began to weep, and said, “My dearest child, I have bought the little bird dear. In return for it, I have been obliged to promise thee to a savage lion, and when he has thee he will tear thee in pieces and devour thee,” and he told her all, just as it had happened, and begged her not to go there, come what might. But she consoled him and said, “Dearest father, indeed your promise must be fulfilled. I will go thither and soften the lion, so that I may return to thee safely.” Next morning she had the road pointed out to her, took leave, and went fearlessly out into the forest. The lion, however, was an enchanted prince and was by day a lion, and all his people were lions with him, but in the night they resumed their natural human shapes. On her arrival she was kindly received and led into the castle.

When night came, the lion turned into a handsome man, and their wedding was celebrated with great magnificence. They lived happily together, remained awake at night, and slept in the daytime. One day he came and said, “To-morrow there is a feast in thy father’s house, because your eldest sister is to be married, and if thou art inclined to go there, my lions shall conduct thee.” She said, “Yes, I should very much like to see my father again,” and went thither, accompanied by the lions. There was great joy when she arrived, for they had all believed that she had been torn in pieces by the lion, and had long ceased to live. But she told them what a handsome husband she had, and how well off she was, remained with them while the wedding-feast lasted, and then went back again to the forest. When the second daughter was about to be married, and she was again invited to the wedding, she said to the lion, “This time I will not be alone, thou must come with me.” The lion, however, said that it was too dangerous for him, for if when there a ray from a burning candle fell on him, he would be changed into a dove, and for seven years long would have to fly about with the doves. She said, “Ah, but do come with me, I will take great care of thee, and guard thee from all light.” So they went away together, and took with them their little child as well. She had a chamber built there, so strong and thick that no ray could pierce through it; in this he was to shut himself up when the candles were lit for the wedding-feast. But the door was made of green wood which warped and left a little crack which no one noticed. The wedding was celebrated with magnificence, but when the procession with all its candles and torches came back from church, and passed by this apartment, a ray about the breadth of a hair fell on the King’s son, and when this ray touched him, he was transformed in an instant, and when she came in and looked for him, she did not see him, but a white dove was sitting there. The dove said to her, “For seven years must I fly about the world, but at every seventh step that you take I will let fall a drop of red blood and a white feather, and these will show thee the way, and if thou followest the trace thou canst release me.” Thereupon the dove flew out at the door, and she followed him, and at every seventh step a red drop of blood and a little white feather fell down and showed her the way.

So she went continually further and further in the wide world, never looking about her or resting, and the seven years were almost past; then she rejoiced and thought that they would soon be delivered, and yet they were so far from it! Once when they were thus moving onwards, no little feather and no drop of red blood fell, and when she raised her eyes the dove had disappeared. And as she thought to herself, “In this no man can help thee,” she climbed up to the sun, and said to him, “Thou shinest into every crevice, and over every peak, hast thou not seen a white dove flying?” “No,” said the sun, “I have seen none, but I present thee with a casket, open it when thou art in sorest need.” Then she thanked the sun, and went on until evening came and the moon appeared; she then asked her, “Thou shinest the whole night through, and on every field and forest, hast thou not seen a white dove flying?” “No,” said the moon, “I have seen no dove, but here I give thee an egg, break it when thou art in great need." She thanked the moon, and went on until the night wind came up and blew on her, then she said to it, "Thou blowest over every tree and under every leaf, hast thou not seen a white dove flying?" "No," said the night wind, "I have seen none, but I will ask the three other winds, perhaps they have seen it." The east wind and the west wind came, and had seen nothing, but the south wind said, "I have seen the white dove, it has flown to the Red Sea, where it has become a lion again, for the seven years are over, and the lion is there fighting with a dragon; the dragon, however, is an enchanted princess." The night wind then said to her, "I will advise thee; go to the Red Sea, on the right bank are some tall reeds, count them, break off the eleventh, and strike the dragon with it, then the lion will be able to subdue it, and both then will regain their human form. After that, look round and thou wilt see the griffin which is by the Red Sea; swing thyself, with thy beloved, on to his back, and the bird will carry you over the sea to your own home. Here is a nut for thee, when thou are above the center of the sea, let the nut fall, it will immediately shoot up, and a tall nut-tree will grow out of the water on which the griffin may rest; for if he cannot rest, he will not be strong enough to carry you across, and if thou forgettest to throw down the nut, he will let you fall into the sea."

Then she went thither, and found everything as the night wind had said. She counted the reeds by the sea, and cut off the eleventh, struck the dragon therewith, whereupon the lion overcame it, and immediately both of them regained their human shapes. But when the princess, who had before been the dragon, was delivered from enchantment, she took the youth by the arm, seated herself on the griffin, and carried him off with her. There stood the poor maiden who had wandered so far and was again forsaken. She sat down and cried, but at last she took courage and said, "Still I will go as far as the wind blows and as long as the cock crows, until I find him," and she went forth by long, long roads, until at last she came to the castle where both of them were living together; there she heard that soon a feast was to be held, in which they would celebrate their wedding, but she said, "God still helps me," and opened the casket that the sun had given her. A dress lay therein as brilliant as the sun itself. So she took it out and put it on, and went up into the castle, and everyone, even the bride herself, looked at her with astonishment. The dress pleased the bride so well that she thought it might do for her wedding-dress, and asked if it was for sale? "Not for money or land," answered she, "but for flesh and blood." The bride asked her what she meant by that, so she said, "Let me sleep a night in the chamber where the bridegroom sleeps." The bride would not, yet wanted very much to have the dress; at last she consented, but the page was to give the prince a sleeping-draught. When it was night, therefore, and the youth was already asleep, she was led into the chamber; she seated herself on the bed and said, "I have followed after thee for seven years. I have been to the sun and the moon, and the four winds, and have enquired for thee, and have helped thee against the dragon; wilt thou, then quite forget me?" But the prince slept so soundly that it only seemed to him as if the wind were whistling outside in the fir-trees.

When therefore day broke, she was led out again, and had to give up the golden dress. And as that even had been of no avail, she was sad, went out into a meadow, sat down there, and wept. While she was sitting there, she thought of the egg which the moon had given her; she opened it, and there came out a clucking hen with twelve chickens all of gold, and they ran about chirping, and crept again under the old hen's wings; nothing more beautiful was ever seen in the world! Then she arose, and drove them through the meadow before her, until the bride looked out of the window. The little chickens pleased her so much that she immediately came down and asked if they were for sale. "Not for money or land, but for flesh and blood; let me sleep another night in the chamber where the bridegroom sleeps." The bride said, "Yes," intending to cheat her as on the former evening. But when the prince went to bed he asked the page what the murmuring and rustling in the night had been? On this the page told all; that he had been forced to give him a sleeping-draught, because a poor girl had slept secretly in the chamber, and that he was to give him another that night. The prince said, "Pour out the draught by the bed-side." At night, she was again led in, and when she began to relate how ill all had fared with her, he immediately recognized his beloved wife by her voice, sprang up and cried, "Now I really am released! I have been as it were in a dream, for the strange princess has bewitched me so that I have been compelled to forget thee, but God has delivered me from the spell at the right time." Then they both left the castle secretly in the night, for they feared the father of the princess, who was a sorcerer, and they seated themselves on the griffin which bore them across the Red Sea, and when they were in the midst of it, she let fall the nut. Immediately a tall nut-tree grew up, whereon the bird rested, and then carried them home, where they found their child, who had grown tall and beautiful, and they lived thenceforth happily until their death.

The Goose-Girl

THERE was once upon a time an old Queen whose husband had been dead for many years, and she had a beautiful daughter. When the princess grew up she was betrothed to a prince who lived at a great distance. When the time came for her to be married, and she had to journey forth into the distant kingdom, the aged Queen packed up for her many costly vessels of silver and gold, and trinkets also of gold and silver; and cups and jewels, in short, everything which appertained to a royal dowry, for she loved her child with all her heart. She likewise sent her maid in waiting, who was to ride with her, and hand her over to the bridegroom, and each had a horse for the journey, but the horse of the King's daughter was called Falada, and could speak. So when the hour of parting had come, the aged mother went into her bedroom, took a small knife and cut her finger with it until it bled, then she held a white handkerchief to it into which she let three drops of blood fall, gave it to her daughter and said, "Dear child, preserve this carefully, it will be of service to you on your way."

So they took a sorrowful leave of each other; the princess put the piece of cloth in her bosom, mounted her horse, and then went away to her bridegroom. After she had ridden for a while she felt a burning thirst, and said to her waiting-maid, "Dismount, and take my cup which thou hast brought with thee for me, and get me some water from the stream, for I should like to drink." "If you are thirsty," said the waiting-maid, "get off your horse yourself, and lie down and drink out of the water, I don't choose to be your servant." So in her great thirst the princess alighted, bent down over the water in the stream and drank, and was not allowed to drink out of the golden cup. Then she said, "Ah, Heaven!" and the three drops of blood answered, "If thy mother knew, her heart would break." But the King's daughter was humble, said nothing, and mounted her horse again. She rode some miles further, but the day was warm, the sun scorched her, and she was thirsty once more, and when they came to a stream of water, she again cried to her waiting-maid, "Dismount, and give me some water in my golden cup," for she had long ago forgotten the girl's ill words. But the waiting-maid said still more haughtily, "If you wish to drink, drink as you can, I don't choose to be your maid." Then in her great thirst the King's daughter alighted, bent over the flowing stream, wept and said, "Ah, Heaven!" and the drops of blood again replied, "If thy mother knew this, her heart would break." And as she was thus drinking and leaning right over the stream, the handkerchief with the three drops of blood fell out of her bosom, and floated away with the water without her observing it, so great was her trouble. The waiting-maid, however, had seen it, and she rejoiced to think that she had now power over the bride, for since the princess had lost the drops of blood, she had become weak and powerless. So now when she wanted to mount her horse again, the one that was called Falada, the waiting-maid said, "Falada is more suitable for me, and my nag will do for thee" and the princess had to be content with that. Then the waiting-maid, with many hard words, bade the princess exchange her royal apparel for her own shabby clothes; and at length she was compelled to swear by the clear sky above her, that she would not say one word of this to any one at the royal court, and if she had not taken this oath she would have been killed on the spot. But Falada saw all this, and observed it well.

The waiting-maid now mounted Falada, and the true bride the bad horse, and thus they traveled onwards, until at length they entered the royal palace. There were great rejoicings over her arrival, and the prince sprang forward to meet her, lifted the waiting-maid from her horse, and thought she was his consort. She was conducted upstairs, but the real princess was left standing below. Then the old King looked out of the window and saw her standing in the courtyard, and how dainty and delicate and beautiful she was, and instantly went to the royal apartment, and asked the bride about the girl she had with her who was standing down below in the courtyard, and who she was? “I picked her up on my way for a companion; give the girl something to work at, that she may not stand idle.” But the old King had no work for her, and knew of none, so he said, “I have a little boy who tends the geese, she may help him.” The boy was called Conrad, and the true bride had to help him to tend the geese. Soon afterwards the false bride said to the young King, “Dearest husband, I beg you to do me a favour.” He answered, “I will do so most willingly.” “Then send for the knacker, and have the head of the horse on which I rode here cut off, for it vexed me on the way.” In reality, she was afraid that the horse might tell how she had behaved to the King’s daughter. Then she succeeded in making the King promise that it should be done, and the faithful Falada was to die; this came to the ears of the real princess, and she secretly promised to pay the knacker a piece of gold if he would perform a small service for her. There was a great dark-looking gateway in the town, through which morning and evening she had to pass with the geese: would he be so good as to nail up Falada’s head on it, so that she might see him again, more than once. The knacker’s man promised to do that, and cut off the head, and nailed it fast beneath the dark gateway.

Early in the morning, when she and Conrad drove out their flock beneath this gateway, she said in passing,

“Alas, Falada, hanging there!”

Then the head answered,

“Alas, young Queen, how ill you fare!
If this your tender mother knew,
Her heart would surely break in two.”

Then they went still further out of the town, and drove their geese into the country. And when they had come to the meadow, she sat down and unbound her hair which was like pure gold, and Conrad saw it and delighted in its brightness, and wanted to pluck out a few hairs. Then she said,

“Blow, blow, thou gentle wind, I say,
Blow Conrad’s little hat away,
And make him chase it here and there,
Until I have braided all my hair,
And bound it up again.”

And there came such a violent wind that it blew Conrad’s hat far away across country, and he was forced to run after it. When he came back she had finished combing her hair and was putting it up again, and he could not get any of it. Then Conrad was angry, and would not speak to her, and thus they watched the geese until the evening, and then they went home.

Next day when they were driving the geese out through the dark gateway, the maiden said,

“Alas, Falada, hanging there!”

Falada answered,

“Alas, young Queen, how ill you fare!
If this your tender mother knew,
Her heart would surely break in two.”

And she sat down again in the field and began to comb out her hair, and Conrad ran and tried to clutch it, so she said in haste,

“Blow, blow, thou gentle wind, I say,
Blow Conrad’s little hat away,
And make him chase it here and there,
Until I have braided all my hair,
And bound it up again.”

Then the wind blew, and blew his little hat off his head and far away, and Conrad was forced to run after it, and when he came back, her hair had been put up a long time, and he could get none of it, and so they looked after their geese till evening came.

But in the evening after they had got home, Conrad went to the old King, and said, “I won’t tend the geese with that girl any longer!” “Why not?” inquired the aged King. “Oh, because she vexes me the whole day long.” Then the aged King commanded him to relate what it was that she did to him. And Conrad said, “In the morning when we pass beneath the dark gateway with the flock, there is a sorry horse’s head on the wall, and she says to it,

“Alas, Falada, hanging there!”

And the head replies,

“Alas, young Queen how ill you fare!
If this your tender mother knew,
Her heart would surely break in two.”

And Conrad went on to relate what happened on the goose pasture, and how when there he had to chase his hat.

The aged King commanded him to drive his flock out again next day, and as soon as morning came, he placed himself behind the dark gateway, and heard how the maiden spoke to the head of Falada, and then he too went into the country, and hid himself in the thicket in the meadow. There he soon saw with his own eyes the goose-girl and the goose-boy bringing their flock, and how after a while she sat down and unplaited her hair, which shone with radiance. And soon she said,

"Blow, blow, thou gentle wind, I say,
Blow Conrad's little hat away,
And make him chase it here and there,
Until I have braided all my hair,
And bound it up again."

Then came a blast of wind and carried off Conrad's hat, so that he had to run far away, while the maiden quietly went on combing and plaiting her hair, all of which the King observed. Then, quite unseen, he went away, and when the goose-girl came home in the evening, he called her aside, and asked why she did all these things. "I may not tell you that, and I dare not lament my sorrows to any human being, for I have sworn not to do so by the heaven which is above me; if I had not done that, I should have lost my life." He urged her and left her no peace, but he could draw nothing from her. Then said he, "If thou wilt not tell me anything, tell thy sorrows to the iron-stove there," and he went away. Then she crept into the iron-stove, and began to weep and lament, and emptied her whole heart, and said, "Here am I deserted by the whole world, and yet I am a King's daughter, and a false waiting-maid has by force brought me to such a pass that I have been compelled to put off my royal apparel, and she has taken my place with my bridegroom, and I have to perform menial service as a goose-girl. If my mother did but know that, her heart would break."

The aged King, however, was standing outside by the pipe of the stove, and was listening to what she said, and heard it. Then he came back again, and bade her come out of the stove. And royal garments were placed on her, and it was marvellous how beautiful she was! The aged King summoned his son, and revealed to him that he had got the false bride who was only a waiting-maid, but that the true one was standing there, as the sometime goose-girl. The young King rejoiced with all his heart when he saw her beauty and youth, and a great feast was made ready to which all the people and all good friends were invited. At the head of the table sat the bridegroom with the King's daughter at one side of him, and the waiting-maid on the other, but the waiting-maid was blinded, and did not recognize the princess in her dazzling array. When they had eaten and drunk, and were merry, the aged King asked the waiting-maid as a riddle, what a person deserved who had behaved in such and such a way to her master, and at the same time related the whole story, and asked what sentence such an one merited? Then the false bride said, “She deserves no better fate than to be stripped entirely naked, and put in a barrel which is studded inside with pointed nails, and two white horses should be harnessed to it, which will drag her along through one street after another, till she is dead.” “It is thou,” said the aged King, “and thou hast pronounced thine own sentence, and thus shall it be done unto thee.” And when the sentence had been carried out, the young King married his true bride, and both of them reigned over their kingdom in peace and happiness.

The Young Giant

Once on a time a countryman had a son who was as big as a thumb, and did not become any bigger, and during several years did not grow one hair's breadth. Once when the father was going out to plough, the little one said, "Father, I will go out with you." "Thou wouldst go out with me?" said the father. "Stay here, thou wilt be of no use out there, besides thou mightest get lost!" Then Thumbling began to cry, and for the sake of peace his father put him in his pocket, and took him with him. When he was outside in the field, he took him out again, and set him in a freshly-cut furrow. Whilst he was there, a great giant came over the hill. "Do thou see that great bogie?" said the father, for he wanted to frighten the little fellow to make him good; "he is coming to fetch thee." The giant, however, had scarcely taken two steps with his long legs before he was in the furrow. He took up little Thumbling carefully with two fingers, examined him, and without saying one word went away with him. His father stood by, but could not utter a sound for terror, and he thought nothing else but that his child was lost, and that as long as he lived he should never set eyes on him again.

The giant, however, carried him home, suckled him, and Thumbling grew and became tall and strong after the manner of giants. When two years had passed, the old giant took him into the forest, wanted to try him, and said, "Pull up a stick for thyself." Then the boy was already so strong that he tore up a young tree out of the earth by the roots. But the giant thought, "We must do better than that," took him back again, and suckled him two years longer. When he tried him, his strength had increased so much that he could tear an old tree out of the ground. That was still not enough for the giant; he again suckled him for two years, and when he then went with him into the forest and said, "Now just tear up a proper stick for me," the boy tore up the strongest oak-tree from the earth, so that it split, and that was a mere trifle to him. "Now that will do," said the giant, "thou art perfect," and took him back to the field from whence he had brought him. His father was there following the plough. The young giant went up to him, and said, "Does my father see what a fine man his son has grown into?"

The farmer was alarmed, and said, "No, thou art not my son; I don't want thee leave me!" "Truly I am your son; allow me to do your work, I can plough as well as you, nay better." "No, no, thou art not my son; and thou canst not plough go away!" However, as he was afraid of this great man, he left go of the plough, stepped back and stood at one side of the piece of land. Then the youth took the plough, and just pressed it with one hand, but his grasp was so strong that the plough went deep into the earth. The farmer could not bear to see that, and called to him, "If thou art determined to plough, thou must not press so hard on it, that makes bad work." The youth, however, unharnessed the horses, and drew the plough himself, saying, "Just go home, father, and bid my mother make ready a large dish of food, and in the meantime I will go over the field." Then the farmer went home, and ordered his wife to prepare the food; but the youth ploughed the field which was two acres large, quite alone, and then he harnessed himself to the harrow, and harrowed the whole of the land, using two harrows at once. When he had done it, he went into the forest, and pulled up two oak-trees, laid them across his shoulders, and hung on them one harrow behind and one before, and also one horse behind and one before, and carried all as if it had been a bundle of straw, to his parents' house. When he entered the yard, his mother did not recognize him, and asked, "Who is that horrible tall man?" The farmer said, "That is our son." She said, "No that cannot be our son, we never had such a tall one, ours was a little thing." She called to him, "Go away, we do not want thee!" The youth was silent, but led his horses to the stable, gave them some oats and hay, and all that they wanted. When he had done this, he went into the parlour, sat down on the bench and said, "Mother, now I should like something to eat, will it soon be ready?" Then she said, "Yes," and brought in two immense dishes full of food, which would have been enough to satisfy herself and her husband for a week. The youth, however, ate the whole of it himself, and asked if she had nothing more to set before him. "No," she replied, "that is all we have." "But that was only a taste, I must have more." She did not dare to oppose him, and went and put a huge caldron full of food on the fire, and when it was ready, carried it in. "At length come a few crumbs," said he, and ate all there was, but it was still not sufficient to appease his hunger. Then said he, "Father, I see well that with you I shall never have food enough; if you will get me an iron staff which is strong, and which I cannot break against my knees, I will go out into the world." The farmer was glad, put his two horses in his cart, and fetched from the smith a staff so large and thick, that the two horses could only just bring it away. The youth laid it across his knees, and snap! he broke it in two in the middle like a bean-stalk, and threw it away. The father then harnessed four horses, and brought a bar which was so long and thick, that the four horses could only just drag it. The son snapped this also in twain against his knees, threw it away, and said, "Father, this can be of no use to me, you must harness more horses, and bring a stronger staff." So the father harnessed eight horses, and brought one which was so long and thick, that the eight horses could only just carry it. When the son took it in his hand, he broke off a bit from the top of it also, and said, "Father, I see that you will not be able to procure me any such staff as I want, I will remain no longer with you."

So he went away, and gave out that he was a smith's apprentice. He arrived at a village, wherein lived a smith who was a greedy fellow, who never did a kindness to any one, but wanted everything for himself. The youth went into the smithy and asked if he needed a journeyman. "Yes," said the smith, and looked at him, and thought, "That is a strong fellow who will strike out well, and earn his bread." So he asked, "How much wages dost thou want?" "I don't want any at all," he replied, "only every fortnight, when the other journeymen are paid, I will give thee two blows, and thou must bear them." The miser was heartily satisfied, and thought he would thus save much money. Next morning, the strange journeyman was to begin to work, but when the master brought the glowing bar, and the youth struck his first blow, the iron flew asunder, and the anvil sank so deep into the earth, that there was no bringing it out again. Then the miser grew angry, and said, "Oh, but I can't make any use of you, you strike far too powerfully; what will you have for the one blow?"

Then said he, "I will only give you quite a small blow, that's all." And he raised his foot, and gave him such a kick that he flew away over four loads of hay. Then he sought out the thickest iron bar in the smithy for himself, took it as a stick in his hand and went onwards.

When he had walked for some time, he came to a small farm, and asked the bailiff if he did not require a head-servant. "Yes," said the bailiff, "I can make use of one; you look a strong fellow who can do something, how much a year do you want as wages?" He again replied that he wanted no wages at all, but that every year he would give him three blows, which he must bear. Then the bailiff was satisfied, for he, too, was a covetous fellow. Next morning all the servants were to go into the wood, and the others were already up, but the head-servant was still in bed. Then one of them called to him, "Get up, it is time; we are going into the wood, and thou must go with us." "Ah," said he quite roughly and surlily, "you may just go, then; I shall be back again before any of you." Then the others went to the bailiff, and told him that the head-man was still lying in bed, and would not go into the wood with them. The bailiff said they were to awaken him again, and tell him to harness the horses. The head-man, however, said as before, "Just go there, I shall be back again before any of you." And then he stayed in bed two hours longer. At length he arose from the feathers, but first he got himself two bushels of peas from the loft, made himself some broth with them, ate it at his leisure, and when that was done, went and harnessed the horses, and drove into the wood. Not far from the wood was a ravine through which he had to pass, so he first drove the horses on, and then stopped them, and went behind the cart, took trees and brushwood, and made a great barricade, so that no horse could get through. When he was entering the wood, the others were just driving out of it with their loaded carts to go home; then said he to them, "Drive on, I will still get home before you do." He did not drive far into the wood, but at once tore two of the very largest trees of all out of the earth, threw them on his cart, and turned round. When he came to the barricade, the others were still standing there, not able to get through. "Don't you see," said he, "that if you had stayed with me, you would have got home just as quickly, and would have had another hour's sleep?" He now wanted to drive on, but his horses could not work their way through, so he unharnessed them, laid them on the top of the cart, took the shafts in his own hands, and pulled it all through, and he did this just as easily as if it had been laden with feathers. When he was over, he said to the others, "There, you see, I have got over quicker than you," and drove on, and the others had to stay where they were. In the yard, however, he took a tree in his hand, showed it to the bailiff, and said, "Isn't that a fine bundle of wood?” Then said the bailiff to his wife, “The servant is a good one, if he does sleep long, he is still home before the others.” So he served the bailiff for a year, and when that was over, and the other servants were getting their wages, he said it was time for him to take his too. The bailiff, however, was afraid of the blows which he was to receive, and earnestly entreated him to excuse him from having them; for rather than that, he himself would be head-servant, and the youth should be bailiff. “No,” said he, “I will not be a bailiff, I am head-servant, and will remain so, but I will administer that which we agreed on.” The bailiff was willing to give him whatsoever he demanded, but it was of no use, the head-servant said no to everything. Then the bailiff did not know what to do, and begged for a fortnight’s delay, for he wanted to find some way of escape. The head-servant consented to this delay. The bailiff summoned all his clerks together, and they were to think the matter over, and give him advice. The clerks pondered for a long time, but at last they said that no one was sure of his life with the head-servant, for he could kill a man as easily as a midge, and that the bailiff ought to make him get into the well and clean it, and when he was down below, they would roll up one of the mill-stones which was lying there, and throw it on his head; and then he would never return to daylight. The advice pleased the bailiff, and the head-servant was quite willing to go down the well. When he was standing down below at the bottom, they rolled down the largest mill-stone and thought they had broken his skull, but he cried, “Chase away those hens from the well, they are scratching in the sand up there, and throwing the grains into my eyes, so that I can’t see.” So the bailiff cried, “Sh-sh,” and pretended to frighten the hens away. When the head-servant had finished his work, he climbed up and said, “Just look what a beautiful neck-tie I have on,” and behold it was the mill-stone which he was wearing round his neck. The head-servant now wanted to take his reward, but the bailiff again begged for a fortnight’s delay. The clerks met together and advised him to send the head-servant to the haunted mill to grind corn by night, for from thence as yet no man had ever returned in the morning alive. The proposal pleased the bailiff, he called the head-servant that very evening, and ordered him to take eight bushels of corn to the mill, and grind it that night, for it was wanted. So the head-servant went to the loft, and put two bushels in his right pocket, and two in his left, and took four in a wallet, half on his back, and half on his breast, and thus laden went to the haunted mill. The miller told him that he could grind there very well by day, but not by night, for the mill was haunted, and that up to the present time whosoever had gone into it at night had been found in the morning lying dead inside. He said, “I will manage it, just you go away to bed.” Then he went into the mill, and poured out the corn. About eleven o’clock he went into the miller’s room, and sat down on the bench. When he had sat there a while, a door suddenly opened, and a large table came in, and on the table, wine and roasted meats placed themselves, and much good food besides, but everything came of itself, for no one was there to carry it. After this the chairs pushed themselves up, but no people came, until all at once he beheld fingers, which handled knives and forks, and laid food on the plates, but with this exception he saw nothing. As he was hungry, and saw the food, he, too, place himself at the table, ate with those who were eating and enjoyed it. When he had had enough, and the others also had quite emptied their dishes, he distinctly heard all the candles being suddenly snuffed out, and as it was now pitch dark, he felt something like a box on the ear. Then he said, "If anything of that kind comes again, I shall strike out in return." And when he had received a second box on the ear, he, too struck out. And so it continued the whole night. He took nothing without returning it, but repaid everything with interest, and did not lay about him in vain. At daybreak, however, everything ceased. When the miller had got up, he wanted to look after him, and wondered if he were still alive. Then the youth said, "I have eaten my fill, have received some boxes on the ears, but I have given some in return." The miller rejoiced, and said that the mill was now released from the spell, and wanted to give him much money as a reward. But he said, "Money, I will not have, I have enough of it." So he took his meal on his back, went home, and told the bailiff that he had done what he had been told to do, and would now have the reward agreed on. When the bailiff heard that, he was seriously alarmed and quite beside himself; he walked backwards and forwards in the room, and drops of perspiration ran down from his forehead. Then he opened the window to get some fresh air, but before he was aware, the head-servant had given him such a kick that he flew through the window out into the air, and so far away that no one ever saw him again. Then said the head-servant to the bailiff's wife, "If he does not come back, you must take the other blow." She cried, "No, no I cannot bear it," and opened the other window, because drops of perspiration were running down her forehead. Then he gave her such a kick that she, too, flew out, and as she was lighter she went much higher than her husband. Her husband cried, "Do come to me," but she replied, "Come thou to me, I cannot come to thee." And they hovered about there in the air, and could not get to each other, and whether they are still hovering about, or not, I do not know, but the young giant took up his iron bar, and went on his way.

The Gnome

There was once upon a time a rich King who had three daughters, who daily went to walk in the palace garden, and the King was a great lover of all kinds of fine trees, but there was one for which he had such an affection, that if anyone gathered an apple from it he wished him a hundred fathoms underground. And when harvest time came, the apples on this tree were all as red as blood. The three daughters went every day beneath the tree, and looked to see if the wind had not blown down an apple, but they never by any chance found one, and the tree was so loaded with them that it was almost breaking, and the branches hung down to the ground. Then the King's youngest child had a great desire for an apple, and said to her sisters, "Our father loves us far too much to wish us underground, it is my belief that he would only do that to people who were strangers." And while she was speaking, the child plucked off quite a large apple, and ran to her sisters, saying, "Just taste, my dear little sisters, for never in my life have I tasted anything so delightful." Then the two other sisters also ate some of the apple, whereupon all three sank deep down into the earth, where they could hear no cock crow.

When mid-day came, the King wished to call them to come to dinner, but they were nowhere to be found. He sought them everywhere in the palace and garden, but could not find them. Then he was much troubled, and made known to the whole land that whosoever brought his daughters back again should have one of them to wife. Hereupon so many young men went about the country in search, that there was no counting them, for every one loved the three children because they were so kind to all, and so fair of face. Three young huntsmen also went out, and when they had travelled about for eight days, they arrived at a great castle, in which were beautiful apartments, and in one room a table was laid on which were delicate dishes which were still so warm that they were smoking, but in the whole of the castle no human being was either to be seen or heard. They waited there for half a day, and the food still remained warm and smoking, and at length they were so hungry that they sat down and ate, and agreed with each other that they would stay and live in that castle, and that one of them, who should be chosen by casting lots, should remain in the house, and the two others seek the King's daughters. They cast lots, and the lot fell on the eldest; so next day the two younger went out to seek, and the eldest had to stay home. At mid-day came a small, small mannikin and begged for a piece of bread, then the huntsman took the bread which he had found there, and cut a round off the loaf and was about to give it to him, but whilst he was giving it to the mannikin, the latter let it fall, and asked the huntsman to be so good as to give him that piece again. The huntsman was about to do so and stooped, on which the mannikin took a stick, seized him by the hair, and gave him a good beating. Next day, the second stayed at home, and he fared no better. When the two others returned in the evening, the eldest said, "Well, how have you got on?”

“Oh, very badly,” said he, and then they lamented their misfortune together, but they said nothing about it to the youngest, for they did not like him at all, and always called him Stupid Hans, because he did not exactly belong to the forest. On the third day, the youngest stayed at home, and again the little mannikin came and begged for a piece of bread. When the youth gave it to him, the elf let it fall as before, and asked him to be so good as to give him that piece again. Then said Hans to the little mannikin, “What! canst thou not pick up that piece thyself? If thou wilt not take as much trouble as that for thy daily bread, thou dost not deserve to have it.” Then the mannikin grew very angry and said he was to do it, but the huntsman would not, and took my dear mannikin, and gave him a thorough beating. Then the mannikin screamed terribly, and cried, “Stop, stop, and let me go, and I will tell thee where the King’s daughters are.” When Hans heard that, he left off beating him and the mannikin told him that he was an earth mannikin, and that there were more than a thousand like him, and that if he would go with him he would show him where the King’s daughters were. Then he showed him a deep well, but there was no water in it. And the elf said that he knew well that the companions Hans had with him did not intend to deal honourably with him, therefore if he wished to deliver the King’s children, he must do it alone. The two other brothers would also be very glad to recover the King’s daughters, but they did not want to have any trouble or danger. Hans was therefore to take a large basket, and he must seat himself in it with his hanger and a bell, and be let down. Below were three rooms, and in each of them was a princess, with a many-headed dragon, whose heads she was to comb and trim, but he must cut them off. And having said all this, the elf vanished. When it was evening the two brothers came and asked how he had got on, and he said, “pretty well so far,” and that he had seen no one except at mid-day when a little mannikin had come and begged for a piece of bread, that he had given some to him, but that the mannikin had let it fall and had asked him to pick it up again; but as he did not choose to do that, the elf had begun to lose his temper, and that he had done what he ought not, and had given the elf a beating, on which he had told him where the King’s daughters were. Then the two were so angry at this that they grew green and yellow. Next morning they went to the well together, and drew lots who should first seat himself in the basket, and again the lot fell on the eldest, and he was to seat himself in it, and take the bell with him. Then he said, “If I ring, you must draw me up again immediately.” When he had gone down for a short distance, he rang, and they at once drew him up again. Then the second seated himself in the basket, but he did just the same as the first, and then it was the turn of the youngest, but he let himself be lowered quite to the bottom. When he had got out of the basket, he took his hanger, and went and stood outside the first door and listened, and heard the dragon snoring quite loudly. He opened the door slowly, and one of the princesses was sitting there, and had nine dragon’s heads lying upon her lap, and was combing them. Then he took his hanger and hewed at them, and the nine fell off. The princess sprang up, threw her arms round his neck, embraced and kissed him repeatedly, and took her stomacher, which was made of pure gold, and hung it round his neck. Then he went to the second princess, who had a dragon with five heads to comb, and delivered her also, and to the youngest, who had a dragon with four heads, he went likewise. And they all rejoiced, and embraced him and kissed him without stopping. Then he rang very loud, so that those above heard him, and he placed the princesses one after the other in the basket, and had them all drawn up, but when it came to his own turn he remembered the words of the elf, who had told him that his comrades did not mean well by him. So he took a great stone which was lying there, and placed it in the basket, and when it was about half way up, his false brothers above cut the rope, so that the basket with the stone fell to the ground, and they thought that he was dead, and ran away with the three princesses, making them promise to tell their father that it was they who had delivered them, and then they went to the King, and each demanded a princess in marriage.

In the meantime the youngest huntsman was wandering about the three chambers in great trouble, fully expecting to have to end his days there, when he saw, hanging on the wall, a flute; then said he, “Why dost thou hang there, no one can be merry here?” He looked at the dragons, heads likewise and said, “You too cannot help me now.” He walked backwards and forwards for such a long time that he made the surface of the ground quite smooth. But at last other thoughts came to his mind, and he took the flute from the wall, and played a few notes on it, and suddenly a number of elves appeared, and with every note that he sounded one more came. Then he played until the room was entirely filled. They all asked what he desired, so he said he wished to get above ground back to daylight, on which they seized him by every hair that grew on his head, and thus they flew with him onto the earth again. When he was above ground, he at once went to the King’s palace, just as the wedding of one princess was about to be celebrated, and he went to the room where the King and his three daughters were. When the princesses saw him they fainted. Hereupon the King was angry, and ordered him to be put in prison at once, because he thought he must have done some injury to the children. When the princesses came to themselves, however, they entreated the King to set him free again. The King asked why, and they said that they were not allowed to tell that, but their father said that they were to tell it to the stove. And he went out, listened at the door, and heard everything. Then he caused the two brothers to be hanged on the gallows, and to the third he gave his youngest daughter, and on that occasion I wore a pair of glass shoes, and I struck them against a stone, and they said, “Klink,” and were broken.

The King of the Golden Mountain

There was a certain merchant who had two children, a boy and a girl; they were both young, and could not walk. And two richly-laden ships of his sailed forth to sea with all his property on board, and just as he was expecting to win much money by them, news came that they had gone to the bottom, and now instead of being a rich man he was a poor one, and had nothing left but one field outside the town. In order to drive his misfortune a little out of his thoughts, he went out to this field, and as he was walking forwards and backwards in it, a little black mannikin stood suddenly by his side, and asked why he was so sad, and what he was taking so much to heart. Then said the merchant, “If thou couldst help me I would willingly tell thee.” “Who knows?” replied the black dwarf. “Perhaps, I can help thee.” Then the merchant told him that all he possessed had gone to the bottom of the sea, and that he had nothing left but this field. “Do not trouble thyself,” said the dwarf. “If thou wilt promise to give me the first thing that rubs itself against thy leg when thou art at home again, and to bring it here to this place in twelve years’ time, thou shalt have as much money as thou wilt.” The merchant thought, “What can that be but my dog?” and did not remember his little boy, so he said yes, gave the black man a written and sealed promise, and went home.

When he reached home, his little boy was so delighted that he held by a bench, tottered up to him and seized him fast by the legs. The father was shocked, for he remembered his promise, and now knew what he had pledged himself to do; as however, he still found no money in his chest, he thought the dwarf had only been jesting. A month afterwards he went up to the garret, intending to gather together some old tin and to sell it, and saw a great heap of money lying. Then he was happy again, made purchases, became a greater merchant than before, and felt that this world was well-governed. In the meantime the boy grew tall, and at the same time sharp and clever. But the nearer the twelfth year approached the more anxious grew the merchant, so that his distress might be seen in his face. One day his son asked what ailed him, but the father would not say. The boy, however, persisted so long, that at last he told him that without being aware of what he was doing, he had promised him to a black dwarf, and had received much money for doing so. He said likewise that he had set his hand and seal to this, and that now when twelve years had gone by he would have to give him up. Then said the son, “Oh, father, do not be uneasy, all will go well. The black man has no power over me.” The son had himself blessed by the priest, and when the time came, father and son went together to the field, and the son made a circle and placed himself inside it with his father. Then came the black dwarf and said to the old man, “Hast thou brought with thee that which thou hast promised me?” He was silent, but the son asked, “What dost thou want here?” Then said the black dwarf, “I have to speak with thy father, and not with thee.” The son replied, “Thou hast betrayed and misled my father, give back the writing.” “No,” said the black dwarf, “I will not give up my rights.” They spoke together for a long time after this, but at last they agreed that the son, as he did not belong to the enemy of mankind, nor yet to his father, should seat himself in a small boat, which should lie on water which was flowing away from them, and that the father should push it off with his own foot, and then the son should remain given up to the water. So he took leave of his father, placed himself in a little boat, and the father had to push it off with his own foot. The boat capsized so that the keel was uppermost, and the father believed his son was lost, and went home and mourned for him.

The boat, however, did not sink, but floated quietly away, and the boy sat safely inside it, and it floated thus for a long time, until at last it stopped by an unknown shore. Then he landed and saw a beautiful castle before him, and set out to go to it. But when he entered it, he found that it was bewitched. He went through every room, but all were empty until he reached the last, where a snake lay coiled in a ring. The snake, however, was an enchanted maiden, who rejoiced to see him, and said, “Hast thou come, oh, my deliverer? I have already waited twelve years for thee; this kingdom is bewitched, and thou must set it free.” “How can I do that?” he inquired. “To-night come twelve black men, covered with chains who will ask what thou art doing here; keep silent; give them no answer, and let them do what they will with thee; they will torment thee, beat thee, stab thee; let everything pass, only do not speak; at twelve o’clock, they must go away again. On the second night twelve others will come; on the third, four-and-twenty, who will cut off thy head, but at twelve o’clock their power will be over, and then if thou hast endured all, and hast not spoken the slightest word, I shall be released. I will come to thee, and will have, in a bottle, some of the water of life. I will rub thee with that, and then thou wilt come to life again, and be as healthy as before.” Then said he, “I will gladly set thee free.” And everything happened just as she had said; the black men could not force a single word from him, and on the third night the snake became a beautiful princess, who came with the water of life and brought him back to life again. So she threw herself into his arms and kissed him, and there was joy and gladness in the whole castle. After this their marriage was celebrated, and he was King of the Golden Mountain.

They lived very happily together, and the Queen bore a fine boy. Eight years had already gone by, when the King bethought him of his father; his heart was moved, and he wished to visit him. The Queen, however, would not let him go away, and said, “I know beforehand that it will cause my unhappiness;” but he suffered her to have no rest until she consented. At their parting she gave him a wishing-ring, and said, “Take this ring and put it on thy finger, and then thou wilt immediately be transported whithersoever thou wouldst be, only thou must promise me not to use it in wishing me away from this place and with thy father.” That he promised her, put the ring on his finger, and wished himself at home, just outside the town where his father lived. Instantly he found himself there, and made for the town, but when he came to the gate, the sentries would not let him in, because he wore such strange and yet such rich and magnificent clothing. Then he went to a hill where a shepherd was watching his sheep, changed clothes with him, put on his old shepherd's-coat, and then entered the town without hindrance. When he came to his father, he made himself known to him, but he did not at all believe that the shepherd was his son, and said he certainly had had a son, but that he was dead long ago; however, as he saw he was a poor, needy shepherd, he would give him something to eat. Then the shepherd said to his parents, "I am verily your son. Do you know of no mark on my body by which you could recognize me?" "Yes," said his mother, "our son had a raspberry mark under his right arm." He slipped back his shirt, and they saw the raspberry under his right arm, and no longer doubted that he was their son. Then he told them that he was King of the Golden Mountain, and a king's daughter was his wife, and that they had a fine son of seven years old. Then said the father, "That is certainly not true; it is a fine kind of a king who goes about in a ragged shepherd's-coat." On this the son fell in a passion, and without thinking of his promise, turned his ring round, and wished both his wife and child with him. They were there in a second, but the Queen wept, and reproached him, and said that he had broken his word, and had brought misfortune upon her. He said, "I have done it thoughtlessly, and not with evil intention," and tried to calm her, and she pretended to believe this; but she had mischief in her mind.

Then he led her out of the town into the field, and showed her the stream where the little boat had been pushed off, and then he said, "I am tired; sit down, I will sleep awhile on thy lap." And he laid his head on her lap, and fell asleep. When he was asleep, she first drew the ring from his finger, then she drew away the foot which was under him, leaving only the slipper behind her, and she took her child in her arms, and wished herself back in her own kingdom. When he awoke, there he lay quite deserted, and his wife and child were gone, and so was the ring from his finger, the slipper only was still there as a token. "Home to thy parents thou canst not return," thought he, "they would say that thou wast a wizard; thou must be off, and walk on until thou arrivest in thine own kingdom." So he went away and came at length to a hill by which three giants were standing, disputing with each other because they did not know how to divide their father's property. When they saw him passing by, they called to him and said little men had quick wits, and that he was to divide their inheritance for them. The inheritance, however, consisted of a sword, which had this property that if any one took it in his hand, and said, "All heads off but mine," every head would lie on the ground; secondly, of a cloak which made any one who put it on invisible; thirdly, of a pair of boots which could transport the wearer to any place he wished in a moment. He said, "Give me the three things that I may see if they are still in good condition." They gave him the cloak, and when he had put it on, he was invisible and changed into a fly. Then he resumed his own form and said, "The cloak is a good one, now give me the sword." They said, "No, we will not give thee that; if thou were to say, All heads off but mine,' all our heads would be off, and thou alone wouldst be left with thine." Nevertheless they gave it to him with the condition that he was only to try it against a tree. This he did, and the sword cut in two the trunk of a tree as if it had been a blade of straw. Then he wanted to have the boots likewise, but they said, "No, we will not give them; if thou hadst them on thy feet and wert to wish thyself at the top of the hill, we should be left down here with nothing." "Oh, no," said he, "I will not do that." So they gave him the boots as well. And now when he had got all these things, he thought of nothing but his wife and his child, and said as though to himself, "Oh, if I were but on the Golden Mountain," and at the same moment he vanished from the sight of the giants, and thus their inheritance was divided. When he was near his palace, he heard sounds of joy, and fiddles, and flutes, and the people told him that his wife was celebrating her wedding with another. Then he fell into a rage, and said, "False woman, she betrayed and deserted me whilst I was asleep!" So he put on his cloak, and unseen by all went into the palace. When he entered the dining-hall a great table was spread with delicious food, and the guests were eating and drinking, and laughing, and jesting. She sat on a royal seat in the midst of them in splendid apparel, with a crown on her head. He placed himself behind her, and no one saw him. When she put a piece of meat on a plate for herself, he took it away and ate it, and when she poured out a glass of wine for herself, he took it away and drank it. She was always helping herself to something, and yet she never got anything, for plate and glass disappeared immediately. Then dismayed and ashamed, she arose and went to her chamber and wept, but he followed her there. She said, "Has the devil power over me, or did my deliverer never come?" Then he struck her in the face, and said, "Did thy deliverer never come? It is he who has thee in his power, thou traitor. Have I deserved this from thee?" Then he made himself visible, went into the hall, and cried, "The wedding is at an end, the true King has returned." The kings, princes, and councillors who were assembled there, ridiculed and mocked him, but he did not trouble to answer them, and said, "Will you go away, or not?" On this they tried to seize him and pressed upon him, but he drew his sword and said, "All heads off but mine," and all the heads rolled on the ground, and he alone was master, and once more King of the Golden Mountain.

The Raven

There was once upon a time a Queen who had a little daughter who was still so young that she had to be carried. One day the child was naughty, and the mother might say what she liked, but the child would not be quiet. Then she became impatient, and as the ravens were flying about the palace, she opened the window and said, “I wish you were a raven and would fly away, and then I should have some rest.” Scarcely had she spoken the words, before the child was changed into a raven, and flew from her arms out of the window. It flew into a dark forest, and stayed in it a long time, and the parents heard nothing of their child. Then one day a man was on his way through this forest and heard the raven crying, and followed the voice, and when he came nearer, the bird said, “I am a king’s daughter by birth, and am bewitched, but thou canst set me free.” “What am I to do,” asked he. She said, “Go further into the forest, and thou wilt find a house, wherein sits an aged woman, who will offer thee meat and drink, but you must accept nothing, for if you eatest and drinkest anything, thou wilt fall into a sleep, and then thou wilt not be able to deliver me. In the garden behind the house there is a great heap of tan, and on this thou shalt stand and wait for me. For three days I will come every afternoon at two o’clock in a carriage. On the first day four white horses will be harnessed to it, then four chestnut horses, and lastly four black ones; but if thou art not awake, but sleeping, I shall not be set free.” The man promised to do everything that she desired, but the raven said, alas, “I know already that thou wilt not deliver me; thou wilt accept something from the woman.” Then the man once more promised that he would certainly not touch anything either to eat or to drink. But when he entered the house the old woman came to him and said, “Poor man, how faint you are; come and refresh yourself; eat and drink.” “No,” said the man, “I will not eat or drink.” She, however, let him have no peace, and said, “If you will not eat, take one drink out of the glass; one is nothing.” Then he let himself be persuaded, and drank. Shortly before two o’clock in the afternoon he went into the garden to the tan heap to wait for the raven. As he was standing there, his weariness all at once became so great that he could not struggle against it, and lay down for a short time, but he was determined not to go to sleep. Hardly, however, had he lain down, than his eyes closed of their own accord, and he fell asleep and slept so soundly that nothing in the world could have aroused him. At two o’clock the raven came driving up with four white horses, but she was already in deep grief and said, “I know he is asleep.” And when she came into the garden, he was indeed lying there asleep on the heap of tan. She alighted from the carriage, went to him, shook him, and called him, but he did not awake. Next day about noon, the old woman came again and brought him food and drink, but he would not take any of it. But she let him have no rest and persuaded him until at length he again took one drink out of the glass. Towards two o’clock he went into the garden to the tan heap to wait for the raven, but all at once felt such a great weariness that his limbs would no longer support him. He could not help himself, and was forced to lie down, and fell into a heavy sleep. When the raven drove up with four brown horses, she was already full of grief, and said, “I know he is asleep.” She went to him, but there he lay sleeping, and there was no wakening him. Next day the old woman asked what was the meaning of this? He was neither eating nor drinking anything; did he want to die? He replied, “I am not allowed to eat or drink, and will not do so.” But she set a dish with food, and a glass with wine before him, and when he smelt it he could not resist, and swallowed a deep draught. When the time came, he went out into the garden to the heap of tan, and waited for the King’s daughter; but he became still more weary than on the day before, and lay down and slept as soundly as if he had been a stone. At two o’clock the raven came with four black horses, and the coachman and everything else was black. She was already in the deepest grief, and said, “I know that he is asleep and cannot deliver me.” When she came to him, there he was lying fast asleep. She shook him and called him, but she could not waken him. Then she laid a loaf beside him, and after that a piece of meat, and thirdly a bottle of wine, and he might consume as much of all of them as he liked, but they would never grow less. After this she took a gold ring from her finger, and put it on his, and her name was graven on it. Lastly, she laid a letter beside him wherein was written what she had given him, and that none of the things would ever grow less; and in it was also written, “I see right well that here you will never be able to deliver me, but if thou art still willing to deliver me, come to the golden castle of Stromberg; it lies in thy power, of that I am certain.” And when she had given him all these things, she seated herself in her carriage, and drove to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man awoke and saw that he had slept, he was sad at heart, and said, “She has certainly driven by, and I have not set her free.” Then he perceived the things which were lying beside him, and read the letter wherein was written how everything had happened. So he arose and went away, intending to go to the golden castle of Stromberg, but he did not know where it was. After he had walked about the world for a long time, he entered into a dark forest, and walked for fourteen days, and still could not find his way out. Then it was once more evening, and he was so tired that he lay down in a thicket and fell asleep. Next day he went onwards, and in the evening, as he was again about to lie down beneath some bushes, he heard such a howling and crying that he could not go to sleep. And at the time when people light the candles, he saw one glimmering, and arose and went towards it. Then he came to a house which seemed very small, for in front of it a great giant was standing. He thought to himself, “If I go in, and the giant sees me, it will very likely cost me my life.”

At length he ventured it and went in. When the giant saw him, he said, “It is well that thou comest, for it is long since I have eaten; I will at once eat thee for my supper.” “I’d rather you would leave that alone,” said the man, “I do not like to be eaten; but if thou hast any desire to eat, I have quite enough here to satisfy thee.” “If that be true,” said the giant, “thou mayst be easy, I was only going to devour thee because I had nothing else.” Then they went, and sat down to the table, and the man took out the bread, wine, and meat which would never come to an end. “This pleases me well,” said the giant, and ate to his heart’s content. Then the man said to him, “Canst thou tell me where the golden castle of Stromberg is?” The giant said, “I will look at my map; all the towns, and villages, and houses are to be found on it.” He brought out the map which he had in the room and looked for the castle, but it was not to be found on it. “It’s no matter!” said he, “I have some still larger maps in my cupboard upstairs, and we will look in them.” But there, too, it was in vain. The man now wanted to go onwards, but the giant begged him to wait a few days longer until his brother, who had gone out to bring some provisions, came home. When the brother came home they inquired about the golden castle of Stromberg. He replied, “When I have eaten and have had enough, I will look in the map.” Then he went with them up to his chamber, and they searched in his map, but could not find it. Then he brought out still older maps, and they never rested until they found the golden castle of Stromberg, but it was many thousand miles away. “How am I to get there?” asked the man. The giant said, “I have two hours’ time, during which I will carry you into the neighbourhood, but after that I must be at home to suckle the child that we have.” So the giant carried the man to about a hundred leagues from the castle, and said, “Thou canst very well walk the rest of the way alone.” And he turned back, but the man went onwards day and night, until at length he came to the golden castle of Stromberg. It stood on a glass-mountain, and the bewitched maiden drove in her carriage round the castle, and then went inside it. He rejoiced when he saw her and wanted to climb up to her, but when he began to do so he always slipped down the glass again. And when he saw that he could not reach her, he was filled with trouble, and said to himself, “I will stay down here below, and wait for her.” So he built himself a hut and stayed in it for a whole year, and every day saw the King’s daughter driving about above, but never could go to her. Then one day he saw from his hut three robbers who were beating each other, and cried to them, “God be with ye!” They stopped when they heard the cry, but as they saw no one, they once more began to beat each other, and that too most dangerously. So he again cried, “God be with ye!” Again they stopped, looked round about, but as they saw no one they went on beating each other. Then he cried for the third time, “God be with ye,” and thought, “I must see what these three are about,” and went thither and asked why they were beating each other so furiously. One of them said that he found a stick, and that when he struck a door with it, that door would spring open. The next said that he had found a mantle, and that whenever he put it on, he was invisible, but the third said he had found a horse on which a man could ride everywhere, even up the glass-mountain. And now they did not know whether they ought to have these things in common, or whether they ought to divide them. Then the man said, “I will give you something in exchange for these three things. Money indeed have I not, but I have other things of more value; but first I must try yours to see if you have told the truth.” Then they put him on the horse, threw the mantle round him, and gave him the stick in his hand, and when he had all these things they were no longer able to see him. So he gave them some vigorous blows and cried, “Now, vagabonds, you have got what you deserve, are you satisfied?” And he rode up the glass-mountain, but when he came in front of the castle at the top, it was shut. Then he struck the door with his stick, and it sprang open immediately. He went in and ascended the stairs until he came to the hall where the maiden was sitting with a golden cup full of wine before her. She, however, could not see him because he had the mantle on. And when he came up to her, he drew from his finger the ring which she had given him, and threw it into the cup so that it rang. Then she cried, “That is my ring, so the man who is to set me free must be here.” They searched the whole castle and did not find him, but he had gone out, and had seated himself on the horse and thrown off the mantle. When they came to the door, they saw him and cried aloud in their delight.* Then he alighted and took the King’s daughter in his arms, but she kissed him and said, “Now hast thou set me free, and to-morrow we will celebrate our wedding.”

The Peasant’s Wise Daughter

There was once a poor peasant who had no land, but only a small house, and one daughter. Then said the daughter, “We ought to ask our lord the King for a bit of newly-cleared land.” When the King heard of their poverty, he presented them with a piece of land, which she and her father dug up, and intended to sow with a little corn and grain of that kind. When they had dug nearly the whole of the field, they found in the earth a mortar made of pure gold. “Listen,” said the father to the girl, “as our lord the King has been so gracious and presented us with the field, we ought to give him this mortar in return for it.” The daughter, however, would not consent to this, and said, “Father, if we have the mortar without having the pestle as well, we shall have to get the pestle, so you had much better say nothing about it.” He would, however, not obey her, but took the mortar and carried it to the King, said that he had found it in the cleared land, and asked if he would accept it as a present. The King took the mortar, and asked if he had found nothing besides that? “No,” answered the countryman. Then the King said that he must now bring him the pestle. The peasant said they had not found that, but he might just as well have spoken to the wind; he was put in prison, and was to stay there until he produced the pestle. The servants had daily to carry him bread and water, which is what people get in prison, and they heard how the man cried out continually, “Ah! if I had but listened to my daughter! Alas, alas, if I had but listened to my daughter!” and would neither eat nor drink. So he commanded the servants to bring the prisoner before him, and then the King asked the peasant why he was always crying, “Ah! if I had but listened to my daughter!” and what it was that his daughter had said. “She told me that I ought not to take the mortar to you, for I should have to produce the pestle as well.” “If you have a daughter who is as wise as that, let her come here.” She was therefore obliged to appear before the King, who asked her if she really was so wise, and said he would set her a riddle, and if she could guess that, he would marry her. She at once said yes, she would guess it. Then said the King, “Come to me not clothed, not naked, not riding, not walking, not in the road, and not out of the road, and if thou canst do that I will marry thee.” So she went away, put off everything she had on, and then she was not clothed, and took a great fishing net, and seated herself in it and wrapped it entirely round and round her, so that she was not naked, and she hired an ass, and tied the fisherman’s net to its tail, so that it was forced to drag her along, and that was neither riding nor walking. The ass had also to drag her in the ruts, so that she only touched the ground with her great toe, and that was neither being in the road nor out of the road. And when she arrived in that fashion, the King said she had guessed the riddle and fulfilled all the conditions. Then he ordered her father to be released from the prison, took her to wife, and gave into her care all the royal possessions.

Now when some years had passed, the King was once drawing up his troops on parade, when it happened that some peasants who had been selling wood stopped with their waggons before the palace; some of them had oxen yoked to them, and some horses. There was one peasant who had three horses, one of which was delivered of a young foal, and it ran away and lay down between two oxen which were in front of the waggon. When the peasants came together, they began to dispute, to beat each other and make a disturbance, and the peasant with the oxen wanted to keep the foal, and said one of the oxen had given birth to it, and the other said his horse had had it, and that it was his. The quarrel came before the King, and he give the verdict that the foal should stay where it had been found, and so the peasant with the oxen, to whom it did not belong, got it. Then the other went away, and wept and lamented over his foal. Now he had heard how gracious his lady the Queen was because she herself had sprung from poor peasant folks, so he went to her and begged her to see if she could not help him to get his foal back again. Said she, "Yes, I will tell you what to do, if thou wilt promise me not to betray me. Early to-morrow morning, when the King parades the guard, place thyself there in the middle of the road by which he must pass, take a great fishing-net and pretend to be fishing; go on fishing, too, and empty out the net as if thou hadst got it full" and then she told him also what he was to say if he was questioned by the King. The next day, therefore, the peasant stood there, and fished on dry ground. When the King passed by, and saw that, he sent his messenger to ask what the stupid man was about? He answered, "I am fishing." The messenger asked how he could fish when there was no water there? The peasant said, "It is as easy for me to fish on dry land as it is for an ox to have a foal." The messenger went back and took the answer to the King, who ordered the peasant to be brought to him and told him that this was not his own idea, and he wanted to know whose it was? The peasant must confess this at once. The peasant, however, would not do so, and said always, God forbid he should! the idea was his own. They laid him, however, on a heap of straw, and beat him and tormented him so long that at last he admitted that he had got the idea from the Queen.

When the King reached home again, he said to his wife, "Why hast thou behaved so falsely to me? I will not have thee any longer for a wife; thy time is up, go back to the place from whence thou camest to thy peasant's hut." One favour, however, he granted her; she might take with her the one thing that was dearest and best in her eyes; and thus was she dismissed. She said, "Yes, my dear husband, if you command this, I will do it," and she embraced him and kissed him, and said she would take leave of him. Then she ordered a powerful sleeping draught to be brought, to drink farewell to him; the King took a long draught, but she took only a little. He soon fell into a deep sleep, and when she perceived that, she called a servant and took a fair white linen cloth and wrapped the King in it, and the servant was forced to carry him into a carriage that stood before the door, and she drove with him to her own little house. She laid him in her own little bed, and he slept one day and one night without awakening, and when he awoke he looked round and said, “Good God! where am I?” He called his attendants, but none of them were there. At length his wife came to his bedside and said, “My dear lord and King, you told me I might bring away with me from the palace that which was dearest and most precious in my eyes I have nothing more precious and dear than yourself, so I have brought you with me.” Tears rose to the King’s eyes and he said, “Dear wife, thou shalt be mine and I will be thine,” and he took her back with him to the royal palace and was married again to her, and at the present time they are very likely still living.

Old Hildebrand

Once upon a time lived a peasant and his wife, and the parson of the village had a fancy for the wife, and had wished for a long while to spend a whole day happily with her. The peasant woman, too, was quite willing. One day, therefore, he said to the woman, “Listen, my dear friend, I have now thought of a way by which we can for once spend a whole day happily together. I’ll tell you what; on Wednesday, you must take to your bed, and tell your husband you are ill, and if you only complain and act being ill properly, and go on doing so until Sunday when I have to preach, I will then say in my sermon that whosoever has at home a sick child, a sick husband, a sick wife, a sick father, a sick mother, a sick brother or whosoever else it may be, and makes a pilgrimage to the Göckerli hill in Italy, where you can get a peck of laurel-leaves for a kreuzer, the sick child, the sick husband, the sick wife, the sick father, or sick mother, the sick sister, or whosoever else it may be, will be restored to health immediately.”

“I will manage it,” said the woman promptly. Now therefore on the Wednesday, the peasant woman took to her bed, and complained and lamented as agreed on, and her husband did everything for her that he could think of, but nothing did her any good, and when Sunday came the woman said, “I feel as ill as if I were going to die at once, but there is one thing I should like to do before my end I should like to hear the parson’s sermon that he is going to preach to-day.” On that the peasant said, “Ah, my child, do not do it — thou mightest make thyself worse if thou wert to get up. Look, I will go to the sermon, and will attend to it very carefully, and will tell thee everything the parson says.”

“Well,” said the woman, “go, then, and pay great attention, and repeat to me all that thou hearest.” So the peasant went to the sermon, and the parson began to preach and said, if any one had at home a sick child, a sick husband, a sick wife, a sick father a sick mother, a sick sister, brother or any one else, and would make a pilgrimage to the Göckerli hill in Italy, where a peck of laurel-leaves costs a kreuzer, the sick child, sick husband, sick wife, sick father, sick mother, sick sister, brother, or whosoever else it might be, would be restored to health instantly, and whosoever wished to undertake the journey was to go to him after the service was over, and he would give him the sack for the laurel-leaves and the kreuzer.

Then no one was more rejoiced than the peasant, and after the service was over, he went at once to the parson, who gave him the bag for the laurel-leaves and the kreuzer. After that he went home, and even at the house door he cried, “Hurrah! dear wife, it is now almost the same thing as if thou wert well! The parson has preached to-day that whosoever had at home a sick child, a sick husband, a sick wife, a sick father, a sick mother, a sick sister, brother or whoever it might be, and would make a pilgrimage to the Göckerli hill in Italy, where a peck of laurel-leaves costs a kreuzer, the sick child, sick husband, sick wife, sick father, sick mother, sick sister, brother, or whosoever else it was, would be cured immediately, and now I have already got the bag and the kreuzer from the parson, and will at once begin my journey so that thou mayst get well the faster," and thereupon he went away. He was, however, hardly gone before the woman got up, and the parson was there directly.

But now we will leave these two for a while, and follow the peasant, who walked on quickly without stopping, in order to get the sooner to the Göckerli hill, and on his way he met his gossip. His gossip was an egg-merchant, and was just coming from the market, where he had sold his eggs. "May you be blessed," said the gossip, "where are you off to so fast?"

"To all eternity, my friend," said the peasant, "my wife is ill, and I have been to-day to hear the parson's sermon, and he preached that if any one had in his house a sick child, a sick husband, a sick wife, a sick father, a sick mother, a sick sister, brother or any one else, and made a pilgrimage to the Göckerli hill in Italy, where a peck of laurel-leaves costs a kreuzer, the sick child, the sick husband, the sick wife, the sick father, the sick mother, the sick sister, brother or whosoever else it was, would be cured immediately, and so I have got the bag for the laurel-leaves and the kreuzer from the parson, and now I am beginning my pilgrimage." "But listen, gossip," said the egg-merchant to the peasant, "are you, then, stupid enough to believe such a thing as that? Don't you know what it means? The parson wants to spend a whole day alone with your wife in peace, so he has given you this job to do to get you out of the way."

"My word!" said the peasant. "How I'd like to know if that's true!"

"Come, then," said the gossip, "I'll tell you what to do. Get into my egg-basket and I will carry you home, and then you will see for yourself." So that was settled, and the gossip put the peasant into his egg-basket and carried him home.

When they got to the house, hurrah! but all was going merry there! The woman had already had nearly everything killed that was in the farmyard, and had made pancakes, and the parson was there, and had brought his fiddle with him. The gossip knocked at the door, and woman asked who was there. "It is I, gossip," said the egg-merchant, "give me shelter this night; I have not sold my eggs at the market, so now I have to carry them home again, and they are so heavy that I shall never be able to do it, for it is dark already."

"Indeed, my friend," said the woman, "thou comest at a very inconvenient time for me, but as thou art here it can't be helped, come in, and take a seat there on the bench by the stove." Then she placed the gossip and the basket which he carried on his back on the bench by the stove. The parson, however, and the woman, were as merry as possible. At length the parson said, "Listen, my dear friend, thou canst sing beautifully; sing something to me." "Oh," said the woman, "I cannot sing now, in my young days indeed I could sing well enough, but that's all over now."

"Come," said the parson once more, "do sing some little song."

On that the woman began and sang,

“I’ve sent my husband away from me
To the Göckerli hill in Italy.”

Thereupon the parson sang,

“I wish ’twas a year before he came back,
I’d never ask himfor the laurel-leaf sack.”

Hallelujah.

Then the gossip who was in the background began to sing (but I ought to tell you the peasant was called Hildebrand), so the gossip sang,

“What art thou doing, my Hildebrand dear,
There on the bench by the stove so near?”

Hallelujah.

And then the peasant sang from his basket,

“All singing I ever shall hate from this day,
And here in this basket no longer I’ll stay.”

Hallelujah.

And he got out of the basket, and cudgelled the parson out of the house.

The Three Little Birds

About a thousand or more years ago, there were in this country nothing but small kings, and one of them who lived on the Keuterberg was very fond of hunting. Once on a time when he was riding forth from his castle with his huntsmen, three girls were watching their cows upon the mountain, and when they saw the King with all his followers, the eldest girl pointed to him, and called to the two other girls, “If I do not get that one, I will have none.” Then the second girl answered from the other side of the hill, and pointed to the one who was on the King’s right hand, “Hilloa! hilloa! If I do not get him, I will have no one.” These, however, were the two ministers. The King heard all this, and when he had come back from the chase, he caused the three girls to be brought to him, and asked them what they had said yesterday on the mountain. This they would not tell him, so the King asked the eldest if she really would take him for her husband? Then she said, “Yes,” and the two ministers married the two sisters, for they were all three fair and beautiful of face, especially the Queen, who had hair like flax. But the two sisters had no children, and once when the King was obliged to go from home he invited them to come to the Queen in order to cheer her, for she was about to bear a child. She had a little boy who brought a bright red star into the world with him. Then the two sisters said to each other that they would throw the beautiful boy into the water. When they had thrown him in (I believe it was into the Weser) a little bird flew up into the air, which sang,

“To thy death art thou sped,
 Until God’s word be said.

In the white lily bloom,
 Brave boy, is thy tomb.”

When the two heard that, they were frightened to death, and ran away in great haste. When the King came home they told him that the Queen had been delivered of a dog. Then the King said, “What God does, is well done!” But a fisherman who dwelt near the water fished the little boy out again while he was still alive, and as his wife had no children, they reared him. When a year had gone by, the King again went away, and the Queen had another little boy, whom the false sisters likewise took and threw into the water. Then up flew a little bird again and sang,

“To thy death art thou sped,
 Until God’s word be said.

In the white lily bloom,
 Brave boy, is thy tomb.”

And when the King came back, they told him that the Queen had once more given birth to a dog, and he again said, “What God does, is well done.” The fisherman, however, fished this one also out of the water, and reared him.

Then the King again journeyed forth, and the Queen had a little girl, whom also the false sisters threw into the water. Then again a little bird flew up on high and sang,

“To thy death art thou sped
Until God’s word be said.

In the white lily bloom,
Bonny girl, is thy tomb.”

And when the King came home they told him that the Queen had been delivered of a cat. Then the King grew angry, and ordered his wife to be cast into prison, and therein was she shut up for many long years.

In the meantime the children had grown up. Then eldest once went out with some other boys to fish, but the other boys would not have him with them, and said, “Go thy way, foundling.”

Hereupon he was much troubled, and asked the old fisherman if that was true? The fisherman told him that once when he was fishing he had drawn him out of the water. So the boy said he would go forth and seek his father. The fisherman, however, entreated him to stay, but he would not let himself be hindered, and at last the fisherman consented. Then the boy went on his way and walked for many days, and at last he came to a great piece of water by the side of which stood an old woman fishing. “Good day, mother,” said the boy.

“Many thanks,” said she.

“Thou wilt fish long enough before thou catchest anything.”

“And thou wilt seek long enough before thou findest thy father. How wilt thou get over the water?” said the woman.

“God knows.”

Then the old woman took him up on her back and carried him through it, and he sought for a long time, but could not find his father.

When a year had gone by, the second boy set out to seek his brother. He came to the water, and all fared with him just as with his brother. And now there was no one at home but the daughter, and she mourned for her brothers so much that at last she also begged the fisherman to let her set forth, for she wished to go in search of her brothers. Then she likewise came to the great piece of water, and she said to the old woman, “Good day, mother.”

“Many thanks,” replied the old woman.

“May God help you with your fishing,” said the maiden. When the old woman heard that, she became quite friendly, and carried her over the water, gave her a wand, and said to her, “Go, my daughter, ever onwards by this road, and when you come to a great black dog, you must pass it silently and boldly, without either laughing or looking at it. Then you will come to a great high castle, on the threshold of which you must let the wand fall, and go straight through the castle, and out again on the other side. There you will see an old fountain out of which a large tree has grown, whereon hangs a bird in a cage which you must take down. Take likewise a glass of water out of the fountain, and with these two things go back by the same way. Pick up the wand again from the threshold and take it with you, and when you again pass by the dog, strike him in the face with it, but be sure that you hit him, and then just come back here to me." The maiden found everything exactly as the old woman had said, and on her way back she found her two brothers who had sought each other over half the world. They went together to the place where the black dog was lying on the road; she struck it in the face, and it turned into a handsome prince who went with them to the river. There the old woman was still standing. She rejoiced much to see them again, and carried them all over the water, and then she too went away, for now she was freed. The others, however, went to the old fisherman, and all were glad that they had found each other again, but they hung the bird on the wall.

But the second son could not settle at home, and took his cross-bow and went a-hunting. When he was tired he took his flute, and made music. The King was hunting too, and heard that and went thither, and when he met the youth, he said, "Who has given thee leave to hunt here?"

"Oh, no one."

"To whom dost thou belong, then?"

"I am the fisherman's son."

"But he has no children."

"If thou wilt not believe, come with me."

That the King did, and questioned the fisherman, who told everything to him, and the little bird on the wall began to sing,

"The mother sits alone
There in the prison small,
O King of royal blood,
These are thy children all.
The sisters twain so false,
They wrought the children woe,
There in the waters deep
Where the fishermen come and go."

Then they were all terrified, and the King took the bird, the fisherman and the three children back with him to the castle, and ordered the prison to be opened and brought his wife out again. She had, however, grown quite ill and weak. Then the daughter gave her some of the water of the fountain to drink, and she became strong and healthy. But the two false sisters were burnt, and the daughter married the prince.

The Water of Life

There was once a King who had an illness, and no one believed that he would come out of it with his life. He had three sons who were much distressed about it, and went down into the palace-garden and wept. There they met an old man who inquired as to the cause of their grief. They told him that their father was so ill that he would most certainly die, for nothing seemed to cure him. Then the old man said, “I know of one more remedy, and that is the water of life; if he drinks of it he will become well again; but it is hard to find.” The eldest said, “I will manage to find it,” and went to the sick King, and begged to be allowed to go forth in search of the water of life, for that alone could save him. “No,” said the King, “the danger of it is too great. I would rather die.” But he begged so long that the King consented. The prince thought in his heart, “If I bring the water, then I shall be best beloved of my father, and shall inherit the kingdom.” So he set out, and when he had ridden forth a little distance, a dwarf stood there in the road who called to him and said, “Whither away so fast?” “Silly shrimp,” said the prince, very haughtily, “it is nothing to do with you,” and rode on. But the little dwarf had grown angry, and had wished an evil wish. Soon after this the prince entered a ravine, and the further he rode the closer the mountains drew together, and at last the road became so narrow that he could not advance a step further; it was impossible either to turn his horse or to dismount from the saddle, and he was shut in there as if in prison. The sick King waited long for him, but he came not. Then the second son said, “Father, let me go forth to seek the water,” and thought to himself, “If my brother is dead, then the kingdom will fall to me.” At first the King would not allow him to go either, but at last he yielded, so the prince set out on the same road that his brother had taken, and he too met the dwarf, who stopped him to ask, whither he was going in such haste? “Little shrimp,” said the prince, “that is nothing to thee,” and rode on without giving him another look. But the dwarf bewitched him, and he, like the other, rode into a ravine, and could neither go forwards nor backwards. So fare haughty people.

As the second son also remained away, the youngest begged to be allowed to go forth to fetch the water, and at last the King was obliged to let him go. When he met the dwarf and the latter asked him whither he was going in such haste, he stopped, gave him an explanation, and said, “I am seeking the water of life, for my father is sick unto death.” “Dost thou know, then, where that is to be found?” “No,” said the prince. “As thou hast borne thyself as is seemly, and not haughtily like thy false brothers, I will give thee the information and tell thee how thou mayst obtain the water of life. It springs from a fountain in the courtyard of an enchanted castle, but thou wilt not be able to make thy way to it, if I do not give thee an iron wand and two small loaves of bread. Strike thrice with the wand on the iron door of the castle and it will spring open: inside lie two lions with gaping jaws, but if thou throwest a loaf to each of them, they will be quieted. Then hasten to fetch some of the water of life before the clock strikes twelve, else the door will shut again, and thou wilt be imprisoned.” The prince thanked him, took the wand and the bread, and set out on his way. When he arrived, everything was as the dwarf had said. The door sprang open at the third stroke of the wand, and when he had appeased the lions with the bread, he entered the castle, and came to a large and splendid hall, wherein sat some enchanted princes whose rings he drew off their fingers. A sword and a loaf of bread were lying there, which he carried away. After this, he entered a chamber, in which was a beautiful maiden who rejoiced when she saw him, kissed him, and told him that he had delivered her, and should have the whole of her kingdom, and that if he would return in a year their wedding should be celebrated; likewise she told him where the spring of the water of life was, and that he was to hasten and draw some of it before the clock struck twelve. Then he went onwards, and at last entered a room where there was a beautiful newly-made bed, and as he was very weary, he felt inclined to rest a little. So he lay down and fell asleep. When he awoke, it was striking a quarter to twelve. He sprang up in a fright, ran to the spring, drew some water in a cup which stood near, and hastened away. But just as he was passing through the iron door, the clock struck twelve, and the door fell to with such violence that it carried away a piece of his heel. He, however, rejoicing at having obtained the water of life, went homewards, and again passed the dwarf. When the latter saw the sword and the loaf, he said, “With these thou hast won great wealth; with the sword thou canst slay whole armies, and the bread will never come to an end.” But the prince would not go home to his father without his brothers, and said, “Dear dwarf, canst thou not tell me where my two brothers are? They went out before I did in search of the water of life, and have not returned.” “They are imprisoned between two mountains,” said the dwarf. “I have condemned them to stay there, because they were so haughty.” Then the prince begged until the dwarf released them; but he warned him, however, and said, “Beware of them, for they have bad hearts.” When his brothers came, he rejoiced, and told them how things had gone with him, that he had found the water of life and had brought a cupful away with him, and had rescued a beautiful princess, who was willing to wait a year for him, and then their wedding was to be celebrated and he would obtain a great kingdom. After that they rode on together, and chanced upon a land where war and famine reigned, and the King already thought he must perish, for the scarcity was so great. Then the prince went to him and gave him the loaf, wherewith he fed and satisfied the whole of his kingdom, and then the prince gave him the sword also wherewith he slew the hosts of his enemies, and could now live in rest and peace. The prince then took back his loaf and his sword, and the three brothers rode on. But after this they entered two more countries where war and famine reigned and each time the prince gave his loaf and his sword to the Kings, and had now delivered three kingdoms, and after that they went on board a ship and sailed over the sea. During the passage, the two eldest conversed apart and said, “The youngest has found the water of life and not we, for that our father will give him the kingdom the kingdom which belongs to us, and he will rob us of all our fortune.” They then began to seek revenge, and plotted with each other to destroy him. They waited until they found him fast asleep, then they poured the water of life out of the cup, and took it for themselves, but into the cup they poured salt sea-water. Now therefore, when they arrived home, the youngest took his cup to the sick King in order that he might drink out of it, and be cured. But scarcely had he drunk a very little of the salt sea-water than he became still worse than before. And as he was lamenting over this, the two eldest brothers came, and accused the youngest of having intended to poison him, and said that they had brought him the true water of life, and handed it to him. He had scarcely tasted it, when he felt his sickness departing, and became strong and healthy as in the days of his youth. After that they both went to the youngest, mocked him, and said, “You certainly found the water of life, but you have had the pain, and we the gain; you should have been sharper, and should have kept your eyes open. We took it from you whilst you were asleep at sea, and when a year is over, one of us will go and fetch the beautiful princess. But beware that you do not disclose aught of this to our father; indeed he does not trust you, and if you say a single word, you shall lose your life into the bargain, but if you keep silent, you shall have it as a gift.”

The old King was angry with his youngest son, and thought he had plotted against his life. So he summoned the court together and had sentence pronounced upon his son, that he should be secretly shot. And once when the prince was riding forth to the chase, suspecting no evil, the King’s huntsman had to go with him, and when they were quite alone in the forest, the huntsman looked so sorrowful that the prince said to him, “Dear huntsman, what ails you?” The huntsman said, “I cannot tell you, and yet I ought.” Then the prince said, “Say openly what it is, I will pardon you.” “Alas!” said the huntsman, “I am to shoot you dead, the King has ordered me to do it.” Then the prince was shocked, and said, “Dear huntsman, let me live; there, I give you my royal garments; give me your common ones in their stead.” The huntsman said, “I will willingly do that, indeed I should not have been able to shoot you.” Then they exchanged clothes, and the huntsman returned home; the prince, however, went further into the forest. After a time three waggons of gold and precious stones came to the King for his youngest son, which were sent by the three Kings who had slain their enemies with the prince’s sword, and maintained their people with his bread, and who wished to show their gratitude for it. The old King then thought, “Can my son have been innocent?” and said to his people, “Would that he were still alive, how it grieves me that I have suffered him to be killed!” “He still lives,” said the huntsman, “I could not find it in my heart to carry out your command,” and told the King how it had happened. Then a stone fell from the King’s heart, and he had it proclaimed in every country that his son might return and be taken into favour again.

The princess, however, had a road made up to her palace which was quite bright and golden, and told her people that whosoever came riding straight along it to her, would be the right wooer and was to be admitted, and whoever rode by the side of it, was not the right one, and was not to be admitted. As the time was now close at hand, the eldest thought he would hasten to go to the King’s daughter, and give himself out as her deliverer, and thus win her for his bride, and the kingdom to boot. Therefore he rode forth, and when he arrived in front of the palace, and saw the splendid golden road, he thought, it would be a sin and a shame if he were to ride over that, and turned aside, and rode on the right side of it. But when he came to the door, the servants told him that he was not the right man, and was to go away again. Soon after this the second prince set out, and when he came to the golden road, and his horse had put one foot on it, he thought, it would be a sin and a shame to tread a piece of it off, and he turned aside and rode on the left side of it, and when he reached the door, the attendants told him he was not the right one, and he was to go away again. When at last the year had entirely expired, the third son likewise wished to ride out of the forest to his beloved, and with her forget his sorrows. So he set out and thought of her so incessantly, and wished to be with her so much, that he never noticed the golden road at all. So his horse rode onwards up the middle of it, and when he came to the door, it was opened and the princess received him with joy, and said he was her deliverer, and lord of the kingdom, and their wedding was celebrated with great rejoicing. When it was over she told him that his father invited him to come to him, and had forgiven him. So he rode thither, and told him everything; how his brothers had betrayed him, and how he had nevertheless kept silence. The old King wished to punish them, but they had put to sea, and never came back as long as they lived.

Doctor Knowall

There was once on a time a poor peasant called Crabb, who drove with two oxen a load of wood to the town, and sold it to a doctor for two thalers. When the money was being counted out to him, it so happened that the doctor was sitting at table, and when the peasant saw how daintily he ate and drank, his heart desired what he saw, and he would willingly have been a doctor too. So he remained standing a while, and at length inquired if he too could not be a doctor. “Oh, yes,” said the doctor, “that is soon managed.” “What must I do?” asked the peasant. “In the first place buy thyself an A B C book of the kind which has a cock on the frontispiece: in the second, turn thy cart and thy two oxen into money, and get thyself some clothes, and whatsoever else pertains to medicine; thirdly, have a sign painted for thyself with the words, “I am Doctor Knowall,” and have that nailed up above thy house-door.” The peasant did everything that he had been told to do. When he had doctored people awhile, but not long, a rich and great lord had some money stolen. Then he was told about Doctor Knowall who lived in such and such a village, and must know what had become of the money. So the lord had the horses put in his carriage, drove out to the village, and asked Crabb if he were Doctor Knowall? Yes, he was, he said. Then he was to go with him and bring back the stolen money. “Oh, yes, but Grethe, my wife, must go too.” The lord was willing and let both of them have a seat in the carriage, and they all drove away together. When they came to the nobleman’s castle, the table was spread, and Crabb was told to sit down and eat. “Yes, but my wife, Grethe, too,” said he, and he seated himself with her at the table. And when the first servant came with a dish of delicate fare, the peasant nudged his wife, and said, “Grethe, that was the first,” meaning that was the servant who brought the first dish. The servant, however, thought he intended by that to say, “That is the first thief,” and as he actually was so, he was terrified, and said to his comrade outside, “The doctor knows all: we shall fare ill, he said I was the first.” The second did not want to go in at all, but was forced. So when he went in with his dish, the peasant nudged his wife, and said, “Grethe, that is the second.” This servant was just as much alarmed, and he got out. The third did not fare better, for the peasant again said, “Grethe, that is the third.” The fourth had to carry in a dish that was covered, and the lord told the doctor that he was to show his skill, and guess what was beneath the cover. The doctor looked at the dish, had no idea what to say, and cried, “Ah, poor Crabb.” When the lord heard that, he cried, “There! he knows it, he knows who has the money!”

On this the servants looked terribly uneasy, and made a sign to the doctor that they wished him to step outside for a moment. When therefore he went out, all four of them confessed to him that they had stolen the money, and said that they would willingly restore it and give him a heavy sum into the bargain, if he would not denounce them, for if he did they would be hanged. They led him to the spot where the money was concealed. With this the doctor was satisfied, and returned to the hall, sat down to the table, and said, “My lord, now will I search in my book where the gold is hidden.” The fifth servant, however, crept into the stove to hear if the doctor knew still more. The Doctor, however, sat still and opened his A B C book, turned the pages backwards and forwards, and looked for the cock. As he could not find it immediately he said, “I know you are there, so you had better show yourself.” Then the fellow in the stove thought that the doctor meant him, and full of terror, sprang out, crying, “That man knows everything!” Then Dr. Knowall showed the count where the money was, but did not say who had stolen it, and received from both sides much money in reward, and became a renowned man.

The Spirit in the Bottle

There was once a poor woodcutter who toiled from early morning till late night. When at last he had laid by some money he said to his boy, “You are my only child, I will spend the money which I have earned with the sweat of my brow on your education; if you learn some honest trade you can support me in my old age, when my limbs have grown stiff and I am obliged to stay at home.” Then the boy went to a High School and learned diligently so that his masters praised him, and he remained there a long time. When he had worked through two classes, but was still not yet perfect in everything, the little pittance which the father had earned was all spent, and the boy was obliged to return home to him. “Ah,” said the father, sorrowfully, “I can give you no more, and in these hard times I cannot earn a farthing more than will suffice for our daily bread.” “Dear father,” answered the son, “don’t trouble yourself about it, if it is God’s will, it will turn to my advantage I shall soon accustom myself to it.” When the father wanted to go into the forest to earn money by helping to pile and stack wood ans also chop it, the son said, “I will go with you and help you.” “Nay, my son,” said the father, “that would be hard for you; you are not accustomed to rough work, and will not be able to bear it, besides I have only one axe and no money left wherewith to buy another.” “Just go to the neighbour,” answered the son, “he will lend you his axe until I have earned one for myself.” The father then borrowed an axe of the neighbour, and next morning at break of day they went out into the forest together. The son helped his father and was quite merry and brisk about it. But when the sun was right over their heads, the father said, “We will rest, and have our dinner, and then we shall work as well again.” The son took his bread in his hands, and said, “Just you rest, father, I am not tired; I will walk up and down a little in the forest, and look for birds’ nests.” “Oh, you fool,” said the father, “why should you want to run about there? Afterwards you will be tired, and no longer able to raise your arm; stay here, and sit down beside me.” The son, however, went into the forest, ate his bread, was very merry and peered in among the green branches to see if he could discover a bird’s nest anywhere. So he went up and down to see if he could find a bird’s nest until at last he came to a great dangerous-looking oak, which certainly was already many hundred years old, and which five men could not have spanned. He stood still and looked at it, and thought, “Many a bird must have built its nest in that.” Then all at once it seemed to him that he heard a voice. He listened and became aware that someone was crying in a very smothered voice, “Let me out, let me out!” He looked around, but could discover nothing; nevertheless, he fancied that the voice came out of the ground. Then he cried, “Where art thou?” The voice answered, “I am down here amongst the roots of the oak-tree. Let me out! Let me out!” The scholar began to loosen the earth under the tree, and search among the roots, until at last he found a glass bottle in a little hollow. He lifted it up and held it against the light, and then saw a creature shaped like a frog, springing up and down in it. “Let me out! Let me out!” it cried anew, and the scholar thinking no evil, drew the cork out of the bottle. Immediately a spirit ascended from it, and began to grow, and grew so fast that in a very few moments he stood before the scholar, a terrible fellow as big as half the tree by which he was standing. “Knowest thou,” he cried in an awful voice, “what thy wages are for having let me out?” “No,” replied the scholar fearlessly, “how should I know that?” “Then I will tell thee,” cried the spirit; “I must strangle thee for it.” “Thou shouldst have told me that sooner,” said the scholar, “for I should then have left thee shut up, but my head shall stand fast for all thou canst do; more persons than one must be consulted about that.” “More persons here, more persons there,” said the spirit. “Thou shalt have the wages thou hast earned. Dost thou think that I was shut up there for such a long time as a favour. No, it was a punishment for me. I am the mighty Mercurius. Whoso releases me, him must I strangle.” “Softly,” answered the scholar, “not so fast. I must first know that thou really wert shut up in that little bottle, and that thou art the right spirit. If, indeed, thou canst get in again, I will believe and then thou mayst do as thou wilt with me.” The spirit said haughtily, “that is a very trifling feat,” drew himself together, and made himself as small and slender as he had been at first, so that he crept through the same opening, and right through the neck of the bottle in again. Scarcely was he within than the scholar thrust the cork he had drawn back into the bottle, and threw it among the roots of the oak into its old place, and the spirit was betrayed.

And now the scolar was about to return to his father, but the spirit cried very piteously, “Ah, do let me out! ah, do let me out!” “No,” answered the scholar, “not a second time! He who has once tried to take my life shall not be set free by me, now that I have caught him again.” “If thou wilt set me free,” said the spirit, “I will give thee so much that thou wilt have plenty all the days of thy life.” “No,” answered the boy, “thou wouldst cheat me as thou didst the first time.” “Thou art playing away with thy own good luck,” said the spirit; “I will do thee no harm but will reward thee richly.” The scholar thought, “I will venture it, perhaps he will keep his word, and anyhow he shall not get the better of me.” Then he took out the cork, and the spirit rose up from the bottle as he had done before, stretched himself out and became as big as a giant. “Now thou shalt have thy reward,” said he, and handed the scholar a little bag just like a plaster, and said, “If thou spreadest one end of this over a wound it will heal, and if thou rubbest steel or iron with the other end it will be changed into silver.” “I must just try that,” said the scholar, and went to a tree, tore off the bark with his axe, and rubbed it with one end of the plaster. It immediately closed together and was healed. “Now, it is all right,” he said to the spirit, “and we can part.” The spirit thanked him for his release, and the boy thanked the spirit for his present, and went back to his father.

“Where hast thou been racing about?” said the father; “why hast thou forgotten thy work? I said at once that thou wouldst never get on with anything.” “Be easy, father, I will make it up.” “Make it up indeed,” said the father angrily, “there’s no art in that.” “Take care, father, I will soon hew that tree there, so that it will split.” Then he took his plaster, rubbed the axe with it, and dealt a mighty blow, but as the iron had changed into silver, the edge turned; “Hollo, father, just look what a bad axe you’ve given me, it has become quite crooked.” The father was shocked and said, “Ah, what hast thou done? now I shall have to pay for that, and have not the wherewithal, and that is all the good I have got by thy work.” “Don’t get angry,” said the son, “I will soon pay for the axe.” “Oh, thou blockhead,” cried the father, “wherewith wilt thou pay for it? Thou hast nothing but what I give thee. These are students’ tricks that are sticking in thy head, but thou hast no idea of wood-cutting.” After a while the scholar said, “Father, I can really work no more, we had better take a holiday.” “Eh, what!” answered he, “Dost thou think I will sit with my hands lying in my lap like thee? I must go on working, but thou mayst take thyself off home.” “Father, I am here in this wood for the first time, I don’t know my way alone. Do go with me.” As his anger had now abated, the father at last let himself be persuaded and went home with him. Then he said to the son, “Go and sell thy damaged axe, and see what thou canst get for it, and I must earn the difference, in order to pay the neighbour.” The son took the axe, and carried it into town to a goldsmith, who tested it, laid it in the scales, and said, “It is worth four hundred thalers, I have not so much as that by me.” The son said, “Give me what thou hast, I will lend you the rest.” The goldsmith gave him three hundred thalers, and remained a hundred in his debt. The son thereupon went home and said, “Father, I have got the money, go and ask the neighbour what he wants for the axe.” “I know that already,” answered the old man, “one thaler, six groschen.” “Then give him him two thalers, twelve groschen, that is double and enough; see, I have money in plenty,” and he gave the father a hundred thalers, and said, “You shall never know want, live as comfortably as you like.” “Good heavens!” said the father, “how hast thou come by these riches?” The scholar then told how all had come to pass, and how he, trusting in his luck, had made such a good hit. But with the money that was left, he went back to the High School and went on learning more, and as he could heal all wounds with his plaster, he became the most famous doctor in the whole world.

The Devil's Sooty Brother

A disbanded soldier had nothing to live on, and did not know how to get on. So he went out into the forest and when he had walked for a short time, he met a little man who was, however, the Devil. The little man said to him, "What ails you, you seem so very sorrowful?" Then the soldier said, "I am hungry, but have no money." The Devil said, "If you will hire yourself to me, and be my serving-man, you shall have enough for all your life? You shall serve me for seven years, and after that you shall again be free. But one thing I must tell you, and that is, you must not wash, comb, or trim yourself, or cut your hair or nails, or wipe the water from your eyes." The soldier said, "All right, if there is no help for it," and went off with the little man, who straightway led him down into hell. Then he told him what he had to do. He was to poke the fire under the kettles wherein the hell-broth was stewing, keep the house clean, drive all the sweepings behind the doors, and see that everything was in order, but if he once peeped into the kettles, it would go ill with him. The soldier said, "Good, I will take care." And then the old Devil went out again on his wanderings, and the soldier entered upon his new duties, made the fire, and swept the dirt well behind the doors, just as he had been bidden. When the old Devil came back again, he looked to see if all had been done, appeared satisfied, and went forth a second time. The soldier now took a good look on every side; the kettles were standing all round hell with a mighty fire below them, and inside they were boiling and sputtering. He would have given anything to look inside them, if the Devil had not so particularly forbidden him: at last, he could no longer restrain himself, slightly raised the lid of the first kettle, and peeped in, and there he saw his former corporal shut in. "Aha, old bird!" said he, "Do I meet you here? You once had me in your power, now I have you," and he quickly let the lid fall, poked the fire, and added a fresh log. After that, he went to the second kettle, raised its lid also a little, and peeped in; his former ensign was in that. "Aha, old bird, so I find you here! you once had me in your power, now I have you." He closed the lid again, and fetched yet another log to make it really hot. Then he wanted to see who might be sitting up in the third kettle it was actually be but a general. "Aha, old bird, do I meet you here? Once you had me in your power, now I have you." And he fetched the bellows and made hell-fire blaze right under him. So he did his work seven years in hell, did not wash, comb, or trim himself, or cut his hair or nails, or wash the water out of his eyes, and the seven years seemed so short to him that he thought he had only been half a year. Now when the time had fully gone by, the Devil came and said, "Well Hans, what have you done?" "I poked the fire under the kettles, and I have swept all the dirt well behind the doors."

"But you have peeped into the kettles as well; it is lucky for you that you added fresh logs to them, or else your life would have been forfeited; now that your time is up, will you go home again?" "Yes," said the soldier, "I should very much like to see what my father is doing at home." The Devil said, “In order that you may receive the wages you have earned, go and fill your knapsack full of the sweepings, and take it home with you. You must also go unwashed and uncombed, with long hair on your head and beard, and with uncut nails and dim eyes, and when you are asked whence you come, you must say, “From hell,” and when you are asked who you are, you are to say, “The Devil’s sooty brother, and my King as well.” The soldier held his peace, and did as the Devil bade him, but he was not at all satisfied with his wages. Then as soon as he was up in the forest again, he took his knapsack from his back, to empty it, but on opening it, the sweepings had become pure gold. “I should never have expected that,” said he, and was well pleased, and entered the town. The landlord was standing in front of the inn, and when he saw the soldier approaching, he was terrified, because Hans looked so horrible, worse than a scare-crow. He called to him and asked, “Whence comest thou?” “From hell.” “Who art thou?” “The Devil’s sooty brother, and my King as well.” Then the host would not let him enter, but when Hans showed him the gold, he came and unlatched the door himself. Hans then ordered the best room and attendance, ate, and drank his fill, but neither washed nor combed himself as the Devil had bidden him, and at last lay down to sleep. But the knapsack full of gold remained before the eyes of the landlord, and left him no peace, and during the night he crept in and stole it away. Next morning, however, when Hans got up and wanted to pay the landlord and travel further, behold his knapsack was gone! But he soon composed himself and thought, “Thou hast been unfortunate from no fault of thine own,” and straightway went back again to hell, complained of his misfortune to the old Devil, and begged for his help. The Devil said, “Seat yourself, I will wash, comb, and trim you, cut your hair and nails, and wash your eyes for you,” and when he had done with him, he gave him the knapsack back again full of sweepings, and said, “Go and tell the landlord that he must return you your money, or else I will come and fetch him, and he shall poke the fire in your place.” Hans went up and said to the landlord, “Thou hast stolen my money; if thou dost not return it, thou shalt go down to hell in my place, and wilt look as horrible as I.” Then the landlord gave him the money, and more besides, only begging him to keep it secret, and Hans was now a rich man.

He set out on his way home to his father, bought himself a shabby smock-frock to wear, and strolled about making music, for he had learned to do that while he was with the Devil in hell. There was however, an old King in that country, before whom he had to play, and the King was so delighted with his playing, that he promised him his eldest daughter in marriage. But when she heard that she was to be married to a common fellow in a smock-frock, she said, “Rather than do that, I would go into the deepest water.” Then the King gave him the youngest, who was quite willing to do it to please her father, and thus the Devil’s sooty brother got the King’s daughter, and when the aged King died, the whole kingdom likewise.

Bearskin

THERE was once a young fellow who enlisted as a soldier, conducted himself bravely, and was always the foremost when it rained bullets. So long as the war lasted, all went well, but when peace was made, he received his dismissal, and the captain said he might go where he liked. His parents were dead, and he had no longer a home, so he went to his brothers and begged them to take him in, and keep him until war broke out again. The brothers, however, were hard-hearted and said, “What can we do with thee? thou art of no use to us; go and make a living for thyself.” The soldier had nothing left but his gun; he took that on his shoulder, and went forth into the world. He came to a wide heath, on which nothing was to be seen but a circle of trees; under these he sat sorrowfully down, and began to think over his fate. “I have no money,” thought he, “I have learnt no trade but that of fighting, and now that they have made peace they don’t want me any longer; so I see beforehand that I shall have to starve.” All at once he heard a rustling, and when he looked round, a strange man stood before him, who wore a green coat and looked right stately, but had a hideous cloven foot. “I know already what thou art in need of,” said the man; “gold and possessions shall thou have, as much as thou canst make away with do what thou wilt, but first I must know if thou art fearless, that I may not bestow my money in vain.” “A soldier and fear — how can those two things go together?” he answered; “thou canst put me to the proof.” “Very well, then,” answered the man, “look behind thee.” The soldier turned round, and saw a large bear, which came growling towards him. “Oho!” cried the soldier, “I will tickle thy nose for thee, so that thou shalt soon lose thy fancy for growling,” and he aimed at the bear and shot it through the muzzle; it fell down and never stirred again. “I see quite well,” said the stranger, “that thou art not wanting in courage, but there is still another condition which thou wilt have to fulfil.” “If it does not endanger my salvation,” replied the soldier, who knew very well who was standing by him. “If it does, I’ll have nothing to do with it.” “Thou wilt look to that for thyself,” answered Greencoat; “thou shalt for the next seven years neither wash thyself, nor comb thy beard, nor thy hair, nor cut thy nails, nor say one paternoster. I will give thee a coat and a cloak, which during this time thou must wear. If thou diest during these seven years, thou art mine; if thou remainest alive, thou art free, and rich to boot, for all the rest of thy life.” The soldier thought of the great extremity in which he now found himself, and as he so often had gone to meet death, he resolved to risk it now also, and agreed to the terms. The Devil took off his green coat, gave it to the soldier, and said, “If thou hast this coat on thy back and puttest thy hand into the pocket, thou wilt always find it full of money.” Then he pulled the skin off the bear and said, “This shall be thy cloak, and thy bed also, for thereon shalt thou sleep, and in no other bed shalt thou lie, and because of this apparel shalt thou be called Bearskin.” After this the Devil vanished.

The soldier put the coat on, felt at once in the pocket, and found that the thing was really true. Then he put on the bearskin and went forth into the world, and enjoyed himself, refraining from nothing that did him good and his money harm. During the first year his appearance was passable, but during the second he began to look like a monster. His hair covered nearly the whole of his face, his beard was like a piece of coarse felt, his fingers had claws, and his face was so covered with dirt that if cress had been sown on it, it would have come up. Whosoever saw him, ran away, but as he everywhere gave the poor money to pray that he might not die during the seven years, and as he paid well for everything he still always found shelter. In the fourth year, he entered an inn where the landlord would not receive him, and would not even let him have a place in the stable, because he was afraid the horses would be scared. But as Bearskin thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a handful of ducats, the host let himself be persuaded and gave him a room in an outhouse. Bearskin was, however, obliged to promise not to let himself be seen, lest the inn should get a bad name.

As Bearskin was sitting alone in the evening, and wishing from the bottom of his heart that the seven years were over, he heard a loud lamenting in a neighboring room. He had a compassionate heart, so he opened the door, and saw an old man weeping bitterly, and wringing his hands. Bearskin went nearer, but the man sprang to his feet and tried to escape from him. At last when the man perceived that Bearskin's voice was human he let himself be prevailed on, and by kind words bearskin succeeded so far that the old man revealed the cause of his grief. His property had dwindled away by degrees, he and his daughters would have to starve, and he was so poor that he could not pay the innkeeper, and was to be put in prison. "If that is your only trouble," said Bearskin, "I have plenty of money." He caused the innkeeper to be brought thither, paid him and put a purse full of gold into the poor old man's pocket besides.

When the old man saw himself set free from all his troubles he did not know how to be grateful enough. "Come with me," said he to Bearskin; "my daughters are all miracles of beauty, choose one of them for thyself as a wife. When she hears what thou hast done for me, she will not refuse thee. Thou dost in truth look a little strange, but she will soon put thee to rights again." This pleased Bearskin well, and he went. When the eldest saw him she was so terribly alarmed at his face that she screamed and ran away. The second stood still and looked at him from head to foot, but then she said, "How can I accept a husband who no longer has a human form? The shaven bear that once was here and passed itself off for a man pleased me far better, for at any rate it wore a hussar's dress and white gloves. If it were nothing but ugliness, I might get used to that." The youngest, however, said, "Dear father, that must be a good man to have helped you out of your trouble, so if you have promised him a bride for doing it, your promise must be kept." It was a pity that Bearskin's face was covered with dirt and with hair, for if not they might have seen how delighted he was when he heard these words. He took a ring from his finger, broke it in two, and gave her one half, the other he kept for himself. He wrote his name, however, on her half, and hers on his, and begged her to keep her piece carefully, and then he took his leave and said, “I must still wander about for three years, and if I do not return then, thou art free, for I shall be dead. But pray to God to preserve my life.”

The poor betrothed bride dressed herself entirely in black, and when she thought of her future bridegroom, tears came into her eyes. Nothing but contempt and mockery fell to her lot from her sisters. “Take care,” said the eldest, “if thou givest him thy hand, he will strike his claws into it.” “Beware!” said the second. “Bears like sweet things, and if he takes a fancy to thee, he will eat thee up.” “Thou must always do as he likes,” began the elder again, “or else he will growl.” And the second continued, “But the wedding will be a merry one, for bears dance well.” The bride was silent, and did not let them vex her. Bearskin, however, travelled about the world from one place to another, did good where he was able, and gave generously to the poor that they might pray for him.

At length, as the last day of the seven years dawned, he went once more out on to the heath, and seated himself beneath the circle of trees. It was not long before the wind whistled, and the Devil stood before him and looked angrily at him; then he threw Bearskin his old coat, and asked for his own green one back. “We have not got so far as that yet,” answered Bearskin, “thou must first make me clean.” Whether the Devil liked it or not, he was forced to fetch water, and wash Bearskin, comb his hair, and cut his nails. After this, he looked like a brave soldier, and was much handsomer than he had ever been before.

When the Devil had gone away, Bearskin was quite lighthearted. He went into the town, put on a magnificent velvet coat, seated himself in a carriage drawn by four white horses, and drove to his bride’s house. No one recognized him, the father took him for a distinguished general, and led him into the room where his daughters were sitting. He was forced to place himself between the two eldest, they helped him to wine, gave him the best pieces of meat, and thought that in all the world they had never seen a handsomer man. The bride, however, sat opposite to him in her black dress, and never raised her eyes, nor spoke a word. When at length he asked the father if he would give him one of his daughters to wife, the two eldest jumped up, ran into their bedrooms to put on splendid dresses, for each of them fancied she was the chosen one. The stranger, as soon as he was alone with his bride, brought out his half of the ring, and threw it in a glass of wine which he reached across the table to her. She took the wine, but when she had drunk it, and found the half ring lying at the bottom, her heart began to beat. She got the other half, which she wore on a ribbon round her neck, joined them, and saw that the two pieces fitted exactly together. Then said he, “I am thy betrothed bridegroom, whom thou sawest as Bearskin, but through God’s grace I have again received my human form, and have once more become clean.” He went up to her, embraced her, and gave her a kiss. In the meantime the two sisters came back in full dress, and when they saw that the handsome man had fallen to the share of the youngest, and heard that he was Bearskin, they ran out full of anger and rage. One of them drowned herself in the well, the other hanged herself on a tree. In the evening, some one knocked at the door, and when the bridegroom opened it, it was the Devil in his green coat, who said, “Seest thou, I have now got two souls in the place of thy one!”

The Willow-Wren and the Bear

ONCE in summer-time the bear and the wolf were walking in the forest, and the bear heard a bird singing so beautifully that he said, “Brother wolf, what bird is it that sings so well?” “That is the King of birds,” said the wolf, “before whom we must bow down.” It was, however, in reality the willow-wren (Zaunkönig). “If that’s the case,” said the bear, “I should very much like to see his royal palace; come, take me thither.” “That is not done quite as you seem to think,” said the wolf; “you must wait until the Queen comes.” Soon afterwards, the Queen arrived with some food in her beak, and the lord King came too, and they began to feed their young ones. The bear would have liked to go at once, but the wolf held him back by the sleeve, and said, “No, you must wait until the lord and lady Queen have gone away again.” So they observed the hole in which was the nest, and trotted away. The bear, however, could not rest until he had seen the royal palace, and when a short time had passed, again went to it. The King and Queen had just flown out, so he peeped in and saw five or six young ones lying in it. “Is that the royal palace?” cried the bear; “it is a wretched palace, and you are not King’s children, you are disreputable children!” When the young wrens heard that, they were frightfully angry, and screamed, “No, that we are not! Our parents are honest people! Bear, thou wilt have to pay for that!”

The bear and the wolf grew uneasy, and turned back and went into their holes. The young willow-wrens, however, continued to cry and scream, and when their parents again brought food they said, “We will not so much as touch one fly’s leg, no, not if we were dying of hunger, until you have settled whether we are respectable children or not; the bear has been here and has insulted us!” Then the old King said, “Be easy, he shall be punished,” and he at once flew with the Queen to the bear’s cave, and called in, “Old Growler, why hast thou insulted my children? Thou shalt suffer for it we will punish thee by a bloody war.” Thus war was announced to the Bear, and all four-footed animals were summoned to take part in it, oxen, asses, cows, deer, and every other animal the earth contained. And the willow-wren summoned everything which flew in the air, not only birds, large and small, but midges, and hornets, bees and flies had to come.

When the time came for the war to begin, the willow-wren sent out spies to discover who was the enemy’s commander-in-chief. The gnat, who was the most crafty, flew into the forest where the enemy was assembled, and hid herself beneath a leaf of the tree where the watchword was to be given. There stood the bear, and he called the fox before him and said, “Fox, thou art the most cunning of all animals, thou shalt be general and lead us.” “Good,” said the fox, “but what signal shall we agree upon?” No one knew that, so the fox said, “I have a fine long bushy tail, which almost looks like a plume of red feathers. When I lift my tail up quite high, all is going well, and you must charge; but if I let it hang down, run away as fast as you can.” When the gnat had heard that, she flew away again, and revealed everything, with the greatest minuteness, to the willow-wren. When day broke, and the battle was to begin, all the four-footed animals came running up with such a noise that the earth trembled. The willow-wren also came flying through the air with his army with such a humming, and whirring, and swarming that every one was uneasy and afraid, and on both sides they advanced against each other. But the willow-wren sent down the hornet, with orders to get beneath the fox's tail, and sting with all his might. When the fox felt the first sting, he started so that he drew up one leg, with the pain, but he bore it, and still kept his tail high in the air; at the second sting, he was forced to put it down for a moment; at the third, he could hold out no longer, and screamed out and put his tail between his legs. When the animals saw that, they thought all was lost, and began to fly, each into his hole and the birds had won the battle.

Then the King and Queen flew home to their children and cried, "Children, rejoice, eat and drink to your heart's content, we have won the battle!" But the young wrens said, "We will not eat yet, the bear must come to the nest, and beg for pardon and say that we are honorable children, before we will do that." Then the willow-wren flew to the bear's hole and cried, "Growler, thou art to come to the nest to my children, and beg their pardon, or else every rib of thy body shall be broken." So the bear crept thither in the greatest fear, and begged their pardon. And now at last the young wrens were satisfied, and sat down together and ate and drank, and made merry till quite late into the night.

Sweet Porridge

THERE was a poor but good little girl who lived alone with her mother, and they no longer had anything to eat. So the child went into the forest, and there an aged woman met her who was aware of her sorrow, and presented her with a little pot, which when she said, “Cook, little pot, cook,” would cook good, sweet porridge, and when she said, “Stop, little pot,” it ceased to cook. The girl took the pot home to her mother, and now they were freed from their poverty and hunger, and ate sweet porridge as often as they chose. Once on a time when the girl had gone out, her mother said, “Cook, little pot, cook.” And it did cook and she ate till she was satisfied, and then she wanted the pot to stop cooking, but did not know the word. So it went on cooking and the porridge rose over the edge, and still it cooked on until the kitchen and whole house were full, and then the next house, and then the whole street, just as if it wanted to satisfy the hunger of the whole world, and there was the greatest distress, but no one knew how to stop it. At last when only one single house remained, the child came home and just said, “Stop, little pot,” and it stopped and gave up cooking, and whosoever wished to return to the town had to eat his way back.

Wise Folks

ONE day a peasant took his good hazel-stick out of the corner and said to his wife, “Trina, I am going across country, and shall not return for three days. If during that time the cattle-dealer should happen to call and want to buy our three cows, you may strike a bargain at once, but not unless you can get two hundred thalers for them; nothing less, do you hear?” “For heaven’s sake just go in peace,” answered the woman, “I will manage that.” “You, indeed,” said the man. “You once fell on your head when you were a little child, and that affects you even now; but let me tell you this, if you do anything foolish, I will make your back black and blue, and not with paint, I assure you, but with the stick which I have in my hand, and the colouring shall last a whole year, you may rely on that.” And having said that, the man went on his way.

Next morning the cattle-dealer came, and the woman had no need to say many words to him. When he had seen the cows and heard the price, he said, “I am quite willing to give that, honestly speaking, they are worth it. I will take the beasts away with me at once.” He unfastened their chains and drove them out of the byre, but just as he was going out of the yard-door, the woman clutched him by the sleeve and said, “You must give me the two hundred thalers now, or I cannot let the cows go.” “True,” answered the man, “but I have forgotten to buckle on my money-belt. Have no fear, however, you shall have security for my paying. I will take two cows with me and leave one, and then you will have a good pledge.” The woman saw the force of this, and let the man go away with the cows, and thought to herself, “How pleased Hans will be when he finds how cleverly I have managed it!” The peasant came home on the third day as he had said he would, and at once inquired if the cows were sold? “Yes, indeed, dear Hans,” answered the woman, “and as you said, for two hundred thalers. They are scarcely worth so much, but the man took them without making any objection.” “Where is the money?” asked the peasant. “Oh, I have not got the money,” replied the woman; “he had happened to forget his money-belt, but he will soon bring it, and he left good security behind him.” “What kind of security?” asked the man. “One of the three cows, which he shall not have until he has paid for the other two. I have managed very cunningly, for I have kept the smallest, which eats the least.” The man was enraged and lifted up his stick, and was just going to give her the beating he had promised her. Suddenly he let the stick fail and said, “You are the stupidest goose that ever waddled on God’s earth, but I am sorry for you. I will go out into the highways and wait for three days to see if I find anyone who is still stupider than you. If I succeed in doing so, you shall go scot-free, but if I do not find him, you shall receive your well-deserved reward without any discount.”

He went out into the great highways, sat down on a stone, and waited for what would happen. Then he saw a peasant’s waggon coming towards him, and a woman was standing upright in the middle of it, instead of sitting on the bundle of straw which was lying beside her, or walking near the oxen and leading them. The man thought to himself, “That is certainly one of the kind I am in search of,” and jumped up and ran backwards and forwards in front of the waggon like one who is not very wise. “What do you want, my friend?” said the woman to him; “I don’t know you, where do you come from?” “I have fallen down from heaven,” replied the man, “and don’t know how to get back again, couldn’t you drive me up?” “No,” said the woman, “I don’t know the way, but if you come from heaven you can surely tell me how my husband, who has been there these three years is. You must have seen him?” “Oh, yes, I have seen him, but all men can’t get on well. He keeps sheep, and the sheep give him a great deal to do. They run up the mountains and lose their way in the wilderness, and he has to run after them and drive them together again. His clothes are all torn to pieces too, and will soon fall off his body. There is no tailor there, for Saint Peter won’t let any of them in, as you know by the story.” “Who would have thought it?” cried the woman, “I tell you what, I will fetch his Sunday coat which is still hanging at home in the cupboard, he can wear that and look respectable. You will be so kind as to take it with you.” “That won’t do very well,” answered the peasant; “people are not allowed to take clothes into Heaven, they are taken away from one at the gate.” “Then hark you,” said the woman, “I sold my fine wheat yesterday and got a good lot of money for it, I will send that to him. If you hide the purse in your pocket, no one will know that you have it.” “If you can’t manage it any other way,” said the peasant, “I will do you that favor.” “Just sit still where you are,” said she, “and I will drive home and fetch the purse, I shall soon be back again. I do not sit down on the bundle of straw, but stand up in the waggon, because it makes it lighter for the cattle.” She drove her oxen away, and the peasant thought, “That woman has a perfect talent for folly, if she really brings the money, my wife may think herself fortunate, for she will get no beating.” It was not long before she came in a great hurry with the money, and with her own hands put it in his pocket. Before she went away, she thanked him again a thousand times for his courtesy.

When the woman got home again, she found her son who had come in from the field. She told him what unlooked-for things had befallen her, and then added, “I am truly delighted at having found an opportunity of sending something to my poor husband. Who would ever have imagined that he could be suffering for want of anything up in heaven?” The son was full of astonishment. “Mother,” said he, “it is not every day that a man comes from Heaven in this way, I will go out immediately, and see if he is still to be found; he must tell me what it is like up there, and how the work is done.” He saddled the horse and rode off with all speed. He found the peasant who was sitting under a willow-tree, and was just going to count the money in the purse. “Have you seen the man who has fallen down from Heaven?” cried the youth to him. “Yes,” answered the peasant, “he has set out on his way back there, and has gone up that hill, from whence it will be rather nearer;

you could still catch him up, if you were to ride fast." "Alas," said the youth, "I have been doing tiring work all day, and the ride here has completely worn me out; you know the man, be so kind as to get on my horse, and go and persuade him to come here." "Aha!" thought the peasant, "here is another who has no wick in his lamp!" "Why should I not do you this favor?" said he, and mounted the horse and rode off in a quick trot. The youth remained sitting there till night fell, but the peasant never came back. "The man from Heaven must certainly have been in a great hurry, and would not turn back," thought he, "and the peasant has no doubt given him the horse to take to my father." He went home and told his mother what had happened, and that he had sent his father the horse so that he might not have to be always running about. "Thou hast done well," answered she, "thy legs are younger than his, and thou canst go on foot."

When the peasant got home, he put the horse in the stable beside the cow which he had as a pledge, and then went to his wife and said, "Trina, as your luck would have it, I have found two who are still sillier fools than you; this time you escape without a beating, I will store it up for another occasion." Then he lighted his pipe, sat down in his grandfather's chair, and said, "It was a good stroke of business to get a sleek horse and a great purse full of money into the bargain, for two lean cows. If stupidity always brought in as much as that, I would be quite willing to hold it in honor." So thought the peasant, but you no doubt prefer the simple folks.

Stories about Snakes

First Story.

There was once a little child whose mother gave her every afternoon a small bowl of milk and bread, and the child seated herself in the yard with it. When she began to eat however, a snake came creeping out of a crevice in the wall, dipped its little head in the dish, and ate with her. The child had pleasure in this, and when she was sitting there with her little dish and the snake did not come at once, she cried,

“Snake, snake, come swiftly
 Hither come, thou tiny thing,

Thou shalt have thy crumbs of bread,
 Thou shalt refresh thyself with milk.”

Then the snake came in haste, and enjoyed its food. Moreover it showed gratitude, for it brought the child all kinds of pretty things from its hidden treasures, bright stones, pearls, and golden playthings. The snake, however, only drank the milk, and left the bread-crumbs alone. Then one day the child took its little spoon and struck the snake gently on its head with it, and said, “Eat the bread-crumbs as well, little thing.” The mother, who was standing in the kitchen, heard the child talking to someone, and when she saw that she was striking a snake with her spoon, ran out with a log of wood, and killed the good little creature.

From that time forth, a change came over the child. As long as the snake had eaten with her, she had grown tall and strong, but now she lost her pretty rosy cheeks and wasted away. It was not long before the funeral bird began to cry in the night, and the redbreast to collect little branches and leaves for a funeral garland, and soon afterwards the child lay on her bier.

Second Story.

An orphan child was sitting on the town walls spinning, when she saw a snake coming out of a hole low down in the wall. Swiftly she spread out beside this one of the blue silk handkerchiefs which snakes have such a strong liking for, and which are the only things they will creep on. As soon as the snake saw it, it went back, then returned, bringing with it a small golden crown, laid it on the handkerchief, and then went away again. The girl took up the crown, it glittered and was of delicate golden filagree work. It was not long before the snake came back for the second time, but when it no longer saw the crown, it crept up to the wall, and in its grief smote its little head against it as long as it had strength to do so, until at last it lay there dead. If the girl had but left the crown where it was, the snake would certainly have brought still more of its treasures out of the hole.

Third Story.

A snake cries, “Huhu, huhu.” A child says, “Come out.” The snake comes out, then the child inquires about her little sister: “Hast thou not seen little

Red-stockings?” The snake says, “No.” “Neither have I.” “Then I am like you. Huhu, huhu, huhu.”

The Poor Miller's Boy and the Cat

In a certain mill lived an old miller who had neither wife nor child, and three apprentices served under him. As they had been with him several years, he one day said to them, "I am old, and want to sit in the chimney-corner, go out, and whichsoever of you brings me the best horse home, to him will I give the mill, and in return for it he shall take care of me till my death." The third of the boys was, however, the drudge, who was looked on as foolish by the others; they begrudged the mill to him, and afterwards he would not have it. Then all three went out together, and when they came to the village, the two said to stupid Hans, "Thou mayst just as well stay here, as long as thou livest thou wilt never get a horse." Hans, however, went with them, and when it was night they came to a cave in which they lay down to sleep. The two sharp ones waited until Hans had fallen asleep, then they got up, and went away leaving him where he was. And they thought they had done a very clever thing, but it was certain to turn out ill for them. When the sun arose, and Hans woke up, he was lying in a deep cavern. He looked around on every side and exclaimed, "Oh, heavens, where am I?" Then he got up and clambered out of the cave, went into the forest, and thought, "Here I am quite alone and deserted, how shall I obtain a horse now?" Whilst he was thus walking full of thought, he met a small tabby-cat which said quite kindly, "Hans, where are you going?" "Alas, thou canst not help me." "I well know your desire," said the cat. "You wish to have a beautiful horse. Come with me, and be my faithful servant for seven years long, and then I will give you one more beautiful than any you have ever seen in your whole life." "Well, this is a wonderful cat!" thought Hans, "but I am determined to see if she is telling the truth." So she took him with her into her enchanted castle, where there were nothing but cats who were her servants. They leapt nimbly upstairs and downstairs, and were merry and happy. In the evening when they sat down to dinner, three of them had to make music. One played the bassoon, the other the fiddle, and the third put the trumpet to his lips, and blew out his cheeks as much as he possibly could. When they had dined, the table was carried away, and the cat said, "Now, Hans, come and dance with me." "No," said he, "I won't dance with a pussy cat. I have never done that yet." "Then take him to bed," said she to the cats. So one of them lighted him to his bed-room, one pulled his shoes off, one his stockings, and at last one of them blew out the candle. Next morning they returned and helped him out of bed, one put his stockings on for him, one tied his garters, one brought his shoes, one washed him, and one dried his face with her tail. "That feels very soft!" said Hans. He, however, had to serve the cat, and chop some wood every day, and to do that, he had an axe of silver, and the wedge and saw were of silver and the mallet of copper. So he chopped the wood small; stayed there in the house and had good meat and drink, but never saw anyone but the tabby-cat and her servants. Once she said to him, "Go and mow my meadow, and dry the grass," and gave him a scythe of silver, and a whetstone of gold, but bade him deliver them up again carefully. So Hans went thither, and did what he was bidden, and when he had finished the work, he carried the scythe, whetstone, and hay to the house, and asked if it was not yet time for her to give him his reward. “No,” said the cat, “you must first do something more for me of the same kind. There is timber of silver, carpenter’s axe, square, and everything that is needful, all of silver, with these build me a small house.” Then Hans built the small house, and said that he had now done everything, and still he had no horse. Nevertheless the seven years had gone by with him as if they were six months. The cat asked him if he would like to see her horses? “Yes,” said Hans. Then she opened the door of the small house, and when she had opened it, there stood twelve horses, such horses, so bright and shining, that his heart rejoiced at the sight of them. And now she gave him to eat and drink, and said, “Go home, I will not give thee thy horse away with thee; but in three days’ time I will follow thee and bring it.” So Hans set out, and she showed him the way to the mill. She had, however, never once given him a new coat, and he had been obliged to keep on his dirty old smock-frock, which he had brought with him, and which during the seven years had everywhere become too small for him. When he reached home, the two other apprentices were there again as well, and each of them certainly had brought a horse with him, but one of them was a blind one, and the other lame. They asked Hans where his horse was. “It will follow me in three days’ time.” Then they laughed and said, “Indeed, stupid Hans, where wilt thou get a horse?” “It will be a fine one!” Hans went into the parlour, but the miller said he should not sit down to table, for he was so ragged and torn, that they would all be ashamed of him if any one came in. So they gave him a mouthful of food outside, and at night, when they went to rest, the two others would not let him have a bed, and at last he was forced to creep into the goose-house, and lie down on a little hard straw. In the morning when he awoke, the three days had passed, and a coach came with six horses and they shone so bright that it was delightful to see them! and a servant brought a seventh as well, which was for the poor miller’s boy. And a magnificent princess alighted from the coach and went into the mill, and this princess was the little tabby-cat whom poor Hans had served for seven years. She asked the miller where the miller’s boy and drudge was? Then the miller said, “We cannot have him here in the mill, for he is so ragged; he is lying in the goose-house.” Then the King’s daughter said that they were to bring him immediately. So they brought him out, and he had to hold his little smock-frock together to cover himself. The servants unpacked splendid garments, and washed him and dressed him, and when that was done, no King could have looked more handsome. Then the maiden desired to see the horses which the other apprentices had brought home with them, and one of them was blind and the other lame. So she ordered the servant to bring the seventh horse, and when the miller saw it, he said that such a horse as that had never yet entered his yard. “And that is for the third miller’s boy,” said she. “Then he must have the mill,” said the miller, but the King’s daughter said that the horse was there, and that he was to keep his mill as well, and took her faithful Hans and set him in the coach, and drove away with him. They first drove to the little house which he had built with the silver tools, and behold it was a great castle, and everything inside it was of silver and gold; and then she married him, and he was rich, so rich that he had enough for all the rest of his life. After this, let no one ever say that anyone who is silly can never become a person of importance.

The Two Travellers

Hill and vale do not come together, but the children of men do, good and bad. In this way a shoemaker and a tailor once met with each other in their travels. The tailor was a handsome little fellow who was always merry and full of enjoyment. He saw the shoemaker coming towards him from the other side, and as he observed by his bag what kind of a trade he plied, he sang a little mocking song to him,

“Sew me the seam,
Draw me the thread,
Spread it over with pitch,
Knock the nail on the head.”

The shoemaker, however, could not endure a joke; he pulled a face as if he had drunk vinegar, and made a gesture as if he were about to seize the tailor by the throat. But the little fellow began to laugh, reached him his bottle, and said, “No harm was meant, take a drink, and swallow your anger down.” The shoemaker took a very hearty drink, and the storm on his face began to clear away. He gave the bottle back to the tailor, and said, “I spoke civilly to you; one speaks well after much drinking, but not after much thirst. Shall we travel together?” “All right,” answered the tailor, “if only it suits you to go into a big town where there is no lack of work.” “That is just where I want to go,” answered the shoemaker. “In a small nest there is nothing to earn, and in the country, people like to go barefoot.” They travelled therefore onwards together, and always set one foot before the other like a weasel in the snow.

Both of them had time enough, but little to bite and to break. When they reached a town they went about and paid their respects to the tradesmen, and because the tailor looked so lively and merry, and had such pretty red cheeks, every one gave him work willingly, and when luck was good the master’s daughters gave him a kiss beneath the porch, as well. When he again fell in with the shoemaker, the tailor had always the most in his bundle. The ill-tempered shoemaker made a wry face, and thought, “The greater the rascal the more the luck,” but the tailor began to laugh and to sing, and shared all he got with his comrade. If a couple of pence jingled in his pockets, he ordered good cheer, and thumped the table in his joy till the glasses danced, and it was lightly come, lightly go, with him.

When they had travelled for some time, they came to a great forest through which passed the road to the capital. Two foot-paths, however, led through it, one of which was a seven days’ journey, and the other only two, but neither of the travellers knew which way was the short one. They seated themselves beneath an oak-tree, and took counsel together how they should forecast, and for how many days they should provide themselves with bread. The shoemaker said, “One must look before one leaps, I will take with me bread for a week." "What!" said the tailor, "drag bread for seven days on one's back like a beast of burden, and not be able to look about. I shall trust in God, and not trouble myself about anything! The money I have in my pocket is as good in summer as in winter, but in hot weather bread gets dry, and mouldy into the bargain; even my coat does not go as far as it might. Besides, why should we not find the right way? Bread for two days, and that's enough." Each, therefore, bought his own bread, and then they tried their luck in the forest.

It was as quiet there as in a church. No wind stirred, no brook murmured, no bird sang, and through the thickly-leaved branches no sunbeam forced its way. The shoemaker spoke never a word, the heavy bread weighed down his back until the perspiration streamed down his cross and gloomy face. The tailor, however, was quite merry, he jumped about, whistled on a leaf, or sang a song, and thought to himself, "God in heaven must be pleased to see me so happy."

This lasted two days, but on the third the forest would not come to an end, and the tailor had eaten up all his bread, so after all his heart sank down a yard deeper. In the meantime he did not lose courage, but relied on God and on his luck. On the third day he lay down in the evening hungry under a tree, and rose again next morning hungry still; so also passed the fourth day, and when the shoemaker seated himself on a fallen tree and devoured his dinner, the tailor was only a looker-on. If he begged for a little piece of bread the other laughed mockingly, and said, "Thou hast always been so merry, now thou canst try for once what it is to be sad: the birds which sing too early in the morning are struck by the hawk in the evening," In short he was pitiless. But on the fifth morning the poor tailor could no longer stand up, and was hardly able to utter one word for weakness; his cheeks were white, and his eyes red. Then the shoemaker said to him, "I will give thee a bit of bread to-day, but in return for it, I will put out thy right eye." The unhappy tailor who still wished to save his life, could not do it in any other way; he wept once more with both eyes, and then held them out, and the shoemaker, who had a heart of stone, put out his right eye with a sharp knife. The tailor called to remembrance what his mother had formerly said to him when he had been eating secretly in the pantry. "Eat what one can, and suffer what one must." When he had consumed his dearly-bought bread, he got on his legs again, forgot his misery and comforted himself with the thought that he could always see enough with one eye. But on the sixth day, hunger made itself felt again, and gnawed him almost to the heart. In the evening he fell down by a tree, and on the seventh morning he could not raise himself up for faintness, and death was close at hand. Then said the shoemaker, "I will show mercy and give thee bread once more, but thou shalt not have it for nothing, I shall put out thy other eye for it." And now the tailor felt how thoughtless his life had been, prayed to God for forgiveness, and said, "Do what thou wilt, I will bear what I must, but remember that our Lord God does not always look on passively, and that an hour will come when the evil deed which thou hast done to me, and which I have not deserved of thee, will be requited. When times were good with me, I shared what I had with thee. My trade is of that kind that each stitch must always be exactly like the other. If I no longer have my eyes and can sew no more I must go a-begging. At any rate do not leave me here alone when I am blind, or I shall die of hunger." The shoemaker, however, who had driven God out of his heart, took the knife and put out his left eye. Then he gave him a bit of bread to eat, held out a stick to him, and drew him on behind him.

When the sun went down, they got out of the forest, and before them in the open country stood the gallows. Thither the shoemaker guided the blind tailor, and then left him alone and went his way. Weariness, pain, and hunger made the wretched man fall asleep, and he slept the whole night. When day dawned he awoke, but knew not where he lay. Two poor sinners were hanging on the gallows, and a crow sat on the head of each of them. Then one of the men who had been hanged began to speak, and said, "Brother, art thou awake?" "Yes, I am awake," answered the second. "Then I will tell thee something," said the first; "the dew which this night has fallen down over us from the gallows, gives every one who washes himself with it his eyes again. If blind people did but know this, how many would regain their sight who do not believe that to be possible."

When the tailor heard that, he took his pocket-handkerchief, pressed it on the grass, and when it was moist with dew, washed the sockets of his eyes with it. Immediately was fulfilled what the man on the gallows had said, and a couple of healthy new eyes filled the sockets. It was not long before the tailor saw the sun rise behind the mountains; in the plain before him lay the great royal city with its magnificent gates and hundred towers, and the golden balls and crosses which were on the spires began to shine. He could distinguish every leaf on the trees, saw the birds which flew past, and the midges which danced in the air. He took a needle out of his pocket, and as he could thread it as well as ever he had done, his heart danced with delight. He threw himself on his knees, thanked God for the mercy he had shown him, and said his morning prayer. He did not forget also to pray for the poor sinners who were hanging there swinging against each other in the wind like the pendulums of clocks. Then he took his bundle on his back and soon forgot the pain of heart he had endured, and went on his way singing and whistling.

The first thing he met was a brown foal running about the fields at large. He caught it by the mane, and wanted to spring on it and ride into the town. The foal, however, begged to be set free. "I am still too young," it said, "even a light tailor such as thou art would break my back in two let me go till I have grown strong. A time may perhaps come when I may reward thee for it." "Run off," said the tailor, "I see thou art still a giddy thing." He gave it a touch with a switch over its back, whereupon it kicked up its hind legs for joy, leapt over hedges and ditches, and galloped away into the open country.

But the little tailor had eaten nothing since the day before. "The sun to be sure fills my eyes," said he, "but the bread does not fill my mouth. The first thing that comes across me and is even half edible will have to suffer for it." In the meantime a stork stepped solemnly over the meadow towards him. "Halt, halt!" cried the tailor, and seized him by the leg. "I don't know if thou art good to eat or not, but my hunger leaves me no great choice. I must cut thy head off, and roast thee." "Don't do that," replied the stork; "I am a sacred bird which brings mankind great profit, and no one does me an injury. Leave me my life, and I may do thee good in some other way." "Well, be off, Cousin Longlegs," said the tailor. The stork rose up, let its long legs hang down, and flew gently away.

"What's to be the end of this?" said the tailor to himself at last, "my hunger grows greater and greater, and my stomach more and more empty. Whatsoever comes in my way now is lost." At this moment he saw a couple of young ducks which were on a pond come swimming towards him. "You come just at the right moment," said he, and laid hold of one of them and was about to wring its neck. On this an old duck which was hidden among the reeds, began to scream loudly, and swam to him with open beak, and begged him urgently to spare her dear children. "Canst thou not imagine," said she, "how thy mother would mourn if any one wanted to carry thee off, and give thee thy finishing stroke?" "Only be quiet," said the good-tempered tailor, "thou shalt keep thy children," and put the prisoner back into the water.

When he turned round, he was standing in front of an old tree which was partly hollow, and saw some wild bees flying in and out of it. "There I shall at once find the reward of my good deed," said the tailor, "the honey will refresh me." But the Queen-bee came out, threatened him and said, "If thou touchest my people, and destroyest my nest, our stings shall pierce thy skin like ten thousand red-hot needles. But if thou wilt leave us in peace and go thy way, we will do thee a service for it another time."

The little tailor saw that here also nothing was to be done. "Three dishes empty and nothing on the fourth is a bad dinner!" He dragged himself therefore with his starved-out stomach into the town, and as it was just striking twelve, all was ready-cooked for him in the inn, and he was able to sit down at once to dinner. When he was satisfied he said, "Now I will get to work." He went round the town, sought a master, and soon found a good situation. As, however, he had thoroughly learnt his trade, it was not long before he became famous, and every one wanted to have his new coat made by the little tailor, whose importance increased daily. "I can go no further in skill," said he, "and yet things improve every day." At last the King appointed him court-tailor.

But how things do happen in the world! On the very same day his former comrade the shoemaker also became court-shoemaker. When the latter caught sight of the tailor, and saw that he had once more two healthy eyes, his conscience troubled him. "Before he takes revenge on me," thought he to himself, "I must dig a pit for him." He, however, who digs a pit for another, falls into it himself. In the evening when work was over and it had grown dusk, he stole to the King and said, "Lord King, the tailor is an arrogant fellow and has boasted that he will get the gold crown back again which was lost in ancient times." "That would please me very much," said the King, and he caused the tailor to be brought before him next morning, and ordered him to get the crown back again, or to leave the town for ever. "Oho!" thought the tailor, "a rogue gives more than he has got. If the surly King wants me to do what can be done by no one, I will not wait till morning, but will go out of the town at once, to-day." He packed up his bundle, therefore, but when he was without the gate he could not help being sorry to give up his good fortune, and turn his back on the town in which all had gone so well with him. He came to the pond where he had made the acquaintance of the ducks; at that very moment the old one whose young ones he had spared, was sitting there by the shore, pluming herself with her beak. She knew him again instantly, and asked why he was hanging his head so? "Thou wilt not be surprised when thou hearest what has befallen me," replied the tailor, and told her his fate. "If that be all," said the duck, "we can help thee. The crown fell into the water, and lies down below at the bottom; we will soon bring it up again for thee. In the meantime just spread out thy handkerchief on the bank." She dived down with her twelve young ones, and in five minutes she was up again and sat with the crown resting on her wings, and the twelve young ones were swimming round about and had put their beaks under it, and were helping to carry it. They swam to the shore and put the crown on the handkerchief. No one can imagine how magnificent the crown was; when the sun shone on it, it gleamed like a hundred thousand carbuncles. The tailor tied his handkerchief together by the four corners, and carried it to the King, who was full of joy, and put a gold chain round the tailor's neck.

When the shoemaker saw that one stroke had failed, he contrived a second, and went to the King and said, "Lord King, the tailor has become insolent again; he boasts that he will copy in wax the whole of the royal palace, with everything that pertains to it, loose or fast, inside and out." The King sent for the tailor and ordered him to copy in wax the whole of the royal palace, with everything that pertained to it, movable or immovable, within and without, and if he did not succeed in doing this, or if so much as one nail on the wall were wanting, he should be imprisoned for his whole life under ground.

The tailor thought, "It gets worse and worse! No one can endure that?" and threw his bundle on his back, and went forth. When he came to the hollow tree, he sat down and hung his head. The bees came flying out, and the Queen-bee asked him if he had a stiff neck, since he held his head so awry? "Alas, no," answered the tailor, "something quite different weighs me down," and he told her what the King had demanded of him. The bees began to buzz and hum amongst themselves, and the Queen-bee said, "Just go home again, but come back to-morrow at this time, and bring a large sheet with you, and then all will be well." So he turned back again, but the bees flew to the royal palace and straight into it through the open windows, crept round about into every corner, and inspected everything most carefully. Then they hurried back and modelled the palace in wax with such rapidity that any one looking on would have thought it was growing before his eyes. By the evening all was ready, and when the tailor came next morning, the whole of the splendid building was there, and not one nail in the wall or tile of the roof was wanting, and it was delicate withal, and white as snow, and smelt sweet as honey. The tailor wrapped it carefully in his cloth and took it to the King, who could not admire it enough, placed it in his largest hall, and in return for it presented the tailor with a large stone house.

The shoemaker, however, did not give up, but went for the third time to the King and said, "Lord King, it has come to the tailor's ears that no water will spring up in the court-yard of the castle, and he has boasted that it shall rise up in the midst of the court-yard to a man's height and be clear as crystal." Then the King ordered the tailor to be brought before him and said, "If a stream of water does not rise in my court-yard by to-morrow as thou hast promised, the executioner shall in that very place make thee shorter by the head." The poor tailor did not take long to think about it, but hurried out to the gate, and because this time it was a matter of life and death to him, tears rolled down his face. Whilst he was thus going forth full of sorrow, the foal to which he had formerly given its liberty, and which had now become a beautiful chestnut horse, came leaping towards him. "The time has come," it said to the tailor, "when I can repay thee for thy good deed. I know already what is needful to thee, but thou shalt soon have help; get on me, my back can carry two such as thou." The tailor's courage came back to him; he jumped up in one bound, and the horse went full speed into the town, and right up to the court-yard of the castle. It galloped as quick as lightning thrice round it, and at the third time it fell violently down. At the same instant, however, there was a terrific clap of thunder, a fragment of earth in the middle of the court-yard sprang like a cannon-ball into the air, and over the castle, and directly after it a jet of water rose as high as a man on horseback, and the water was as pure as crystal, and the sunbeams began to dance on it. When the King saw that he arose in amazement, and went and embraced the tailor in the sight of all men.

But good fortune did not last long. The King had daughters in plenty, one still prettier than the other, but he had no son. So the malicious shoemaker betook himself for the fourth time to the King, and said, "Lord King, the tailor has not given up his arrogance. He has now boasted that if he liked, he could cause a son to be brought to the Lord king through the air." The King commanded the tailor to be summoned, and said, "If thou causest a son to be brought to me within nine days, thou shalt have my eldest daughter to wife." "The reward is indeed great," thought the little tailor; "one would willingly do something for it, but the cherries grow too high for me, if I climb for them, the bough will break beneath me, and I shall fall."

He went home, seated himself cross-legged on his work-table, and thought over what was to be done. "It can't be managed," cried he at last, "I will go away; after all I can't live in peace here." He tied up his bundle and hurried away to the gate. When he got to the meadow, he perceived his old friend the stork, who was walking backwards and forwards like a philosopher. Sometimes he stood still, took a frog into close consideration, and at length swallowed it down. The stork came to him and greeted him. "I see," he began, "that thou hast thy pack on thy back. Why art thou leaving the town?" The tailor told him what the King had required of him, and how he could not perform it, and lamented his misfortune. "Don't let thy hair grow grey about that," said the stork, "I will help thee out of thy difficulty. For a long time now, I have carried the children in swaddling-clothes into the town, so for once in a way I can fetch a little prince out of the well. Go home and be easy. In nine days from this time repair to the royal palace, and there will I come." The little tailor went home, and at the appointed time was at the castle. It was not long before the stork came flying thither and tapped at the window. The tailor opened it, and cousin Longlegs came carefully in, and walked with solemn steps over the smooth marble pavement. He had, moreover, a baby in his beak that was as lovely as an angel, and stretched out its little hands to the Queen. The stork laid it in her lap, and she caressed it and kissed it, and was beside herself with delight. Before the stork flew away, he took his travelling bag off his back and handed it over to the Queen. In it there were little paper parcels with colored sweetmeats, and they were divided amongst the little princesses. The eldest, however, had none of them, but got the merry tailor for a husband. "It seems to me," said he, "just as if I had won the highest prize. My mother was if right after all, she always said that whoever trusts in God and only has good luck, can never fail."

The shoemaker had to make the shoes in which the little tailor danced at the wedding festival, after which he was commanded to quit the town for ever. The road to the forest led him to the gallows. Worn out with anger, rage, and the heat of the day, he threw himself down. When he had closed his eyes and was about to sleep, the two crows flew down from the heads of the men who were hanging there, and pecked his eyes out. In his madness he ran into the forest and must have died there of hunger, for no one has ever either seen him again or heard of him.

Hans the Hedgehog

THERE was once a countryman who had money and land in plenty, but how rich soever he was, one thing was still wanting in his happiness he had no children. Often when he went into the town with the other peasants they mocked him and asked why he had no children. At last he became angry, and when he got home he said, “I will have a child, even if it be a hedgehog.” Then his wife had a child, that was a hedgehog in the upper part of his body, and a boy in the lower, and when she saw the child, she was terrified, and said, “See, there thou hast brought ill-luck on us.” Then said the man, “What can be done now? The boy must be christened, but we shall not be able to get a godfather for him.” The woman said, “And we cannot call him anything else but Hans the Hedgehog.”

When he was christened, the parson said, “He cannot go into any ordinary bed because of his spikes.” So a little straw was put behind the stove, and Hans the Hedgehog was laid on it. His mother could not suckle him, for he would have pricked her with his quills. So he lay there behind the stove for eight years, and his father was tired of him and thought, “If he would but die!” He did not die, however, but remained lying there. Now it happened that there was a fair in the town, and the peasant was about to go to it, and asked his wife what he should bring back with him for her. “A little meat and a couple of white rolls which are wanted for the house,” said she. Then he asked the servant, and she wanted a pair of slippers and some stockings with clocks. At last he said also, “And what wilt thou have, Hans my Hedgehog?” “Dear father,” he said, “do bring me bagpipes.” When, therefore, the father came home again, he gave his wife what he had bought for her; meat and white rolls, and then he gave the maid the slippers, and the stockings with clocks; and, lastly, he went behind the stove, and gave Hans the Hedgehog the bagpipes. And when Hans the Hedgehog had the bagpipes, he said, “Dear father, do go to the forge and get the cock shod, and then I will ride away, and never come back again.” On this, the father was delighted to think that he was going to get rid of him, and had the cock shod for him, and when it was done, Hans the Hedgehog got on it, and rode away, but took swine and asses with him which he intended to keep in the forest. When they got there he made the cock fly on to a high tree with him, and there he sat for many a long year, and watched his asses and swine until the herd was quite large, and his father knew nothing about him. While he was sitting in the tree, however, he played his bagpipes, and made music which was very beautiful. Once a King came travelling by who had lost his way and heard the music. He was astonished at it, and sent his servant forth to look all round and see from whence this music came. He spied about, but saw nothing but a little animal sitting up aloft on the tree, which looked like a cock with a hedgehog on it which made this music. Then the King told the servant he was to ask why he sat there, and if he knew the road which led to his kingdom. So Hans the Hedgehog descended from the tree, and said he would show the way if the King would write a bond and promise him whatever he first met in the royal courtyard as soon as he arrived at home. Then the King thought, “I can easily do that, Hans the Hedgehog understands nothing, and I can write what I like.” So the King took pen and ink and wrote something, and when he had done it, Hans the Hedgehog showed him the way, and he got safely home. But his daughter, when she saw him from afar, was so overjoyed that she ran to meet him, and kissed him. Then he remembered Hans the Hedgehog, and told her what had happened, and that he had been forced to promise whatsoever first met him when he got home, to a very strange animal which sat on a cock as if it were a horse, and made beautiful music, but that instead of writing that he should have what he wanted, he had written that he should not have it. Thereupon the princess was glad, and said he had done well, for she never would have gone away with the Hedgehog.

Hans the Hedgehog, however, looked after his asses and pigs, and was always merry and sat on the tree and played his bagpipes.

Now it came to pass that another King came journeying by with his attendants and runners, and he also had lost his way, and did not know how to get home again because the forest was so large. He likewise heard the beautiful music from a distance, and asked his runner what that could be, and told him to go and see. Then the runner went under the tree, and saw the cock sitting at the top of it, and Hans the Hedgehog on the cock. The runner asked him what he was about up there? “I am keeping my asses and my pigs; but what is your desire?” The messenger said that they had lost their way, and could not get back into their own kingdom, and asked if he would not show them the way. Then Hans the Hedgehog got down the tree with the cock, and told the aged King that he would show him the way, if he would give him for his own whatsoever first met him in front of his royal palace. The King said, “Yes,” and wrote a promise to Hans the Hedgehog that he should have this. That done, Hans rode on before him on the cock, and pointed out the way, and the King reached his kingdom again in safety. When he got to the courtyard, there were great rejoicings. Now he had an only daughter who was very beautiful; she ran to meet him, threw her arms round his neck, and was delighted to have her old father back again. She asked him where in the world he had been so long. So he told her how he had lost his way, and had very nearly not come back at all, but that as he was travelling through a great forest, a creature, half hedgehog, half man, who was sitting astride a cock in a high tree, and making music, had shown him the way and helped him to get out, but that in return he had promised him whatsoever first met him in the royal court-yard, and how that was she herself, which made him unhappy now. But on this she promised that, for love of her father, she would willingly go with this Hans if he came.

Hans the Hedgehog, however, took care of his pigs, and the pigs multiplied until they became so many in number that the whole forest was filled with them. Then Hans the Hedgehog resolved not to live in the forest any longer, and sent word to his father to have every stye in the village emptied, for he was coming with such a great herd that all might kill who wished to do so. When his father heard that, he was troubled, for he thought Hans the Hedgehog had died long ago. Hans the Hedgehog, however, seated himself on the cock, and drove the pigs before him into the village, and ordered the slaughter to begin. Ha! but there was a killing and a chopping that might have been heard two miles off! After this Hans the Hedgehog said, "Father, let me have the cock shod once more at the forge, and then I will ride away and never come back as long as I live." Then the father had the cock shod once more, and was pleased that Hans the Hedgehog would never return again.

Hans the Hedgehog rode away to the first kingdom. There the King had commanded that whosoever came mounted on a cock and had bagpipes with him should be shot at, cut down, or stabbed by everyone, so that he might not enter the palace. When, therefore, Hans the Hedgehog came riding thither, they all pressed forward against him with their pikes, but he spurred the cock and it flew up over the gate in front of the King's window and lighted there, and Hans cried that the King must give him what he had promised, or he would take both his life and his daughter's. Then the King began to speak his daughter fair, and to beg her to go away with Hans in order to save her own life and her father's. So she dressed herself in white, and her father gave her a carriage with six horses and magnificent attendants together with gold and possessions. She seated herself in the carriage, and placed Hans the Hedgehog beside her with the cock and the bagpipes, and then they took leave and drove away, and the King thought he should never see her again. He was however, deceived in his expectation, for when they were at a short distance from the town, Hans the Hedgehog took her pretty clothes off, and pierced her with his hedgehog's skin until she bled all over. "That is the reward of your falseness," said he, "go your way, I will not have you!" and on that he chased her home again, and she was disgraced for the rest of her life.

Hans the Hedgehog, however, rode on further on the cock, with his bagpipes, to the dominions of the second King to whom he had shown the way. This one, however, had arranged that if any one resembling Hans the Hedgehog should come, they were to present arms, give him safe conduct, cry long life to him, and lead him to the royal palace.

But when the King's daughter saw him she was terrified, for he looked quite too strange. She remembered however, that she could not change her mind, for she had given her promise to her father. So Hans the Hedgehog was welcomed by her, and married to her, and had to go with her to the royal table, and she seated herself by his side, and they ate and drank. When the evening came and they wanted to go to sleep, she was afraid of his quills, but he told her she was not to fear, for no harm would befall her, and he told the old King that he was to appoint four men to watch by the door of the chamber, and light a great fire, and when he entered the room and was about to get into bed, he would creep out of his hedgehog's skin and leave it lying there by the bedside, and that the men were to run nimbly to it, throw it in the fire, and stay by it until it was consumed. When the clock struck eleven, he went into the chamber, stripped off the hedgehog's skin, and left it lying by the bed. Then came the men and fetched it swiftly, and threw it in the fire; and when the fire had consumed it, he was delivered, and lay there in bed in human form, but he was coal-black as if he had been burnt. The King sent for his physician who washed him with precious salves, and anointed him, and he became white, and was a handsome young man. When the King's daughter saw that she was glad, and the next morning they arose joyfully, ate and drank, and then the marriage was properly solemnized, and Hans the Hedgehog received the kingdom from the aged King.

When several years had passed he went with his wife to his father, and said that he was his son. The father, however, declared he had no son he had never had but one, and he had been born like a hedgehog with spikes, and had gone forth into the world. Then Hans made himself known, and the old father rejoiced and went with him to his kingdom.

My tale is done,
And away it has run
To little August's house.

The Shroud

There was once a mother who had a little boy of seven years old, who was so handsome and lovable that no one could look at him without liking him, and she herself worshipped him above everything in the world. Now it so happened that he suddenly became ill, and God took him to himself; and for this the mother could not be comforted, and wept both day and night. But soon afterwards, when the child had been buried, it appeared by night in the places where it had sat and played during its life, and if the mother wept, it wept also, and when morning came it disappeared. As, however, the mother would not stop crying, it came one night, in the little white shroud in which it had been laid in its coffin, and with its wreath of flowers round its head, and stood on the bed at her feet, and said, “Oh, mother, do stop crying, or I shall never fall asleep in my coffin, for my shroud will not dry because of all thy tears, which fall upon it.” The mother was afraid when she heard that, and wept no more. The next night the child came again, and held a little light in its hand, and said, “Look, mother, my shroud is nearly dry, and I can rest in my grave.” Then the mother gave her sorrow into God’s keeping, and bore it quietly and patiently, and the child came no more, but slept in its little bed beneath the earth.

The Jew Among Thorns

There was once a rich man, who had a servant who served him diligently and honestly: He was every morning the first out of bed, and the last to go to rest at night; and, whenever there was a difficult job to be done, which nobody cared to undertake, he was always the first to set himself to it. Moreover, he never complained, but was contented with everything, and always merry.

When a year was ended, his master gave him no wages, for he said to himself, “That is the cleverest way; for I shall save something, and he will not go away, but stay quietly in my service.” The servant said nothing, but did his work the second year as he had done it the first; and when at the end of this, likewise, he received no wages, he made himself happy, and still stayed on.

When the third year also was past, the master considered, put his hand in his pocket, but pulled nothing out. Then at last the servant said, “Master, for three years I have served you honestly, be so good as to give me what I ought to have, for I wish to leave, and look about me a little more in the world.”

“Yes, my good fellow,” answered the old miser; “you have served me industriously, and, therefore, you shall be cheerfully rewarded;” And he put his hand into his pocket, but counted out only three farthings, saying, “There, you have a farthing for each year; that is large and liberal pay, such as you would have received from few masters.”

The honest servant, who understood little about money, put his fortune into his pocket, and thought, “Ah! now that I have my purse full, why need I trouble and plague myself any longer with hard work!” So on he went, up hill and down dale; and sang and jumped to his heart’s content. Now it came to pass that as he was going by a thicket a little man stepped out, and called to him, “Whither away, merry brother? I see you do not carry many cares.” “Why should I be sad?” answered the servant; “I have enough; three years’ wages are jingling in my pocket.” “How much is your treasure?” the dwarf asked him. “How much? Three farthings sterling, all told.” “Look here,” said the dwarf, “I am a poor needy man, give me your three farthings; I can work no longer, but you are young, and can easily earn your bread.”

And as the servant had a good heart, and felt pity for the old man, he gave him the three farthings, saying, “Take them in the name of Heaven, I shall not be any the worse for it.”

Then the little man said, “As I see you have a good heart I grant you three wishes, one for each farthing, they shall all be fulfilled.”

“Aha?” said the servant, “you are one of those who can work wonders! Well, then, if it is to be so, I wish, first, for a gun, which shall hit everything that I aim at; secondly, for a fiddle, which when I play on it, shall compel all who hear it to dance; thirdly, that if I ask a favor of any one he shall not be able to refuse it.”

“All that shall you have,” said the dwarf; and put his hand into the bush, and only think, there lay a fiddle and gun, all ready, just as if they had been ordered. These he gave to the servant, and then said to him, “Whatever you may ask at any time, no man in the world shall be able to deny you.”

“Heart alive! What can one desire more?” said the servant to himself, and went merrily onwards. Soon afterwards he met a Jew with a long goat’s-beard, who was standing listening to the song of a bird which was sitting up at the top of a tree. “Good heavens,” he was exclaiming, “that such a small creature should have such a fearfully loud voice! If it were but mine! If only someone would sprinkle some salt upon its tail!”

“If that is all,” said the servant, “the bird shall soon be down here;” And taking aim he pulled the trigger, and down fell the bird into the thorn-bushes. “Go, you rogue,” he said to the Jew, “and fetch the bird out for yourself!”

“Oh!” said the Jew, “leave out the rogue, my master, and I will do it at once. I will get the bird out for myself, as you really have hit it.” Then he lay down on the ground, and began to crawl into the thicket.

When he was fast among the thorns, the good servant’s humor so tempted him that he took up his fiddle and began to play. In a moment the Jew’s legs began to move, and to jump into the air, and the more the servant fiddled the better went the dance. But the thorns tore his shabby coat from him, combed his beard, and pricked and plucked him all over the body. “Oh dear,” cried the Jew, “what do I want with your fiddling? Leave the fiddle alone, master; I do not want to dance.”

But the servant did not listen to him, and thought, “You have fleeced people often enough, now the thorn-bushes shall do the same to you;” and he began to play over again, so that the Jew had to jump higher than ever, and scraps of his coat were left hanging on the thorns. “Oh, woe’s me! cried the Jew; I will give the gentleman whatsoever he asks if only he leaves off fiddling a purse full of gold.” “If you are so liberal,” said the servant, “I will stop my music; but this I must say to your credit, that you dance to it so well that it is quite an art;” and having taken the purse he went his way.

The Jew stood still and watched the servant quietly until he was far off and out of sight, and then he screamed out with all his might, “You miserable musician, you beer-house fiddler! wait till I catch you alone, I will hunt you till the soles of your shoes fall off! You ragamuffin! just put five farthings in your mouth, and then you may be worth three halfpence!” and went on abusing him as fast as he could speak. As soon as he had refreshed himself a little in this way, and got his breath again, he ran into the town to the justice.

“My lord judge,” he said, “I have come to make a complaint; see how a rascal has robbed and ill-treated me on the public highway! a stone on the ground might pity me; my clothes all torn, my body pricked and scratched, my little all gone with my purse, good ducats, each piece better than the last; for God’s sake let the man be thrown into prison!”

“Was it a soldier,” said the judge, “who cut you thus with his sabre?” “Nothing of the sort!” said the Jew; “it was no sword that he had, but a gun hanging at his back, and a fiddle at his neck; the wretch may easily be known.”

So the judge sent his people out after the man, and they found the good servant, who had been going quite slowly along, and they found, too, the purse with the money upon him. As soon as he was taken before the judge he said, “I did not touch the Jew, nor take his money; he gave it to me of his own free will, that I might leave off fiddling because he could not bear my music.” “Heaven defend us!” cried the Jew, “his lies are as thick as flies upon the wall.”

But the judge also did not believe his tale, and said, “This is a bad defence, no Jew would do that.” And because he had committed robbery on the public highway, he sentenced the good servant to be hanged. As he was being led away the Jew again screamed after him, “You vagabond! you dog of a fiddler! now you are going to receive your well-earned reward!” The servant walked quietly with the hangman up the ladder, but upon the last step he turned round and said to the judge, “Grant me just one request before I die.”

“Yes, if you do not ask your life,” said the judge. “I do not ask for life,” answered the servant, “but as a last favor let me play once more upon my fiddle.” The Jew raised a great cry of “Murder! murder! for goodness’ sake do not allow it! Do not allow it!” But the judge said, “Why should I not let him have this short pleasure? it has been granted to him, and he shall have it.” However, he could not have refused on account of the gift which had been bestowed on the servant.

Then the Jew cried, “Oh! woe’s me! tie me, tie me fast!” while the good servant took his fiddle from his neck, and made ready. As he gave the first scrape, they all began to quiver and shake, the judge, his clerk, and the hangman and his men, and the cord fell out of the hand of the one who was going to tie the Jew fast. At the second scrape all raised their legs, and the hangman let go his hold of the good servant, and made himself ready to dance. At the third scrape they all leaped up and began to dance; the judge and the Jew being the best at jumping. Soon all who had gathered in the market-place out of curiosity were dancing with them; old and young, fat and lean, one with another. The dogs, likewise, which had run there got up on their hind legs and capered about; and the longer he played, the higher sprang the dancers, so that they knocked against each other’s heads, and began to shriek terribly.

At length the judge cried, quite out of breath, “I will give you your life if you will only stop fiddling.” The good servant thereupon had compassion, took his fiddle and hung it round his neck again, and stepped down the ladder. Then he went up to the Jew, who was lying upon the ground panting for breath, and said, “You rascal, now confess, whence you got the money, or I will take my fiddle and begin to play again.” “I stole it, I stole it!” cried he; “but you have honestly earned it.” So the judge had the Jew taken to the gallows and hanged as a thief.

The Skilful Huntsman

THERE was once a young fellow who had learnt the trade of locksmith, and told his father he would now go out into the world and seek his fortune. “Very well,” said the father, “I am quite content with that,” and gave him some money for his journey. So he travelled about and looked for work. After a time he resolved not to follow the trade of locksmith any more, for he no longer liked it, but he took a fancy for hunting. Then there met him in his rambles a huntsman dressed in green, who asked whence he came and whither he was going? The youth said he was a locksmith’s apprentice, but that the trade no longer pleased him, and he had a liking for huntsmanship, would he teach it to him? “Oh, yes,” said the huntsman, “if thou wilt go with me.” Then the young fellow went with him, bound himself to him for some years, and learnt the art of hunting. After this he wished to try his luck elsewhere, and the huntsman gave him nothing in the way of payment but an air-gun, which had, however, this property, that it hit its mark without fail whenever he shot with it. Then he set out and found himself in a very large forest, which he could not get to the end of in one day. When evening came he seated himself in a high tree in order to escape from the wild beasts. Towards midnight, it seemed to him as if a tiny little light glimmered in the distance. Then he looked down through the branches towards it, and kept well in his mind where it was. But in the first place he took off his hat and threw it down in the direction of the light, so that he might go to the hat as a mark when he had descended. Then he got down and went to his hat, put it on again and went straight forwards. The farther he went, the larger the light grew, and when he got close to it he saw that it was an enormous fire, and that three giants were sitting by it, who had an ox on the spit, and were roasting it. Presently one of them said, “I must just taste if the meat will soon be fit to eat,” and pulled a piece off, and was about to put it in his mouth when the huntsman shot it out of his hand. “Well, really,” said the giant, “if the wind has not blown the bit out of my hand!” and helped himself to another. But when he was just about to bite into it, the huntsman again shot it away from him. On this the giant gave the one who was sitting next him a box on the ear, and cried angrily, “Why art thou snatching my piece away from me?” “I have not snatched it away,” said the other, “a sharpshooter must have shot it away from thee.” The giant took another piece, but could not, however, keep it in his hand, for the huntsman shot it out. Then the giant said, “That must be a good shot to shoot the bit out of one’s very mouth, such an one would be useful to us.” And he cried aloud, “Come here, thou sharpshooter, seat thyself at the fire beside us and eat thy fill, we will not hurt thee; but if thou wilt not come, and we have to bring thee by force, thou art a lost man!” On this the youth went up to them and told them he was a skilled huntsman, and that whatever he aimed at with his gun, he was certain to hit. Then they said if he would go with them he should be well treated, and they told him that outside the forest there was a great lake, behind which stood a tower, and in the tower was imprisoned a lovely princess, whom they wished very much to carry off. “Yes,” said he, “I will soon get her for you.” Then they added, “But there is still something else, there is a tiny little dog, which begins to bark directly any one goes near, and as soon as it barks every one in the royal palace wakens up, and for this reason we cannot get there; canst thou undertake to shoot it dead?” “Yes,” said he, “that will be a little bit of fun for me.” After this he got into a boat and rowed over the lake, and as soon as he landed, the little dog came running out, and was about to bark, but the huntsman took his air-gun and shot it dead. When the giants saw that, they rejoiced, and thought they already had the King’s daughter safe, but the huntsman wished first to see how matters stood, and told them that they must stay outside until he called them. Then he went into the castle, and all was perfectly quiet within, and every one was asleep. When he opened the door of the first room, a sword was hanging on the wall which was made of pure silver, and there was a golden star on it, and the name of the King, and on a table near it lay a sealed letter which he broke open, and inside it was written that whosoever had the sword could kill everything which opposed him. So he took the sword from the wall, hung it at his side and went onwards: then he entered the room where the King’s daughter was lying sleeping, and she was so beautiful that he stood still and, holding his breath, looked at her. He thought to himself, “How can I give an innocent maiden into the power of the wild giants, who have evil in their minds?” He looked about further, and under the bed stood a pair of slippers, on the right one was her father’s name with a star, and on the left her own name with a star. She wore also a great neck-kerchief of silk embroidered with gold, and on the right side was her father’s name, and on the left her own, all in golden letters. Then the huntsman took a pair of scissors and cut the right corner off, and put it in his knapsack, and then he also took the right slipper with the King’s name, and thrust that in. Now the maiden still lay sleeping, and she was quite sewn into her night-dress, and he cut a morsel from this also, and thrust it in with the rest, but he did all without touching her. Then he went forth and left her lying asleep undisturbed, and when he came to the gate again, the giants were still standing outside waiting for him, and expecting that he was bringing the princess. But he cried to them that they were to come in, for the maiden was already in their power, that he could not open the gate to them, but there was a hole through which they must creep. Then the first approached, and the huntsman wound the giant’s hair round his hand, pulled the head in, and cut it off at one stroke with his sword, and then drew the rest of him in. He called to the second and cut his head off likewise, and then he killed the third also, and he was well pleased that he had freed the beautiful maiden from her enemies, and he cut out their tongues and put them in his knapsack. Then thought he, “I will go home to my father and let him see what I have already done, and afterwards I will travel about the world; the luck which God is pleased to grant me will easily find me.”

But when the King in the castle awoke, he saw the three giants lying there dead. So he went into the sleeping-room of his daughter, awoke her, and asked who could have killed the giants? Then said she, "Dear father, I know not, I have been asleep." But when she arose and would have put on her slippers, the right one was gone, and when she looked at her neckkerchief it was cut, and the right corner was missing, and when she looked at her night-dress a piece was cut out of it. The King summoned his whole court together, soldiers and every one else who was there, and asked who had set his daughter at liberty, and killed the giants? Now it happened that he had a captain, who was one-eyed and a hideous man, and he said that he had done it. Then the old King said that as he had accomplished this, he should marry his daughter. But the maiden said, "Rather than marry him, dear father, I will go away into the world as far as my legs can carry me." But the King said that if she would not marry him she should take off her royal garments and wear peasant's clothing, and go forth, and that she should go to a potter, and begin a trade in earthen vessels. So she put off her royal apparel, and went to a potter and borrowed crockery enough for a stall, and she promised him also that if she had sold it by the evening, she would pay for it. Then the King said she was to seat herself in a corner with it and sell it, and he arranged with some peasants to drive over it with their carts, so that everything should be broken into a thousand pieces. When therefore the King's daughter had placed her stall in the street, by came the carts, and broke all she had into tiny fragments. She began to weep and said, "Alas, how shall I ever pay for the pots now?" The King had, however, wished by this to force her to marry the captain; but instead of that, she again went to the potter, and asked him if he would lend to her once more. He said, "No," she must first pay for the things she had already had. Then she went to her father and cried and lamented, and said she would go forth into the world. Then said he, "I will have a little hut built for thee in the forest outside, and in it thou shalt stay all thy life long and cook for every one, but thou shalt take no money for it." When the hut was ready, a sign was hung on the door whereon was written, "To-day given, to-morrow sold." There she remained a long time, and it was rumored about the world that a maiden was there who cooked without asking for payment, and that this was set forth on a sign outside her door. The huntsman heard it likewise, and thought to himself, "That would suit thee. Thou art poor, and hast no money." So he took his air-gun and his knapsack, wherein all the things which he had formerly carried away with him from the castle as tokens of his truthfulness were still lying, and went into the forest, and found the hut with the sign, "To-day given, to-morrow sold." He had put on the sword with which he had cut off the heads of the three giants, and thus entered the hut, and ordered something to eat to be given to him. He was charmed with the beautiful maiden, who was indeed as lovely as any picture. She asked him whence he came and whither he was going, and he said, "I am roaming about the world." Then she asked him where he had got the sword, for that truly her father's name was on it. He asked her if she were the King's daughter. "Yes," answered she. "With this sword," said he, "did I cut off the heads of three giants." And he took their tongues out of his knapsack in proof. Then he also showed her the slipper, and the corner of the neck-kerchief, and the bit of the night-dress. Hereupon she was overjoyed, and said that he was the one who had delivered her. On this they went together to the old King, and fetched him to the hut, and she led him into her room, and told him that the huntsman was the man who had really set her free from the giants. And when the aged King saw all the proofs of this, he could no longer doubt, and said that he was very glad he knew how everything had happened, and that the huntsman should have her to wife, on which the maiden was glad at heart. Then she dressed the huntsman as if he were a foreign lord, and the King ordered a feast to be prepared. When they went to table, the captain sat on the left side of the King's daughter, but the huntsman was on the right, and the captain thought he was a foreign lord who had come on a visit. When they had eaten and drunk, the old King said to the captain that he would set before him something which he must guess. "Supposing any one said that he had killed the three giants and he were asked where the giants' tongues were, and he were forced to go and look, and there were none in their heads, how could that happen?" The captain said, "Then they cannot have had any." "Not so," said the King. "Every animal has a tongue," and then he likewise asked what any one would deserve who made such an answer? The captain replied, "He ought to be torn in pieces." Then the King said he had pronounced his own sentence, and the captain was put in prison and then torn in four pieces; but the King's daughter was married to the huntsman. After this he brought his father and mother, and they lived with their son in happiness, and after the death of the old King he received the kingdom.

The Flail From Heaven

A countryman was once going out to plough with a pair of oxen. When he got to the field, both the animals' horns began to grow, and went on growing, and when he wanted to go home they were so big that the oxen could not get through the gateway for them. By good luck a butcher came by just then, and he delivered them over to him, and made the bargain in this way, that he should take the butcher a measure of turnip-seed, and then the butcher was to count him out a Brabant thaler for every seed. I call that well sold! The peasant now went home, and carried the measure of turnip-seed to him on his back. On the way, however, he lost one seed out of the bag. The butcher paid him justly as agreed on, and if the peasant had not lost the seed, he would have had one thaler the more. In the meantime, when he went on his way back, the seed had grown into a tree which reached up to the sky. Then thought the peasant, "As thou hast the chance, thou must just see what the angels are doing up there above, and for once have them before thine eyes." So he climbed up, and saw that the angels above were threshing oats, and he looked on. While he was thus watching them, he observed that the tree on which he was standing, was beginning to totter; he peeped down, and saw that someone was just going to cut it down. "If I were to fall down from hence it would be a bad thing," thought he, and in his necessity he did not know how to save himself better than by taking the chaff of the oats which lay there in heaps, and twisting a rope of it. He likewise snatched a hoe and a flail which were lying about in heaven, and let himself down by the rope. But he came down on the earth exactly in the middle of a deep, deep hole. So it was a real piece of luck that he had brought the hoe, for he hoed himself a flight of steps with it, and mounted up, and took the flail with him as a token of his truth, so that no one could have any doubt of his story.

The Two Kings' Children

There was once on a time a King who had a little boy of whom it had been foretold that he should be killed by a stag when he was sixteen years of age, and when he had reached that age the huntsmen once went hunting with him. In the forest, the King's son was separated from the others, and all at once he saw a great stag which he wanted to shoot, but could not hit. At length he chased the stag so far that they were quite out of the forest, and then suddenly a great tall man was standing there instead of the stag, and said, "It is well that I have thee. I have already ruined six pairs of glass skates with running after thee, and have not been able to get thee." Then he took the King's son with him, and dragged him through a great lake to a great palace, and then he had to sit down to table with him and eat something. When they had eaten something together the King said, "I have three daughters, thou must keep watch over the eldest for one night, from nine in the evening till six in the morning, and every time the clock strikes, I will come myself and call, and if thou then givest me no answer, to-morrow morning thou shall be put to death, but if thou always givest me an answer, thou shalt have her to wife."

When the young folks went to the bed-room there stood a stone image of St. Christopher, and the King's daughter said to it, "My father will come at nine o'clock, and every hour till it strikes three; when he calls, give him an answer instead of the King's son." Then the stone image of St. Christopher nodded its head quite quickly, and then more and more slowly till at last it stood still. The next morning the King said to him, "Thou hast done the business well, but I cannot give my daughter away. Thou must now watch a night by my second daughter, and then I will consider with myself, whether thou canst have my eldest daughter to wife, but I shall come every hour myself, and when I call thee, answer me, and if I call thee and thou dost not reply, thy blood shall flow." Then they both went into the sleeping-room, and there stood a still larger stone image of St. Christopher, and the King's daughter said to it, "If my father calls, do you answer him." Then the great stone image of St. Christopher again nodded its head quite quickly and then more and more slowly, until at last it stood still again. And the King's son lay down on the threshold, put his hand under his head and slept. The next morning the King said to him, "Thou hast done the business really well, but I cannot give my daughter away; thou must now watch a night by the youngest princess, and then I will consider with myself whether thou canst have my second daughter to wife, but I shall come every hour myself, and when I call thee answer me, and if I call thee and thou answerest not, thy blood shall flow for me."

Then they once more went to the sleeping-room together, and there was a much greater and much taller image of St. Christopher than the two first had been. The King's daughter said to it, "When my father calls, do thou answer." Then the great tall stone image of St. Christopher nodded quite half an hour with its head, until at length the head stood still again. And the King's son laid himself down on the threshold of the door and slept. The next morning the King said, "Thou hast indeed watched well, but I cannot give thee my daughter now; I have a great forest, if thou cuttest it down for me between six o'clock this morning and six at night, I will think about it." Then he gave him a glass axe, a glass wedge, and a glass mallet. When he got into the wood, he began at once to cut, but the axe broke in two, then he took the wedge, and struck it once with the mallet, and it became as short and as small as sand. Then he was much troubled and believed he would have to die, and sat down and wept.

Now when it was noon the King said, "One of you girls must take him something to eat." "No," said the two eldest, "We will not take it to him; the one by whom he last watched, can take him something." Then the youngest was forced to go and take him something to eat. When she got into the forest, she asked him how he was getting on? "Oh," said he, "I am getting on very badly." Then she said he was to come and just eat a little. "Nay," said he, "I cannot do that, I shall still have to die, so I will eat no more." Then she spoke so kindly to him and begged him just to try, that he came and ate something. When he had eaten something she said, "I will comb thy hair a while, and then thou wilt feel happier."

So she combed his hair, and he became weary and fell asleep, and then she took her handkerchief and made a knot in it, and struck it three times on the earth, and said, "Earth-workers, come forth." In a moment, numbers of little earth-men came forth, and asked what the King's daughter commanded? Then said she, "In three hours' time the great forest must be cut down, and the whole of the wood laid in heaps." So the little earth-men went about and got together the whole of their kindred to help them with the work. They began at once, and when the three hours were over, all was done, and they came back to the King's daughter and told her so. Then she took her white handkerchief again and said, "Earth-workers, go home." On this they all disappeared. When the King's son awoke, he was delighted, and she said, "Come home when it has struck six o'clock." He did as she told him, and then the King asked, "Hast thou made away with the forest?" "Yes," said the King's son. When they were sitting at table, the King said, "I cannot yet give thee my daughter to wife, thou must still do something more for her sake." So he asked what it was to be, then? "I have a great fish-pond," said the King. "Thou must go to it to-morrow morning and clear it of all mud until it is as bright as a mirror, and fill it with every kind of fish." The next morning the King gave him a glass shovel and said, "The fish-pond must be done by six o'clock." So he went away, and when he came to the fish-pond he stuck his shovel in the mud and it broke in two, then he stuck his hoe in the mud, and broke it also. Then he was much troubled. At noon the youngest daughter brought him something to eat, and asked him how he was getting on? So the King's son said everything was going very ill with him, and he would certainly have to lose his head. "My tools have broken to pieces again." "Oh," said she, "thou must just come and eat something, and then thou wilt be in another frame of mind.” “No,” said he, “I cannot eat, I am far too unhappy for that!” Then she gave him many good words until at last he came and ate something. Then she combed his hair again, and he fell asleep, so once more she took her handkerchief, tied a knot in it, and struck the ground thrice with the knot, and said, “Earth-workers, come forth.” In a moment a great many little earth-men came and asked what she desired, and she told them that in three hours’ time, they must have the fish-pond entirely cleaned out, and it must be so clear that people could see themselves reflected in it, and every kind of fish must be in it. The little earth-men went away and summoned all their kindred to help them, and in two hours it was done. Then they returned to her and said, “We have done as thou hast commanded.” The King’s daughter took the handkerchief and once more struck thrice on the ground with it, and said, “Earth-workers, go home again.” Then they all went away.

When the King’s son awoke the fish-pond was done. Then the King’s daughter went away also, and told him that when it was six he was to come to the house. When he arrived at the house the King asked, “Hast thou got the fish-pond done?” “Yes,” said the King’s son. That was very good.

When they were again sitting at table the King said, “Thou hast certainly done the fish-pond, but I cannot give thee my daughter yet; thou must just do one thing more.” “What is that, then?” asked the King’s son. The King said he had a great mountain on which there was nothing but briars which must all be cut down, and at the top of it the youth must build up a great castle, which must be as strong as could be conceived, and all the furniture and fittings belonging to a castle must be inside it. And when he arose next morning the King gave him a glass axe and a glass gimlet with him, and he was to have all done by six o’clock. As he was cutting down the first briar with the axe, it broke off short, and so small that the pieces flew all round about, and he could not use the gimlet either. Then he was quite miserable, and waited for his dearest to see if she would not come and help him in his need. When it was mid-day she came and brought him something to eat. He went to meet her and told her all, and ate something, and let her comb his hair and fell asleep. Then she once more took the knot and struck the earth with it, and said, “Earth-workers, come forth!” Then came once again numbers of earth-men, and asked what her desire was. Then said she, “In the space of three hours they must cut down the whole of the briars, and a castle must be built on the top of the mountain that must be as strong as any one could conceive, and all the furniture that pertains to a castle must be inside it.” They went away, and summoned their kindred to help them and when the time was come, all was ready. Then they came to the King’s daughter and told her so, and the King’s daughter took her handkerchief and struck thrice on the earth with it, and said, “Earth-workers, go home,” on which they all disappeared. When therefore the King’s son awoke and saw everything done, he was as happy as a bird in air.

When it had struck six, they went home together. Then said the King, “Is the castle ready?” “Yes,” said the King’s son. When they sat down to table, the King said, “I cannot give away my youngest daughter until the two eldest are married.” Then the King’s son and the King’s daughter were quite troubled, and the King’s son had no idea what to do. But he went by night to the King’s daughter and ran away with her. When they had got a little distance away, the King’s daughter peeped round and saw her father behind her. “Oh,” said she, “what are we to do? My father is behind us, and will take us back with him. I will at once change thee into a briar, and myself into a rose, and I will shelter myself in the midst of the bush.” When the father reached the place, there stood a briar with one rose on it, then he was about to gather the rose, when the thorn came and pricked his finger so that he was forced to go home again. His wife asked why he had not brought their daughter back with him? So he said he had nearly got up to her, but that all at once he had lost sight of her, and a briar with one rose was growing on the spot.

Then said the Queen, “If thou hadst but gathered the rose, the briar would have been forced to come too.” So he went back again to fetch the rose, but in the meantime the two were already far over the plain, and the King ran after them. Then the daughter once more looked round and saw her father coming, and said, “Oh, what shall we do now? I will instantly change thee into a church and myself into a priest, and I will stand up in the pulpit, and preach.” When the King got to the place, there stood a church, and in the pulpit was a priest preaching. So he listened to the sermon, and then went home again.

Then the Queen asked why he had not brought their daughter with him, and he said, “Nay, I ran a long time after her, and just as I thought I should soon overtake her, a church was standing there and a priest was in the pulpit preaching.” “Thou shouldst just have brought the priest,” said his wife, “and then the church would soon have come. It is no use to send thee, I must go there myself.” When she had walked for some time, and could see the two in the distance, the King’s daughter peeped round and saw her mother coming, and said, “Now we are undone, for my mother is coming herself: I will immediately change thee into a fish-pond and myself into a fish.

When the mother came to the place, there was a large fish-pond, and in the midst of it a fish was leaping about and peeping out of the water, and it was quite merry. She wanted to catch the fish, but she could not. Then she was very angry, and drank up the whole pond in order to catch the fish, but it made her so ill that she was forced to vomit, and vomited the whole pond out again. Then she cried, “I see very well that nothing can be done now,” and said that now they might come back to her. Then the King’s daughter went back again, and the Queen gave her daughter three walnuts, and said, “With these thou canst help thyself when thou art in thy greatest need.” So the young folks went once more away together. And when they had walked quite ten miles, they arrived at the castle from whence the King’s son came, and close by it was a village. When they reached it, the King’s son said, “Stay here, my dearest, I will just go to the castle, and then will I come with a carriage and with attendants to fetch thee.”

When he got to the castle they all rejoiced greatly at having the King’s son back again, and he told them he had a bride who was now in the village, and they must go with the carriage to fetch her. Then they harnessed the horses at once, and many attendants seated themselves outside the carriage. When the King’s son was about to get in, his mother gave him a kiss, and he forgot everything which had happened, and also what he was about to do. On this his mother ordered the horses to be taken out of the carriage again, and everyone went back into the house. But the maiden sat in the village and watched and watched, and thought he would come and fetch her, but no one came. Then the King’s daughter took service in the mill which belonged to the castle, and was obliged to sit by the pond every afternoon and clean the tubs.

And the Queen came one day on foot from the castle, and went walking by the pond, and saw the well-grown maiden sitting there, and said, “What a fine strong girl that is! She pleases me well!” Then she and all with her looked at the maid, but no one knew her. So a long time passed by during which the maiden served the miller honorably and faithfully. In the meantime, the Queen had sought a wife for her son, who came from quite a distant part of the world. When the bride came, they were at once to be married. And many people hurried together, all of whom wanted to see everything. Then the girl said to the miller that he might be so good as to give her leave to go also. So the miller said, “Yes, do go there.” When she was about to go, she opened one of the three walnuts, and a beautiful dress lay inside it. She put it on, and went into the church and stood by the altar. Suddenly came the bride and bridegroom, and seated themselves before the altar, and when the priest was just going to bless them, the bride peeped half round and saw the maiden standing there. Then she stood up again, and said she would not be given away until she also had as beautiful a dress as that lady there. So they went back to the house again, and sent to ask the lady if she would sell that dress. No, she would not sell it, but the bride might perhaps earn it. Then the bride asked her how she was to do this? Then the maiden said if she might sleep one night outside the King’s son’s door, the bride might have what she wanted. So the bride said, “Yes, she was willing to do that.” But the servants were ordered to give the King’s son a sleeping-drink, and then the maiden laid herself down on the threshold and lamented all night long. She had had the forest cut down for him, she had had the fish-pond cleaned out for him, she had had the castle built for him, she had changed him into a briar, and then into a church, and at last into a fish-pond, and yet he had forgotten her so quickly. The King’s son did not hear one word of it, but the servants had been awakened, and had listened to it, and had not known what it could mean. The next morning when they were all up, the bride put on the dress, and went away to the church with the bridegroom. In the meantime the maiden opened the second walnut, and a still more beautiful dress was inside it. She put it on, and went and stood by the altar in the church, and everything happened as it had happened the time before. And the maiden again lay all night on the threshold which led to the chamber of the King’s son, and the servant was once more to give him a sleeping-drink. The servant, however, went to him and gave him something to keep him awake, and then the King’s son went to bed, and the miller’s maiden bemoaned herself as before on the threshold of the door, and told of all that she had done. All this the King’s son heard, and was sore troubled, and what was past came back to him. Then he wanted to go to her, but his mother had locked the door. The next morning, however, he went at once to his beloved, and told her everything which had happened to him, and prayed her not to be angry with him for having forgotten her. Then the King’s daughter opened the third walnut, and within it was a still more magnificent dress, which she put on, and went with her bridegroom to church, and numbers of children came who gave them flowers, and offered them gay ribbons to bind about their feet, and they were blessed by the priest, and had a merry wedding. But the false mother and the bride had to depart. And the mouth of the person who last told all this is still warm.

The Cunning Little Tailor

There was once on a time a princess who was extremely proud. If a wooer came she gave him some riddle to guess, and if he could not find it out, he was sent contemptuously away. She let it be made known also that whosoever solved her riddle should marry her, let him be who he might. At length, therefore, three tailors fell in with each other, the two eldest of whom thought they had done so many dexterous bits of work successfully that they could not fail to succeed in this also; the third was a little useless land-louper, who did not even know his trade, but thought he must have some luck in this venture, for where else was it to come from? Then the two others said to him, “Just stay at home; thou canst not do much with thy little bit of understanding.” The little tailor, however, did not let himself be discouraged, and said he had set his head to work about this for once, and he would manage well enough, and he went forth as if the whole world were his.

They all three announced themselves to the princess, and said she was to propound her riddle to them, and that the right persons were now come, who had understandings so fine that they could be threaded in a needle. Then said the princess, “I have two kinds of hair on my head, of what color is it?” “If that be all,” said the first, “it must be black and white, like the cloth which is called pepper and salt.” The princess said, “Wrongly guessed; let the second answer.” Then said the second, “If it be not black and white, then it is brown and red, like my father’s company coat.” “Wrongly guessed,” said the princess, “let the third give the answer, for I see very well he knows it for certain.” Then the little tailor stepped boldly forth and said, “The princess has a silver and a golden hair on her head, and those are the two different colors.” When the princess heard that, she turned pale and nearly fell down with terror, for the little tailor had guessed her riddle, and she had firmly believed that no man on earth could discover it. When her courage returned she said, “Thou hast not won me yet by that; there is still something else that thou must do. Below, in the stable is a bear with which thou shalt pass the night, and when I get up in the morning if thou art still alive, thou shalt marry me.” She expected, however, she should thus get rid of the tailor, for the bear had never yet left any one alive who had fallen into his clutches. The little tailor did not let himself be frightened away, but was quite delighted, and said, “Boldly ventured is half won.”

When therefore the evening came, our little tailor was taken down to the bear. The bear was about to set at the little fellow at once, and give him a hearty welcome with his paws: “Softly, softly,” said the little tailor, “I will soon make thee quiet.” Then quite composedly, and as if he had not an anxiety in the world, he took some nuts out of his pocket, cracked them, and ate the kernels. When the bear saw that, he was seized with a desire to have some nuts too. The tailor felt in his pockets, and reached him a handful; they were, however, not nuts, but pebbles. The bear put them in his mouth, but could get nothing out of them, let him bite as he would. “Eh!” thought he, “what a stupid blockhead I am! I cannot even crack a nut!” and then he said to the tailor, “Here, crack me the nuts.” “There, see what a stupid fellow thou art!” said the little tailor, “to have such a great mouth, and not be able to crack a small nut!” Then he took the pebble and nimbly put a nut in his mouth in the place of it, and crack, it was in two! “I must try the thing again,” said the bear; “when I watch you, I then think I ought to be able to do it too.” So the tailor once more gave him a pebble, and the bear tried and tried to bite into it with all the strength of his body. But no one will imagine that he accomplished it. When that was over, the tailor took out a violin from beneath his coat, and played a piece of it to himself. When the bear heard the music, he could not help beginning to dance, and when he had danced a while, the thing pleased him so well that he said to the little tailor, “Hark you, is the fiddle heavy?” “Light enough for a child. Look, with the left hand I lay my fingers on it, and with the right I stroke it with the bow, and then it goes merrily, hop sa sa vivallalera!” “So,” said the bear; “fiddling is a thing I should like to understand too, that I might dance whenever I had a fancy. What dost thou think of that? Wilt thou give me lessons?” “With all my heart,” said the tailor, “if thou hast a talent for it. But just let me see thy claws, they are terribly long, I must cut thy nails a little.” Then a vise was brought, and the bear put his claws in it, and the little tailor screwed it tight, and said, “Now wait until I come with the scissors,” and he let the bear growl as he liked, and lay down in the corner on a bundle of straw, and fell asleep.

When the princess heard the bear growling so fiercely during the night, she believed nothing else but that he was growling for joy, and had made an end of the tailor. In the morning she arose careless and happy, but when she peeped into the stable, the tailor stood gaily before her, and was as healthy as a fish in water. Now she could not say another word against the wedding because she had given a promise before every one, and the King ordered a carriage to be brought in which she was to drive to church with the tailor, and there she was to be married. When they had got into the carriage, the two other tailors, who had false hearts and envied him his good fortune, went into the stable and unscrewed the bear again. The bear in great fury ran after the carriage. The princess heard him snorting and growling; she was terrified, and she cried, “Ah, the bear is behind us and wants to get thee!” The tailor was quick and stood on his head, stuck his legs out of the window, and cried, “Dost thou see the vise? If thou dost not be off thou shalt be put into it again.” When the bear saw that, he turned round and ran away. The tailor drove quietly to church, and the princess was married to him at once, and he lived with her as happy as a woodlark. Whosoever does not believe this, must pay a thaler.

The Bright Sun Brings It to Light

A tailor's apprentice was travelling about the world in search of work, and at one time he could find none, and his poverty was so great that he had not a farthing to live on. Presently he met a Jew on the road, and as he thought he would have a great deal of money about him, the tailor thrust God out of his heart, fell on the Jew, and said, "Give me thy money, or I will strike thee dead." Then said the Jew, "Grant me my life, I have no money but eight farthings." But the tailor said, "Money thou hast; and it shall be produced," and used violence and beat him until he was near death. And when the Jew was dying, the last words he said were, "The bright sun will bring it to light," and thereupon he died. The tailor's apprentice felt in his pockets and sought for money, but he found nothing but eight farthings, as the Jew had said. Then he took him up and carried him behind a clump of trees, and went onwards to seek work. After he had traveled about a long while, he got work in a town with a master who had a pretty daughter, with whom he fell in love, and he married her, and lived in good and happy wedlock.

After a long time when he and his wife had two children, the wife's father and mother died, and the young people kept house alone. One morning, when the husband was sitting on the table before the window, his wife brought him his coffee, and when he had poured it out into the saucer, and was just going to drink, the sun shone on it and the reflection gleamed hither and thither on the wall above, and made circles on it. Then the tailor looked up and said, "Yes, it would like very much to bring it to light, and cannot!" The woman said, "Oh, dear husband, and what is that, then?" "What dost thou mean by that?" He answered, "I must not tell thee." But she said, "If thou lovest me, thou must tell me," and used her most affectionate words, and said that no one should ever know it, and left him no rest. Then he told her how years ago, when he was travelling about seeking work and quite worn out and penniless, he had killed a Jew, and that in the last agonies of death, the Jew had spoken the words, "The bright sun will bring it to light." And now, the sun had just wanted to bring it to light, and had gleamed and made circles on the wall, but had not been able to do it. After this, he again charged her particularly never to tell this, or he would lose his life, and she did promise. When however, he had sat down to work again, she went to her great friend and confided the story to her, but she was never to repeat it to any human being, but before two days were over, the whole town knew it, and the tailor was brought to trial, and condemned. And thus, after all, the bright sun did bring it to light.

The Blue Light

There was once on a time a soldier who for many years had served the King faithfully, but when the war came to an end could serve no longer because of the many wounds which he had received. The King said to him, “Thou mayst return to thy home, I need thee no longer, and thou wilt not receive any more money, for he only receives wages who renders me service for them.” Then the soldier did not know how to earn a living, went away greatly troubled, and walked the whole day, until in the evening he entered a forest. When darkness came on, he saw a light, which he went up to, and came to a house wherein lived a witch. “Do give me one night’s lodging, and a little to eat and drink,” said he to her, “or I shall starve.” “Oho!” she answered, “who gives anything to a run-away soldier? Yet will I be compassionate, and take you in, if you will do what I wish.” “What do you wish?” said the soldier. “That you should dig all round my garden for me, tomorrow.” The soldier consented, and next day labored with all his strength, but could not finish it by the evening. “I see well enough,” said the witch, “that you can do no more to-day, but I will keep you yet another night, in payment for which you must to-morrow chop me a load of wood, and make it small.” The soldier spent the whole day in doing it, and in the evening the witch proposed that he should stay one night more. “To-morrow, you shall only do me a very trifling piece of work. Behind my house, there is an old dry well, into which my light has fallen, it burns blue, and never goes out, and you shall bring it up again for me.” Next day the old woman took him to the well, and let him down in a basket. He found the blue light, and made her a signal to draw him up again. She did draw him up, but when he came near the edge, she stretched down her hand and wanted to take the blue light away from him. “No,” said he, perceiving her evil intention, “I will not give thee the light until I am standing with both feet upon the ground.” The witch fell into a passion, let him down again into the well, and went away.

The poor soldier fell without injury on the moist ground, and the blue light went on burning, but of what use was that to him? He saw very well that he could not escape death. He sat for a while very sorrowfully, then suddenly he felt in his pocket and found his tobacco pipe, which was still half full. “This shall be my last pleasure,” thought he, pulled it out, lit it at the blue light and began to smoke. When the smoke had circled about the cavern, suddenly a little black dwarf stood before him, and said, “Lord, what are thy commands?” “What commands have I to give thee?” replied the soldier, quite astonished. “I must do everything thou biddest me,” said the little man. “Good,” said the soldier; “then in the first place help me out of this well.” The little man took him by the hand, and led him through an underground passage, but he did not forget to take the blue light with him. On the way the dwarf showed him the treasures which the witch had collected and hidden there, and the soldier took as much gold as he could carry. When he was above, he said to the little man, “Now go and bind the old witch, and carry her before the judge.” In a short time she, with frightful cries, came riding by, as swift as the wind on a wild tom-cat, nor was it long after that before the little man re-appeared. “It is all done,” said he, “and the witch is already hanging on the gallows. What further commands has my lord?” inquired the dwarf. “At this moment, none,” answered the soldier; “Thou canst return home, only be at hand immediately, if I summon thee.” “Nothing more is needed than that thou shouldst light thy pipe at the blue light, and I will appear before thee at once.” Thereupon he vanished from his sight.

The soldier returned to the town from which he had come. He went to the best inn, ordered himself handsome clothes, and then bade the landlord furnish him a room as handsomely as possible. When it was ready and the soldier had taken possession of it, he summoned the little black mannikin and said, “I have served the King faithfully, but he has dismissed me, and left me to hunger, and now I want to take my revenge.” “What am I to do?” asked the little man. “Late at night, when the King’s daughter is in bed, bring her here in her sleep, she shall do servant’s work for me.” The mannikin said, “That is an easy thing for me to do, but a very dangerous thing for you, for if it is discovered, you will fare ill.” When twelve o’clock had struck, the door sprang open, and the mannikin carried in the princess. “Aha! art thou there?” cried the soldier, “get to thy work at once! Fetch the broom and sweep the chamber.” When she had done this, he ordered her to come to his chair, and then he stretched out his feet and said, “Pull off my boots for me,” and then he threw them in her face, and made her pick them up again, and clean and brighten them. She, however, did everything he bade her, without opposition, silently and with half-shut eyes. When the first cock crowed, the mannikin carried her back to the royal palace, and laid her in her bed.

Next morning when the princess arose, she went to her father, and told him that she had had a very strange dream. “I was carried through the streets with the rapidity of lightning,” said she, “and taken into a soldier’s room, and I had to wait upon him like a servant, sweep his room, clean his boots, and do all kinds of menial work. It was only a dream, and yet I am just as tired as if I really had done everything.” “The dream may have been true,” said the King, “I will give thee a piece of advice. Fill thy pocket full of peas, and make a small hole in it, and then if thou art carried away again, they will fall out and leave a track in the streets.” But unseen by the King, the mannikin was standing beside him when he said that, and heard all. At night when the sleeping princess was again carried through the streets, some peas certainly did fall out of her pocket, but they made no track, for the crafty mannikin had just before scattered peas in every street there was. And again the princess was compelled to do servant’s work until cock-crow.

Next morning the King sent his people out to seek the track, but it was all in vain, for in every street poor children were sitting, picking up peas, and saying, “It must have rained peas, last night.” “We must think of something else,” said the King; “keep thy shoes on when thou goest to bed, and before thou comest back from the place where thou art taken, hide one of them there, I will soon contrive to find it.” The black mannikin heard this plot, and at night when the soldier again ordered him to bring the princess, revealed it to him, and told him that he knew of no expedient to counteract this stratagem, and that if the shoe were found in the soldier’s house it would go badly with him. “Do what I bid thee,” replied the soldier, and again this third night the princess was obliged to work like a servant, but before she went away, she hid her shoe under the bed.

Next morning the King had the entire town searched for his daughter’s shoe. It was found at the soldier’s, and the soldier himself, who at the entreaty of the dwarf had gone outside the gate, was soon brought back, and thrown into prison. In his flight he had forgotten the most valuable things he had, the blue light and the gold, and had only one ducat in his pocket. And now loaded with chains, he was standing at the window of his dungeon, when he chanced to see one of his comrades passing by. The soldier tapped at the pane of glass, and when this man came up, said to him, “Be so kind as to fetch me the small bundle I have left lying in the inn, and I will give you a ducat for doing it.” His comrade ran thither and brought him what he wanted. As soon as the soldier was alone again, he lighted his pipe and summoned the black mannikin. “Have no fear,” said the latter to his master. “Go wheresoever they take you, and let them do what they will, only take the blue light with you.” Next day the soldier was tried, and though he had done nothing wicked, the judge condemned him to death. When he was led forth to die, he begged a last favor of the King. “What is it?” asked the King. “That I may smoke one more pipe on my way.” “Thou mayst smoke three,” answered the King, “but do not imagine that I will spare thy life.” Then the soldier pulled out his pipe and lighted it at the blue light, and as soon as a few wreaths of smoke had ascended, the mannikin was there with a small cudgel in his hand, and said, “What does my lord command?” “Strike down to earth that false judge there, and his constable, and spare not the King who has treated me so ill.” Then the mannikin fell on them like lightning, darting this way and that way, and whosoever was so much as touched by his cudgel fell to earth, and did not venture to stir again. The King was terrified; he threw himself on the soldier’s mercy, and merely to be allowed to live at all, gave him his kingdom for his own, and the princess to wife.

The Wilful Child

Once upon a time there was a child who was willful, and would not do at her mother wished. For this reason God had no pleasure in her, and let her become ill, and no doctor could do her any good, and in a short time she lay on her death-bed. When she had been lowered into her grave, and the earth was spread over her, all at once her arm came out again, and stretched upwards, and when they had put it in and spread fresh earth over it, it was all to no purpose, for the arm always came out again. Then the mother herself was obliged to go to the grave, and strike the arm with a rod, and when she had done that, it was drawn in, and then at last the child had rest beneath the ground.

The Three Army-Surgeons

Three army-surgeons who thought they knew their art perfectly, were travelling about the world, and they came to an inn where they wanted to pass the night. The host asked whence they came, and whither they were going? “We are roaming about the world and practising our art.” “Just show me for once in a way what you can do,” said the host. Then the first said he would cut off his hand, and put it on again early next morning; the second said he would tear out his heart, and replace it next morning; the third said he would cut out his eyes and heal them again next morning. “If you can do that,” said the innkeeper, “you have learnt everything.” They, however, had a salve, with which they rubbed themselves, which joined parts together, and they carried the little bottle in which it was, constantly with them. Then they cut the hand, heart and eyes from their bodies as they had said they would, and laid them all together on a plate, and gave it to the innkeeper. The innkeeper gave it to a servant who was to set it in the cupboard, and take good care of it. The girl, however, had a lover in secret, who was a soldier. When therefore the innkeeper, the three army-surgeons, and everyone else in the house were asleep, the soldier came and wanted something to eat. The girl opened the cupboard and brought him some food, and in her love forgot to shut the cupboard-door again; She seated herself at the table by her lover, and they chattered away together. While she sat so contentedly there, thinking of no ill luck, the cat came creeping in, found the cupboard open, took the hand and heart and eyes of the three army-surgeons, and ran off with them. When the soldier had done eating, and the girl was taking away the things and going to shut the cupboard she saw that the plate which the innkeeper had given her to take care of, was empty. Then she said in a fright to her lover, “Ah, miserable girl, what shall I do? The hand is gone, the heart and the eyes are gone too, what will become of me in the morning?” “Be easy,” said he, “I will help thee out of thy trouble there is a thief hanging outside on the gallows, I will cut off his hand. Which hand was it?” “The right one.” Then the girl gave him a sharp knife, and he went and cut the poor sinner’s right hand off, and brought it to her. After this he caught the cat and cut its eyes out, and now nothing but the heart was wanting. “Have you not been killing, and are not the dead pigs in the cellar?” said he. “Yes,” said the girl. “That’s well,” said the soldier, and he went down and fetched a pig’s heart. The girl placed all together on the plate, and put it in the cupboard, and when after this her lover took leave of her, she went quietly to bed.

In the morning when the three army-surgeons got up, they told the girl she was to bring them the plate on which the hand, heart, and eyes were lying. Then she brought it out of the cupboard, and the first fixed the thief’s hand on and smeared it with his salve, and it grew to his arm directly. The second took the cat’s eyes and put them in his own head. The third fixed the pig’s heart firm in the place where his own had been, and the innkeeper stood by, admired their skill, and said he had never yet seen such a thing as that done, and would sing their praises and recommend them to everyone. Then they paid their bill, and travelled farther.

As they were on their way, the one with the pig's heart did not stay with them at all, but wherever there was a corner he ran to it, and rooted about in it with his nose as pigs do. The others wanted to hold him back by the tail of his coat, but that did no good; he tore himself loose, and ran wherever the dirt was thickest. The second also behaved very strangely; he rubbed his eyes, and said to the others, "Comrades, what is the matter? I don't see at all. Will one of you lead me, so that I do not fall." Then with difficulty they travelled on till evening, when they reached another inn. They went into the bar together, and there at a table in the corner sat a rich man counting money. The one with the thief's hand walked round about him, made a sudden movement twice with his arm, and at last when the stranger turned away, he snatched at the pile of money, and took a handful from it. One of them saw this, and said, "Comrade, what art thou about? Thou must not steal shame on thee!" "Eh," said he, "but how can I stop myself? My hand twitches, and I am forced to snatch things whether I will or not."

After this, they lay down to sleep, and while they were lying there it was so dark that no one could see his own hand. All at once the one with the cat's eyes awoke, aroused the others, and said. "Brothers, just look up, do you see the white mice running about there?" The two sat up, but could see nothing. Then said he, "Things are not right with us, we have not got back again what is ours. We must return to the innkeeper, he has deceived us." They went back therefore, the next morning, and told the host they had not got what was their own again; that the first had a thief's hand, the second cat's eyes, and the third a pig's heart. The innkeeper said that the girl must be to blame for that, and was going to call her, but when she had seen the three coming, she had run out by the backdoor, and not come back. Then the three said he must give them a great deal of money, or they would set his house on fire. He gave them what he had, and whatever he could get together, and the three went away with it. It was enough for the rest of their lives, but they would rather have had their own proper organs.

The Seven Swabians

Seven Swabians were once together. The first was Master Schulz; the second, Jackli; the third, Marli; the fourth, Jergli; the fifth, Michal; the sixth, Hans; the seventh, Veitli: all seven had made up their minds to travel about the world to seek adventures, and perform great deeds. But in order that they might go in security and with arms in their hands, they thought it would be advisable that they should have one solitary, but very strong, and very long spear made for them. This spear all seven of them took in their hands at once; in front walked the boldest and bravest, and that was Master Schulz; all the others followed in a row, and Veitli was the last. Then it came to pass one day in the hay-making month (July), when they had walked a long distance, and still had a long way to go before they reached the village where they were to pass the night, that as they were in a meadow in the twilight a great beetle or hornet flew by them from behind a bush, and hummed in a menacing manner. Master Schulz was so terrified that he all but dropped the spear, and a cold perspiration broke out over his whole body. “Hark! hark!” cried he to his comrades, “Good heavens! I hear a drum.” Jackli, who was behind him holding the spear, and who perceived some kind of a smell, said, “Something is most certainly going on, for I taste powder and matches.” At these words Master Schulz began to take to flight, and in a trice jumped over a hedge, but as he just happened to jump on to the teeth of a rake which had been left lying there after the hay-making, the handle of it struck against his face and gave him a tremendous blow. “Oh dear! Oh dear!” screamed Master Schulz. “Take me prisoner; I surrender! I surrender!” The other six all leapt over, one on the top of the other, crying, “If you surrender, I surrender too! If you surrender, I surrender too!” At length, as no enemy was there to bind and take them away, they saw that they had been mistaken, and in order that the story might not be known, and they be treated as fools and ridiculed, they all swore to each other to hold their peace about it until one of them accidentally spoke of it. Then they journeyed onwards. The second danger which they survived cannot be compared with the first. Some days afterwards, their path led them through a fallow-field where a hare was sitting sleeping in the sun. Her ears were standing straight up, and her great glassy eyes were wide open. All of them were alarmed at the sight of the horrible wild beast, and they consulted together as to what it would be the least dangerous to do. For if they were to run away, they knew that the monster would pursue and swallow them whole. So they said, “We must go through a great and dangerous struggle. Boldly ventured, is half won,” and all seven grasped the spear, Master Schulz in front, and Veitli behind. Master Schulz was always trying to keep the spear back, but Veitli had become quite brave while behind, and wanted to dash forward and cried,

“Strike home, in every Swabian’s name,
Or else I wish ye may be lame.”

But Hans knew how to meet this, and said,

“Thunder and lightning, it’s fine to prate,
But for dragon-hunting thou’rt aye too late.”

Michal cried,
“Nothing is wanting, not even a hair,
Be sure the Devil himself is there.”

Then it was Jergli’s turn to speak,

“If it be not, it’s at least his mother,
Or else it’s the Devil’s own step-brother.”

And now Marli had a bright thought, and said to Veitli,

“Advance, Veitli, advance, advance,
And I behind will hold the lance.”

Veitli, however, did not attend to that, and Jackli said,

“Tis Schulz’s place the first to be,
No one deserves that honor but he.”

Then Master Schulz plucked up his courage, and said, gravely,

“Then let us boldly advance to the fight,
And thus we shall show our valour and might.”

Hereupon they all together set on the dragon. Master Schulz crossed himself and prayed for God’s assistance, but as all this was of no avail, and he was getting nearer and nearer to the enemy, he screamed “Oho! oho! ho! ho! ho!” in the greatest anguish. This awakened the hare, which in great alarm darted swiftly away. When Master Schulz saw her thus flying from the field of battle, he cried in his joy.

“Quick, Veitli, quick, look there, look there,
The monster’s nothing but a hare!”

But the Swabian allies went in search of further adventures, and came to the Moselle, a mossy, quiet, deep river, over which there are few bridges, and which in many places people have to cross in boats. As the seven Swabians did not know this, they called to a man who was working on the opposite side of the river, to know how people contrived to get across. The distance and their way of speaking made the man unable to understand what they wanted, and he said “What? what?” in the way people speak in the neighborhood of Treves. Master Schulz thought he was saying, “Wade, wade through the water,” and as he was the first, began to set out and went into the moselle. It was not long before he sank in the mud and the deep waves which drove against him, but his hat was blown on the opposite shore by the wind, and a frog sat down beside it, and croaked “Wat, wat, wat.” The other six on the opposite side heard that, and said, “Oho, comrades, Master Schulz is calling us; if he can wade across, why cannot we?” So they all jumped into the water together in a great hurry, and were drowned, and thus one frog took the lives of all six of them, and not one of the Swabian allies ever reached home again.

The Three Apprentices

There were once three apprentices, who had agreed to keep always together while travelling, and always to work in the same town. At one time, however, their masters had no more work to give them, so that at last they were in rags, and had nothing to live on. Then one of them said, “What shall we do? We cannot stay here any longer, we will travel once more, and if we do not find any work in the town we go to, we will arrange with the innkeeper there, that we are to write and tell him where we are staying, so that we can always have news of each other, and then we will separate.” And that seemed best to the others also. They went forth, and met on the way a richly-dressed man who asked who they were. “We are apprentices looking for work; Up to this time we have kept together, but if we cannot find anything to do we are going to separate.” “There is no need for that,” said the man, “if you will do what I tell you, you shall not want for gold or for work; nay, you shall become great lords, and drive in your carriages!” One of them said, “If our souls and salvation be not endangered, we will certainly do it.” “They will not,” replied the man, “I have no claim on you.” One of the others had, however, looked at his feet, and when he saw a horse’s foot and a man’s foot, he did not want to have anything to do with him. The Devil, however, said, “Be easy, I have no designs on you, but on another soul, which is half my own already, and whose measure shall but run full.” As they were now secure, they consented, and the Devil told them what he wanted. The first was to answer, “All three of us,” to every question; the second was to say, “For money,” and the third, “And quite right too!” They were always to say this, one after the other, but they were not to say one word more, and if they disobeyed this order, all their money would disappear at once, but so long as they observed it, their pockets would always be full. As a beginning, he at once gave them as much as they could carry, and told them to go to such and such an inn when they got to the town. They went to it, and the innkeeper came to meet them, and asked if they wished for anything to eat? The first replied, “All three of us.” “Yes,” said the host, “that is what I mean.” The second said, “For money.” “Of course,” said the host. The third said, “And quite right too!” “Certainly it is right,” said the host.

Good meat and drink were now brought to them, and they were well waited on. After the dinner came the payment, and the innkeeper gave the bill to the one who said, “All three of us,” the second said, “For money,” and the third, “and quite right too!” “Indeed it is right,” said the host, “all three pay, and without money I can give nothing.” They, however, paid still more than he had asked. The lodgers, who were looking on, said, “These people must be mad.” “Yes, indeed they are,” said the host, “they are not very wise.” So they stayed some time in the inn, and said nothing else but, “All three of us,” “For money,” and “And quite right too!” But they saw and knew all that was going on. It so happened that a great merchant came with a large sum of money, and said, “Sir host, take care of my money for me, here are three crazy apprentices who might steal it from me.” The host did as he was asked. As he was carrying the trunk into his room, he felt that it was heavy with gold. Thereupon he gave the three apprentices a lodging below, but the merchant came up-stairs into a separate apartment. When it was midnight, and the host thought that all were asleep, he came with his wife, and they had an axe and struck the rich merchant dead; and after they had murdered him they went to bed again. When it was day there was a great outcry; the merchant lay dead in bed bathed in blood. All the guests ran at once but the host said, “The three crazy apprentices have done this;” the lodgers confirmed it, and said, “It can have been no one else.” The innkeeper, however, had them called, and said to them, “Have you killed the merchant?” “All three of us,” said the first, “For money,” said the second; and the third added, “And quite right too!” “There now, you hear,” said the host, “they confess it themselves.” They were taken to prison, therefore, and were to be tried. When they saw that things were going so seriously, they were after all afraid, but at night the Devil came and said, “Bear it just one day longer, and do not play away your luck, not one hair of your head shall be hurt.”

The next morning they were led to the bar, and the judge said, “Are you the murderers?” “All three of us.” “Why did you kill the merchant?” “For money.” “You wicked wretches, you have no horror of your sins?” “And quite right too!” “They have confessed, and are still stubborn,” said the judge, “lead them to death instantly.” So they were taken out, and the host had to go with them into the circle. When they were taken hold of by the executioner’s men, and were just going to be led up to the scaffold where the headsman was standing with naked sword, a coach drawn by four blood-red chestnut horses came up suddenly, driving so fast that fire flashed from the stones, and someone made signs from the window with a white handkerchief. Then said the headsman, “It is a pardon coming,” and “Pardon! pardon!” was called from the carriage also. Then the Devil stepped out as a very noble gentleman, beautifully dressed, and said, “You three are innocent; you may now speak, make known what you have seen and heard.” Then said the eldest, “We did not kill the merchant, the murderer is standing there in the circle,” and he pointed to the innkeeper. “In proof of this, go into his cellar, where many others whom he has killed are still hanging.” Then the judge sent the executioner’s men thither, and they found it was as the apprentices said, and when they had informed the judge of this, he caused the innkeeper to be led up, and his head was cut off. Then said the Devil to the three, “Now I have got the soul which I wanted to have, and you are free, and have money for the rest of your lives.”

The King’s Son Who Feared Nothing

There was once a King’s son, who was no longer content to stay at home in his father’s house, and as he had no fear of anything, he thought, “I will go forth into the wide world, there the time will not seem long to me, and I shall see wonders enough.” So he took leave of his parents, and went forth, and on and on from morning till night, and whichever way his path led it was the same to him. It came to pass that he got to the house of a giant, and as he was so tired he sat down by the door and rested. And as he let his eyes roam here and there, he saw the giant’s playthings lying in the yard. These were a couple of enormous balls, and nine-pins as tall as a man. After a while he had a fancy to set the nine-pins up and then rolled the balls at them, and screamed and cried out when the nine-pins fell, and had a merry time of it. The giant heard the noise, stretched his head out of the window, and saw a man who was not taller than other men, and yet played with his nine-pins. “Little worm,” cried he, “why art thou playing with my balls? Who gave thee strength to do it?” The King’s son looked up, saw the giant, and said, “Oh, thou blockhead, thou thinkest indeed that thou only hast strong arms, I can do everything I want to do.” The giant came down and watched the bowling with great admiration, and said, “Child of man, if thou art one of that kind, go and bring me an apple of the tree of life.” “What dost thou want with it?” said the King’s son. “I do not want the apple for myself,” answered the giant, “but I have a betrothed bride who wishes for it. I have travelled far about the world and cannot find the tree.” “I will soon find it,” said the King’s son, “and I do not know what is to prevent me from getting the apple down.” The giant said, “Thou really believest it to be so easy! The garden in which the tree stands is surrounded by an iron railing, and in front of the railing lie wild beasts, each close to the other, and they keep watch and let no man go in.” “They will be sure to let me in,” said the King’s son. “Yes, but even if thou dost get into the garden, and seest the apple hanging to the tree, it is still not thine; a ring hangs in front of it, through which any one who wants to reach the apple and break it off, must put his hand, and no one has yet had the luck to do it.” “That luck will be mine,” said the King’s son.

Then he took leave of the giant, and went forth over mountain and valley, and through plains and forests, until at length he came to the wondrous garden.

The beasts lay round about it, but they had put their heads down and were asleep. Moreover, they did not awake when he went up to them, so he stepped over them, climbed the fence, and got safely into the garden. There, in the very middle of it, stood the tree of life, and the red apples were shining upon the branches. He climbed up the trunk to the top, and as he was about to reach out for an apple, he saw a ring hanging before it; but he thrust his hand through that without any difficulty, and gathered the apple. The ring closed tightly on his arm, and all at once he felt a prodigious strength flowing through his veins. When he had come down again from the tree with the apple, he would not climb over the fence, but grasped the great gate, and had no need to shake it more than once before it sprang open with a loud crash. Then he went out, and the lion which had been lying down before, was awake and sprang after him, not in rage and fierceness, but following him humbly as its master.

The King's son took the giant the apple he had promised him, and said, "Seest thou, I have brought it without difficulty." The giant was glad that his desire had been so soon satisfied, hastened to his bride, and gave her the apple for which she had wished. She was a beautiful and wise maiden, and as she did not see the ring on his arm, she said, "I shall never believe that thou hast brought the apple, until I see the ring on thine arm." The giant said, "I have nothing to do but go home and fetch it," and thought it would be easy to take away by force from the weak man, what he would not give of his own free will. He therefore demanded the ring from him, but the King's son refused it. "Where the apple is, the ring must be also," said the giant; "if thou wilt not give it of thine own accord, thou must fight with me for it."

They wrestled with each other for a long time, but the giant could not get the better of the King's son, who was strengthened by the magical power of the ring. Then the giant thought of a stratagem, and said, "I have got warm with fighting, and so hast thou. We will bathe in the river, and cool ourselves before we begin again." The King's son, who knew nothing of falsehood, went with him to the water, and pulled off with his clothes the ring also from his arm, and sprang into the river. The giant instantly snatched the ring, and ran away with it, but the lion, which had observed the theft, pursued the giant, tore the ring out of his hand, and brought it back to its master. Then the giant placed himself behind an oak-tree, and while the King's son was busy putting on his clothes again, surprised him, and put both his eyes out.

And now the unhappy King's son stood there, and was blind and knew not how to help himself. Then the giant came back to him, took him by the hand as if he were someone who wanted to guide him, and led him to the top of a high rock. There he left him standing, and thought, "Just two steps more, and he will fall down and kill himself, and I can take the ring from him." But the faithful lion had not deserted its master; it held him fast by the clothes, and drew him gradually back again. When the giant came and wanted to rob the dead man, he saw that his cunning had been in vain. "Is there no way, then, of destroying a weak child of man like that?" said he angrily to himself, and seized the King's son and led him back again to the precipice by another way, but the lion which saw his evil design, helped its master out of danger here also. When they had got close to the edge, the giant let the blind man's hand drop, and was going to leave him behind alone, but the lion pushed the giant so that he was thrown down and fell, dashed to pieces, on the ground.

The faithful animal again drew its master back from the precipice, and guided him to a tree by which flowed a clear brook. The King's son sat down there, but the lion lay down, and sprinkled the water in his face with its paws. Scarcely had a couple of drops wetted the sockets of his eyes, than he was once more able to see something, and remarked a little bird flying quite close by, which wounded itself against the trunk of a tree. On this it went down to the water and bathed itself therein, and then it soared upwards and swept between the trees without touching them, as if it had recovered its sight again. Then the King's son recognized a sign from God and stooped down to the water, and washed and bathed his face in it. And when he arose he had his eyes once more, brighter and clearer than they had ever been.

The King's son thanked God for his great mercy, and travelled with his lion onwards through the world. And it came to pass that he arrived before a castle which was enchanted. In the gateway stood a maiden of beautiful form and fine face, but she was quite black. She spoke to him and said, "Ah, if thou couldst but deliver me from the evil spell which is thrown over me." "What shall I do?" said the King's son. The maiden answered, "Thou must pass three nights in the great hall of this enchanted castle, but thou must let no fear enter thy heart. When they are doing their worst to torment thee, if thou bearest it without letting a sound escape thee, I shall be free. Thy life they dare not take." Then said the King's son, "I have no fear; with God's help I will try it." So he went gaily into the castle, and when it grew dark he seated himself in the large hall and waited. Everything was quiet, however, till midnight, when all at once a great tumult began, and out of every hole and corner came little devils. They behaved as if they did not see him, seated themselves in the middle of the room, lighted a fire, and began to gamble. When one of them lost, he said, "It is not right; some one is here who does not belong to us; it is his fault that I am losing." "Wait, you fellow behind the stove, I am coming," said another. The screaming became still louder, so that no one could have heard it without terror. The King's son stayed sitting quite quietly, and was not afraid; but at last the devils jumped up from the ground, and fell on him, and there were so many of them that he could not defend himself from them. They dragged him about on the floor, pinched him, pricked him, beat him, and tormented him, but no sound escaped from him. Towards morning they disappeared, and he was so exhausted that he could scarcely move his limbs, but when day dawned the black maiden came to him. She bore in her hand a little bottle wherein was the water of life wherewith she washed him, and he at once felt all pain depart and new strength flow through his veins. She said, "Thou hast held out successfully for one night, but two more lie before thee." Then she went away again, and as she was going, he observed that her feet had become white. The next night the devils came and began their gambols anew. They fell on the King's son, and beat him much more severely than the night before, until his body was covered with wounds. But as he bore all quietly, they were forced to leave him, and when dawn appeared, the maiden came and healed him with the water of life. And when she went away, he saw with joy that she had already become white to the tips of her fingers. And now he had only one night more to go through, but it was the worst. The hob-goblins came again: "Art thou there still?" cried they, "thou shalt be tormented till thy breath stops.” They pricked him and beat him, and threw him here and there, and pulled him by the arms and legs as if they wanted to tear him to pieces, but he bore everything, and never uttered a cry. At last the devils vanished, but he lay fainting there, and did not stir, nor could he raise his eyes to look at the maiden who came in, and sprinkled and bathed him with the water of life. But suddenly he was freed from all pain, and felt fresh and healthy as if he had awakened from sleep, and when he opened his eyes he saw the maiden standing by him, snow-white, and fair as day. “Rise,” said she, “and swing thy sword three times over the stairs, and then all will be delivered.” And when he had done that, the whole castle was released from enchantment, and the maiden was a rich King’s daughter. The servants came and said that the table was already set in the great hall, and dinner served up. Then they sat down and ate and drank together, and in the evening the wedding was solemnized with great rejoicings.

Donkey Cabbages

There was once a young huntsman who went into the forest to lie in wait. He had a fresh and joyous heart, and as he was going thither, whistling upon a leaf, an ugly old crone came up, who spoke to him and said, “Good-day, dear huntsman, truly you are merry and contented, but I am suffering from hunger and thirst, do give me an alms.” The huntsman had compassion on the poor old creature, felt in his pocket, and gave her what he could afford. He was then about to go further, but the old woman stopped him and said, “Listen, dear huntsman, to what I tell you; I will make you a present in return for your kindness. Go on your way now, but in a little while you will come to a tree, whereon nine birds are sitting which have a cloak in their claws, and are plucking at it; take your gun and shoot into the midst of them, they will let the cloak fall down to you, but one of the birds will be hurt, and will drop down dead. Carry away the cloak, it is a wishing-cloak; when you throw it over your shoulders, you only have to wish to be in a certain place, and you will be there in the twinkling of an eye. Take out the heart of the dead bird and swallow it whole, and every morning early, when you get up, you will find a gold piece under your pillow.” The huntsman thanked the wise woman, and thought to himself, “Those are fine things that she has promised me, if all does but come true.” And verily when he had walked about a hundred paces, he heard in the branches above him such a screaming and twittering that he looked up and saw there a crowd of birds who were tearing a piece of cloth about with their beaks and claws, and tugging and fighting as if each wanted to have it all to himself. “Well,” said the huntsman, “this is wonderful, it has really come to pass just as the old wife foretold!” and he took the gun from his shoulder, aimed and fired right into the midst of them, so that the feathers flew about. The birds instantly took to flight with loud outcries, but one dropped down dead, and the cloak fell at the same time. Then the huntsman did as the old woman had directed him, cut open the bird, sought the heart, swallowed it down, and took the cloak home with him.

Next morning, when he awoke, the promise occurred to him, and he wished to see if it also had been fulfilled. When he lifted up the pillow, the gold piece shone in his eyes, and next day he found another, and so it went on, every time he got up. He gathered together a heap of gold, but at last he thought, “Of what use is all my gold to me if I stay at home? I will go forth and see the world.”

He then took leave of his parents, buckled on his huntsman’s pouch and gun, and went out into the world. It came to pass, that one day he travelled through a dense forest, and when he came to the end of it, in the plain before him stood a fine castle. An old woman was standing with a wonderfully beautiful maiden, looking out of one of the windows. The old woman, however, was a witch and said to the maiden, “There comes one out of the forest, who has a wonderful treasure in his body, we must filch it from him, my dear daughter, it is more suitable for us than for him. He has a bird's heart about him, by means of which a gold piece lies every morning under his pillow." She told her what she was to do to get it, and what part she had to play, and finally threatened her, and said with angry eyes, "And if you do not attend to what I say, it will be the worse for you." Now when the huntsman came nearer he descried the maiden, and said to himself, "I have travelled about for such a long time, I will take a rest for once, and enter that beautiful castle. I have certainly money enough." Nevertheless, the real reason was that he had caught sight of the pretty girl.

He entered the house, and was well received and courteously entertained. Before long he was so much in love with the young witch that he no longer thought of anything else, and only saw things as she saw them, and did what she desired. The old woman then said, "Now we must have the bird's heart, he will never miss it." She prepared a drink, and when it was ready, poured it into a cup and gave it to the maiden, who was to present it to the huntsman. She did so, saying, "Now, my dearest, drink to me." So he took the cup, and when he had swallowed the draught, he brought up the heart of the bird. The girl had to take it away secretly and swallow it herself, for the old woman would have it so. Thenceforward he found no more gold under his pillow, but it lay instead under that of the maiden, from whence the old woman fetched it away every morning; but he was so much in love and so befooled, that he thought of nothing else but of passing his time with the girl.

Then the old witch said, "We have the bird's heart, but we must also take the wishing-cloak away from him." The girl answered, "We will leave him that, he has lost his wealth." The old woman was angry and said, "Such a mantle is a wonderful thing, and is seldom to be found in this world. I must and will have it!" She gave the girl several blows, and said that if she did not obey, it should fare ill with her. So she did the old woman's bidding, placed herself at the window and looked on the distant country, as if she were very sorrowful. The huntsman asked, "Why dost thou stand there so sorrowfully?" "Ah, my beloved," was her answer, "over yonder lies the Garnet Mountain, where the precious stones grow. I long for them so much that when I think of them, I feel quite sad, but who can get them? Only the birds; they fly and can reach them, but a man never." "Hast thou nothing else to complain of?" said the huntsman. "I will soon remove that burden from thy heart." With that he drew her under his mantle, wished himself on the Garnet Mountain, and in the twinkling of an eye they were sitting on it together. Precious stones were glistening on every side so that it was a joy to see them, and together they gathered the finest and costliest of them. Now, the old woman had, through her sorceries, contrived that the eyes of the huntsman should become heavy. He said to the maiden, "We will sit down and rest awhile, I am so tired that I can no longer stand on my feet." Then they sat down, and he laid his head in her lap, and fell asleep. When he was asleep, she unfastened the mantle from his shoulders, and wrapped herself in it, picked up the garnets and stones, and wished herself back at home with them.

But when the huntsman had had his sleep out and awoke, and perceived that his sweetheart had betrayed him, and left him alone on the wild mountain, he said, “Oh, what treachery there is in the world!” and sat down there in care and sorrow, not knowing what to do. But the mountain belonged to some wild and monstrous giants who dwelt thereon and lived their lives there, and he had not sat long before he saw three of them coming towards him, so he lay down as if he were sunk in a deep sleep. Then the giants came up, and the first kicked him with his foot and said, “What sort of an earth-worm is lying curled up here?” The second said, “Step upon him and kill him.” But the third said, “That would indeed be worth your while; just let him live, he cannot remain here; and when he climbs higher, toward the summit of of the mountain, the clouds will lay hold of him and bear him away.” So saying they passed by. But the huntsman had paid heed to their words, and as soon as they were gone, he rose and climbed up to the summit of the mountain, and when he had sat there a while, a cloud floated towards him, caught him up, carried him away, and travelled about for a long time in the heavens. Then it sank lower, and let itself down on a great cabbage-garden, girt round by walls, so that he came softly to the ground on cabbages and vegetables.

Then the huntsman looked about him and said, “If I had but something to eat! I am so hungry, and my hunger will increase in course of time; but I see here neither apples nor pears, nor any other sort of fruit, everywhere nothing but cabbages,” but at length he thought, “At a pinch I can eat some of the leaves, they do not taste particularly good, but they will refresh me.” With that he picked himself out a fine head of cabbage, and ate it, but scarcely had he swallowed a couple of mouthfuls than he felt very strange and quite different.

Four legs grew on him, a large head and two thick ears, and he saw with horror that he was changed into an ass. Still as his hunger increased every minute, and as the juicy leaves were suitable to his present nature, he went on eating with great zest. At last he arrived at a different kind of cabbage, but as soon as he had swallowed it, he again felt a change, and reassumed his former human shape.

Then the huntsman lay down and slept off his fatigue. When he awoke next morning, he broke off one head of the bad cabbages and another of the good ones, and thought to himself, “This shall help me to get my own again and punish treachery.” Then he took the cabbages with him, climbed over the wall, and went forth to seek for the castle of his sweetheart. After wandering about for a couple of days he was lucky enough to find it again. He dyed his face brown, so that his own mother would not have known him; and begged for shelter: “I am so tired,” said he, “that I can go no further.” The witch asked, “Who are you, countryman, and what is your business?” “I am a King’s messenger, and was sent out to seek the most delicious salad which grows beneath the sun. I have even been so fortunate as to find it, and am carrying it about with me; but the heat of the sun is so intense that the delicate cabbage threatens to wither, and I do not know if I can carry it any further."

When the old woman heard of the exquisite salad, she was greedy, and said, "Dear countryman, let me just taste this wonderful salad." "Why not?" answered he, "I have brought two heads with me, and will give you one of them," and he opened his pouch and handed her the bad cabbage. The witch suspected nothing amiss, and her mouth watered so for this new dish that she herself went into the kitchen and dressed it. When it was prepared she could not wait until it was set on the table, but took a couple of leaves at once, and put them in her mouth, but hardly had she swallowed them than she was deprived of her human shape, and she ran out into the courtyard in the form of an ass. Presently the maid-servant entered the kitchen, saw the salad standing there ready prepared, and was about to carry it up; but on the way, according to habit, she was seized by the desire to taste, and she ate a couple of leaves. Instantly the magic power showed itself, and she likewise became an ass and ran out to the old woman, and the dish of salad fell to the ground. Meantime the messenger sat beside the beautiful girl, and as no one came with the salad and she also was longing for it, she said, "I don't know what has become of the salad." The huntsman thought, "The salad must have already taken effect," and said, "I will go to the kitchen and inquire about it." As he went down he saw the two asses running about in the courtyard; the salad, however, was lying on the ground. "All right," said he, "the two have taken their portion," and he picked up the other leaves, laid them on the dish, and carried them to the maiden. "I bring you the delicate food myself," said he, "in order that you may not have to wait longer." Then she ate of it, and was, like the others, immediately deprived of her human form, and ran out into the courtyard in the shape of an ass.

After the huntsman had washed his face, so that the transformed ones could recognize him, he went down into the courtyard, and said, "Now you shall receive the wages of your treachery," and bound them together, all three with one rope, and drove them along until he came to a mill. He knocked at the window, the miller put out his head, and asked what he wanted. "I have three unmanageable beasts," answered he, "which I don't want to keep any longer. Will you take them in, and give them food and stable room, and manage them as I tell you, and then I will pay you what you ask." The miller said, "Why not? But how am I to manage them?" The huntsman then said that he was to give three beatings and one meal daily to the old donkey, and that was the witch; one beating and three meals to the younger one, which was the servant-girl; and to the youngest, which was the maiden, no beatings and three meals, for he could not bring himself to have the maiden beaten. After that he went back into the castle, and found therein everything he needed.

After a couple of days, the miller came and said he must inform him that the old ass which had received three beatings and only one meal daily was dead; "the two others," he continued, "are certainly not dead, and are fed three times daily, but they are so sad that they cannot last much longer." The huntsman was moved to pity, put away his anger, and told the miller to drive them back again to him. And when they came, he gave them some of the good salad, so that they became human again. The beautiful girl fell on her knees before him, and said, “Ah, my beloved, forgive me for the evil I have done you; my mother drove me to it; it was done against my will, for I love you dearly. Your wishing-cloak hangs in a cupboard, and as for the bird’s-heart I will take a vomiting potion.” But he thought otherwise, and said, “Keep it; it is all the same, for I will take thee for my true wife.” So the wedding was celebrated, and they lived happily together until their death.

The Old Woman in the Wood

A poor servant-girl was once travelling with the family with which she was in service, through a great forest, and when they were in the midst of it, robbers came out of the thicket, and murdered all they found. All perished together except the girl, who had jumped out of the carriage in a fright, and hidden herself behind a tree. When the robbers had gone away with their booty, she came out and beheld the great disaster. Then she began to weep bitterly, and said, "What can a poor girl like me do now? I do not know how to get out of the forest, no human being lives in it, so I must certainly starve." She walked about and looked for a road, but could find none. When it was evening she seated herself under a tree, gave herself into God's keeping, and resolved to sit waiting there and not go away, let what might happen. When, however, she had sat there for a while, a white dove came flying to her with a little golden key in its mouth. It put the little key in her hand, and said, "Dost thou see that great tree, therein is a little lock, it opens with the tiny key, and there thou wilt find food enough, and suffer no more hunger." Then she went to the tree and opened it, and found milk in a little dish, and white bread to break into it, so that she could eat her fill. When she was satisfied, she said, "It is now the time when the hens at home go to roost, I am so tired I could go to bed too." Then the dove flew to her again, and brought another golden key in its bill, and said, "Open that tree there, and thou willt find a bed." So she opened it, and found a beautiful white bed, and she prayed God to protect her during the night, and lay down and slept. In the morning the dove came for the third time, and again brought a little key, and said, "Open that tree there, and thou wilt find clothes." And when she opened it, she found garments beset with gold and with jewels, more splendid than those of any king's daughter. So she lived there for some time, and the dove came every day and provided her with all she needed, and it was a quiet good life.

Once, however, the dove came and said, "Wilt thou do something for my sake?" "With all my heart," said the girl. Then said the little dove, "I will guide thee to a small house; enter it, and inside it, an old woman will be sitting by the fire and will say, 'Good-day.' But on thy life give her no answer, let her do what she will, but pass by her on the right side; further on, there is a door, which open, and thou wilt enter into a room where a quantity of rings of all kinds are lying, amongst which are some magnificent ones with shining stones; leave them, however, where they are, and seek out a plain one, which must likewise be amongst them, and bring it here to me as quickly as thou canst." The girl went to the little house, and came to the door. There sat an old woman who stared when she saw her, and said, "Good-day my child." The girl gave her no answer, and opened the door. "Whither away," cried the old woman, and seized her by the gown, and wanted to hold her fast, saying, "That is my house; no one can go in there if I choose not to allow it." But the girl was silent, got away from her, and went straight into the room. Now there lay on the table an enormous quantity of rings, which gleamed and glittered before her eyes. She turned them over and looked for the plain one, but could not find it. While she was seeking, she saw the old woman and how she was stealing away, and wanting to get off with a bird-cage which she had in her hand. So she went after her and took the cage out of her hand, and when she raised it up and looked into it, a bird was inside which had the plain ring in its bill. Then she took the ring, and ran quite joyously home with it, and thought the little white dove would come and get the ring, but it did not. Then she leant against a tree and determined to wait for the dove, and, as she thus stood, it seemed just as if the tree was soft and pliant, and was letting its branches down. And suddenly the branches twined around her, and were two arms, and when she looked round, the tree was a handsome man, who embraced and kissed her heartily, and said, “Thou hast delivered me from the power of the old woman, who is a wicked witch. She had changed me into a tree, and every day for two hours I was a white dove, and so long as she possessed the ring I could not regain my human form.” Then his servants and his horses, who had likewise been changed into trees, were freed from the enchantment also, and stood beside him. And he led them forth to his kingdom, for he was a King’s son, and they married, and lived happily.

The Three Brothers

There was once a man who had three sons, and nothing else in the world but the house in which he lived. Now each of the sons wished to have the house after his father’s death; but the father loved them all alike, and did not know what to do; he did not wish to sell the house, because it had belonged to his forefathers, else he might have divided the money amongst them. At last a plan came into his head, and he said to his sons, “Go into the world, and try each of you to learn a trade, and, when you all come back, he who makes the best masterpiece shall have the house.”

The sons were well content with this, and the eldest determined to be a blacksmith, the second a barber, and the third a fencing-master. They fixed a time when they should all come home again, and then each went his way.

It chanced that they all found skilful masters, who taught them their trades well. The blacksmith had to shoe the King’s horses, and he thought to himself, “The house is mine, without doubt.” The barber only shaved great people, and he too already looked upon the house as his own. The fencing-master got many a blow, but he only bit his lip, and let nothing vex him; “for,” said he to himself, “If you are afraid of a blow, you’ll never win the house.”

When the appointed time had gone by, the three brothers came back home to their father; but they did not know how to find the best opportunity for showing their skill, so they sat down and consulted together. As they were sitting thus, all at once a hare came running across the field. “Ah, ha, just in time!” said the barber. So he took his basin and soap, and lathered away until the hare came up; then he soaped and shaved off the hare’s whiskers whilst he was running at the top of his speed, and did not even cut his skin or injure a hair on his body. “Well done!” said the old man. “Your brothers will have to exert themselves wonderfully, or the house will be yours.”

Soon after, up came a nobleman in his coach, dashing along at full speed. “Now you shall see what I can do, father,” said the blacksmith; so away he ran after the coach, took all four shoes off the feet of one of the horses whilst he was galloping, and put him on four new shoes without stopping him. “You are a fine fellow, and as clever as your brother,” said his father; “I do not know to which I ought to give the house.”

Then the third son said, “Father, let me have my turn, if you please;” and, as it was beginning to rain, he drew his sword, and flourished it backwards and forwards above his head so fast that not a drop fell upon him. It rained still harder and harder, till at last it came down in torrents; but he only flourished his sword faster and faster, and remained as dry as if he were sitting in a house. When his father saw this he was amazed, and said, “This is the master-piece, the house is yours!”

His brothers were satisfied with this, as was agreed beforehand; and, as they loved one another very much, they all three stayed together in the house, followed their trades, and, as they had learnt them so well and were so clever, they earned a great deal of money. Thus they lived together happily until they grew old; and at last, when one of them fell sick and died, the two others grieved so sorely about it that they also fell ill, and soon after died. And because they had been so clever, and had loved one another so much, they were all laid in the same grave.

The Devil and his Grandmother

There was a great war, and the King had many soldiers, but gave them small pay, so small that they could not live upon it, so three of them agreed among themselves to desert. One of them said to the others, “If we are caught we shall be hanged on the gallows; how shall we manage it?” Another said, “Look at that great cornfield, if we were to hide ourselves there, no one could find us; the troops are not allowed to enter it, and to-morrow they are to march away.” They crept into the corn, only the troops did not march away, but remained lying all round about it. They stayed in the corn for two days and two nights, and were so hungry that they all but died, but if they had come out, their death would have been certain. Then said they, “What is the use of our deserting if we have to perish miserably here?” But now a fiery dragon came flying through the air, and it came down to them, and asked why they had concealed themselves there? They answered, “We are three soldiers who have deserted because the pay was so bad, and now we shall have to die of hunger if we stay here, or to dangle on the gallows if we go out.” “If you will serve me for seven years,” said the dragon, “I will convey you through the army so that no one shall seize you.” “We have no choice and are compelled to accept,” they replied. Then the dragon caught hold of them with his claws, and carried them away through the air over the army, and put them down again on the earth far from it; but the dragon was no other than the Devil. He gave them a small whip and said, “Whip with it and crack it, and then as much gold will spring up round about as you can wish for; then you can live like great lords, keep horses, and drive your carriages, but when the seven years have come to an end, you are my property.” Then he put before them a book which they were all three forced to sign. “I will, however, then set you a riddle,” said he, “and if you can guess that, you shall be free, and released from my power.” Then the dragon flew away from them, and they went away with their whip, had gold in plenty, ordered themselves rich apparel, and travelled about the world. Wherever they were they lived in pleasure and magnificence, rode on horseback, drove in carriages, ate and drank, but did nothing wicked. The time slipped quickly away, and when the seven years were coming to an end, two of them were terribly anxious and alarmed; but the third took the affair easily, and said, “Brothers, fear nothing, my head is sharp enough, I shall guess the riddle.” They went out into the open country and sat down, and the two pulled sorrowful faces. Then an aged woman came up to them who inquired why they were so sad? “Alas!” said they, “how can that concern you? After all, you cannot help us.” “Who knows?” said she. “Confide your trouble to me.” So they told her that they had been the Devil’s servants for nearly seven years, and that he had provided them with gold as plentifully as if it had been blackberries, but that they had sold themselves to him, and were forfeited to him, if at the end of the seven years they could not guess a riddle. The old woman said, “If you are to be saved, one of you must go into the forest, there he will come to a fallen rock which looks like a little house, he must enter that, and then he will obtain help." The two melancholy ones thought to themselves, "That will still not save us," and stayed where they were, but the third, the merry one, got up and walked on in the forest until he found the rock-house. In the little house, however, a very aged woman was sitting, who was the Devil's grandmother, and asked the soldier where he came from, and what he wanted there? He told her everything that had happened, and as he pleased her well, she had pity on him, and said she would help him. She lifted up a great stone which lay above a cellar, and said, "Conceal thyself there, thou canst hear everything that is said here; only sit still, and do not stir. When the dragon comes, I will question him about the riddle, he tells everything to me, so listen carefully to his answer." At twelve o'clock at night, the dragon came flying thither, and asked for his dinner. The grandmother laid the table, and served up food and drink, so that he was pleased, and they ate and drank together. In the course of conversation, she asked him what kind of a day he had had, and how many souls he had got? "Nothing went very well to-day," he answered, "but I have laid hold of three soldiers, I have them safe." "Indeed! three soldiers, that's something like, but they may escape you yet." The Devil said mockingly, "They are mine! I will set them a riddle, which they will never in this world be able to guess!" "What riddle is that?" she inquired. "I will tell you. In the great North Sea lies a dead dog-fish, that shall be your roast meat, and the rib of a whale shall be your silver spoon, and a hollow old horse's hoof shall be your wine-glass." When the Devil had gone to bed, the old grandmother raised up the stone, and let out the soldier. "Hast thou paid particular attention to everything?" "Yes," said he, "I know enough, and will contrive to save myself." Then he had to go back another way, through the window, secretly and with all speed to his companions. He told them how the Devil had been overreached by the old grandmother, and how he had learned the answer to the riddle from him. Then they were all joyous, and of good cheer, and took the whip and whipped so much gold for themselves that it ran all over the ground. When the seven years had fully gone by, the Devil came with the book, showed the signatures, and said, "I will take you with me to hell. There you shall have a meal! If you can guess what kind of roast meat you will have to eat, you shall be free and released from your bargain, and may keep the whip as well." Then the first soldier began and said, "In the great North Sea lies a dead dog-fish, that no doubt is the roast meat." The Devil was angry, and began to mutter, "Hm! hm! hm!" And asked the second, "But what will your spoon be?" "The rib of a whale, that is to be our silver spoon." The Devil made a wry face, again growled, "Hm! hm! hm!" and said to the third, "And do you also know what your wine-glass is to be?" "An old horse's hoof is to be our wineglass." Then the Devil flew away with a loud cry, and had no more power over them, but the three kept the whip, whipped as much money for themselves with it as they wanted, and lived happily to their end.

Ferdinand the Faithful

Once on a time lived a man and a woman who so long as they were rich had no children, but when they were poor they had a little boy. They could, however, find no godfather for him, so the man said he would just go to another place to see if he could get one there. As he went, a poor man met him, who asked him where he was going. He said he was going to see if he could get a godfather, that he was poor, so no one would stand as godfather for him. “Oh,” said the poor man, “you are poor, and I am poor; I will be godfather for you, but I am so ill off I can give the child nothing. Go home and tell the nurse that she is to come to the church with the child.”

When they all got to the church together, the beggar was already there, and he gave the child the name of Ferdinand the Faithful.

When he was going out of the church, the beggar said, “Now go home, I can give you nothing, and you likewise ought to give me nothing.” But he gave a key to the nurse, and told her when she got home she was to give it to the father, who was to take care of it until the child was fourteen years old, and then he was to go on the heath where there was a castle which the key would fit, and that all which was therein should belong to him. Now when the child was seven years old and had grown very big, he once went to play with some other boys, and each of them boasted that he had got more from his godfather than the other; but the child could say nothing, and was vexed, and went home and said to his father, “Did I get nothing at all, then, from my godfather?” “Oh, yes,” said the father, “thou hadst a key if there is a castle standing on the heath, just go to it and open it.” Then the boy went thither, but no castle was to be seen, or heard of.

After seven years more, when he was fourteen years old, he again went thither, and there stood the castle. When he had opened it, there was nothing within but a horse, a white one. Then the boy was so full of joy because he had a horse, that he mounted on it and galloped back to his father. “Now I have a white horse, and I will travel,” said he. So he set out, and as he was on his way, a pen was lying on the road. At first he thought he would pick it up, but then again he thought to himself, “Thou shouldst leave it lying there; thou wilt easily find a pen where thou art going, if thou hast need of one.” As he was thus riding away, a voice called after him, “Ferdinand the Faithful, take it with thee.” He looked around, but saw no one, then he went back again and picked it up. When he had ridden a little way farther, he passed by a lake, and a fish was lying on the bank, gasping and panting for breath, so he said, “Wait, my dear fish, I will help thee get into the water,” and he took hold of it by the tail, and threw it into the lake. Then the fish put its head out of the water and said, “As thou hast helped me out of the mud I will give thee a flute; when thou art in any need, play on it, and then I will help thee, and if ever thou lettest anything fall in the water, just play and I will reach it out to thee.” Then he rode away, and there came to him a man who asked him where he was going. “Oh, to the next place.” Then what his name was? “Ferdinand the Faithful.” “So! then we have got almost the same name, I am called Ferdinand the Unfaithful.” And they both set out to the inn in the nearest place.

Now it was unfortunate that Ferdinand the Unfaithful knew everything that the other had ever thought and everything he was about to do; he knew it by means of all kinds of wicked arts. There was, however, in the inn an honest girl, who had a bright face and behaved very prettily. She fell in love with Ferdinand the Faithful because he was a handsome man, and she asked him whither he was going. “Oh, I am just travelling round about,” said he. Then she said he ought to stay there, for the King of that country wanted an attendant or an outrider, and he ought to enter his service. He answered he could not very well go to any one like that and offer himself. Then said the maiden, “Oh, but I will soon do that for you.” And so she went straight to the King, and told him that she knew of an excellent servant for him. He was well pleased with that, and had Ferdinand the Faithful brought to him, and wanted to make him his servant. He, however, liked better to be an outrider, for where his horse was, there he also wanted to be, so the King made him an outrider. When Ferdinand the Unfaithful learnt that, he said to the girl, “What! Dost thou help him and not me?” “Oh,” said the girl, “I will help thee too.” She thought, “I must keep friends with that man, for he is not to be trusted.” She went to the King, and offered him as a servant, and the King was willing.

Now when the King met his lords in the morning, he always lamented and said, “Oh, if I had but my love with me.” Ferdinand the Unfaithful was, however, always hostile to Ferdinand the Faithful. So once, when the King was complaining thus, he said, “You have the outrider, send him away to get her, and if he does not do it, his head must be struck off.” Then the King sent for Ferdinand the Faithful, and told him that there was, in this place or in that place, a girl he loved, and that he was to bring her to him, and if he did not do it he should die.

Ferdinand the Faithful went into the stable to his white horse, and complained and lamented, “Oh, what an unhappy man I am!” Then someone behind him cried, “Ferdinand the Faithful, why weepest thou?” He looked round but saw no one, and went on lamenting; “Oh, my dear little white horse, now must I leave thee; now must I die.” Then some one cried once more, “Ferdinand the Faithful, why weepest thou?” Then for the first time he was aware that it was his little white horse who was putting that question. “Dost thou speak, my little white horse; canst thou do that?” And again, he said, “I am to go to this place and to that, and am to bring the bride; canst thou tell me how I am to set about it?” Then answered the little white horse, “Go thou to the King, and say if he will give thou what thou must have, thou wilt get her for him. If he will give thee a ship full of meat, and a ship full of bread, it will succeed. Great giants dwell on the lake, and if thou takest no meat with thee for them, they will tear thee to pieces, and there are the large birds which would pick the eyes out of thy head if thou hadst no bread for them.” Then the King made all the butchers in the land kill, and all the bakers bake, that the ships might be filled. When they were full, the little white horse said to Ferdinand the Faithful, "Now mount me, and go with me into the ship, and then when the giants come, say,

"Peace, peace, my dear little giants,
I have had thought of ye,

Something I have brought for ye;"
and when the birds come, thou shalt again say,

"Peace, peace, my dear little birds,
I have had thought of ye,

Something I have brought for ye;"

then they will do nothing to thee, and when thou comest to the castle, the giants will help thee. Then go up to the castle, and take a couple of giants with thee. There the princess lies sleeping; thou must, however, not awaken her, but the giants must lift her up, and carry her in her bed to the ship." And now everything took place as the little white horse had said, and Ferdinand the Faithful gave the giants and the birds what he had brought with him for them, and that made the giants willing, and they carried the princess in her bed to the King. And when she came to the King, she said she could not live, she must have her writings, they had been left in her castle. Then by the instigation of Ferdinand the Unfaithful, Ferdinand the Faithful was called, and the King told him he must fetch the writings from the castle, or he should die. Then he went once more into the stable, and bemoaned himself and said, "Oh, my dear little white horse, now I am to go away again, how am I to do it?" Then the little white horse said he was just to load the ships full again. So it happened again as it had happened before, and the giants and the birds were satisfied, and made gentle by the meat. When they came to the castle, the white horse told Ferdinand the Faithful that he must go in, and that on the table in the princess's bed-room lay the writings. And Ferdinand the Faithful went in, and fetched them. When they were on the lake, he let his pen fall into the water; then said the white horse, "Now I cannot help thee at all." But he remembered his flute, and began to play on it, and the fish came with the pen in its mouth, and gave it to him. So he took the writings to the castle, where the wedding was celebrated.

The Queen, however, did not love the King because he had no nose, but she would have much liked to love Ferdinand the Faithful. Once, therefore, when all the lords of the court were together, the Queen said she could do feats of magic, that she could cut off any one's head and put it on again, and that one of them ought just to try it. But none of them would be the first, so Ferdinand the Faithful, again at the instigation of Ferdinand the Unfaithful, undertook it and she hewed off his head, and put it on again for him, and it healed together directly, so that it looked as if he had a red thread round his throat. Then the King said to her, "My child, and where hast thou learnt that?" "Yes," she said, "I understand the art; shall I just try it on thee also?"

"Oh, yes," said he. But she cut off his head, and did not put it on again; but pretended that she could not get it on, and that it would not keep fixed. Then the King was buried, but she married Ferdinand the Faithful.

He, however, always rode on his white horse, and once when he was seated on it, it told him that he was to go on to the heath which he knew, and gallop three times round it. And when he had done that, the white horse stood up on its hind legs, and was changed into a King's son.

The Iron Stove

In the days when wishing was still of some use, a King's son was bewitched by an old witch, and shut up in an iron stove in a forest. There he passed many years, and no one could deliver him. Then a King's daughter came into the forest, who had lost herself, and could not find her father's kingdom again. After she had wandered about for nine days, she at length came to the iron stove. Then a voice came forth from it, and asked her, "Whence comest thou, and whither goest, thou?" She answered, "I have lost my father's kingdom, and cannot get home again." Then a voice inside the iron stove said, "I will help thee to get home again, and that indeed most swiftly, if thou wilt promise to do what I desire of thee. I am the son of a far greater King than thy father, and I will marry thee."

Then was she afraid, and thought, "Good heavens! What can I do with an iron stove?" But as she much wished to get home to her father, she promised to do as he desired. But he said, "Thou shalt return here, and bring a knife with thee, and scrape a hole in the iron." Then he gave her a companion who walked near her, but did not speak, but in two hours he took her home; there was great joy in the castle when the King's daughter came home, and the old King fell on her neck and kissed her. She, however, was sorely troubled, and said, "Dear father, what I have suffered! I should never have got home again from the great wild forest, if I had not come to an iron stove, but I have been forced to give my word that I will go back to it, set it free, and marry it." Then the old King was so terrified that he all but fainted, for he had but this one daughter. They therefore resolved they would send, in her place, the miller's daughter, who was very beautiful. They took her there, gave her a knife, and said she was to scrape at the iron stove. So she scraped at it for four-and-twenty hours, but could not bring off the least morsel of it. When day dawned, a voice in the stove said, "It seems to me it is day outside." Then she answered, "It seems so to me too; I fancy I hear the noise of my father's mill."

"So thou art a miller's daughter! Then go thy way at once, and let the King's daughter come here." Then she went away at once, and told the old King that the man outside there, would have none of her he wanted the King's daughter. They, however, still had a swine-herd's daughter, who was even prettier than the miller's daughter, and they determined to give her a piece of gold to go to the iron stove instead of the King's daughter. So she was taken thither, and she also had to scrape for four-and-twenty hours. She, however, made nothing of it. When day broke, a voice inside the stove cried, "It seems to me it is day outside!" Then answered she, "So it seems to me also; I fancy I hear my father's horn blowing."

"Then thou art a swine-herd's daughter! Go away at once, and tell the King's daughter to come, and tell her all must be done as promised, and if she does not come, everything in the kingdom shall be ruined and destroyed, and not one stone be left standing on another." When the King's daughter heard that she began to weep, but now there was nothing for it but to keep her promise. So she took leave of her father, put a knife in her pocket, and went forth to the iron stove in the forest. When she got there, she began to scrape, and the iron gave way, and when two hours were over, she had already scraped a small hole. Then she peeped in, and saw a youth so handsome, and so brilliant with gold and with precious jewels, that her very soul was delighted. Now, therefore, she went on scraping, and made the hole so large that he was able to get out. Then said he, “Thou art mine, and I am thine; thou art my bride, and hast released me.” He wanted to take her away with him to his kingdom, but she entreated him to let her go once again to her father, and the King’s son allowed her to do so, but she was not to say more to her father than three words, and then she was to come back again. So she went home, but she spoke more than three words, and instantly the iron stove disappeared, and was taken far away over glass mountains and piercing swords; but the King’s son was set free, and no longer shut up in it. After this she bade good-bye to her father, took some money with her, but not much, and went back to the great forest, and looked for the iron stove, but it was nowhere to be found. For nine days she sought it, and then her hunger grew so great that she did not know what to do, for she could no longer live. When it was evening, she seated herself in a small tree, and made up her mind to spend the night there, as she was afraid of wild beasts. When midnight drew near she saw in the distance a small light, and thought, “Ah, there I should be saved!” She got down from the tree, and went towards the light, but on the way she prayed. Then she came to a little old house, and much grass had grown all about it, and a small heap of wood lay in front of it. She thought, “Ah, whither have I come,” and peeped in through the window, but she saw nothing inside but toads, big and little, except a table well covered with wine and roast meat, and the plates and glasses were of silver. Then she took courage, and knocked at the door. The fat toad cried,

“Little green waiting-maid,
Waiting-maid with the limping leg,
Little dog of the limping leg,
Hop hither and thither,

And quickly see who is without:”

and a small toad came walking by and opened the door to her. When she entered, they all bade her welcome, and she was forced to sit down. They asked, “Where hast thou come from, and whither art thou going?” Then she related all that had befallen her, and how because she had transgressed the order which had been given her not to say more than three words, the stove, and the King’s son also, had disappeared, and now she was about to seek him over hill and dale until she found him. Then the old fat one said,

“Little green waiting-maid,
Waiting-maid with the limping leg,
Little dog of the limping leg,
Hop hither and thither,

And bring me the great box.”

Then the little one went and brought the box. After this they gave her meat and drink, and took her to a well-made bed, which felt like silk and velvet, and she laid herself therein, in God’s name, and slept. When morning came she arose, and the old toad gave her three needles out of the great box which she was to take with her; they would be needed by her, for she had to cross a high glass mountain, and go over three piercing swords and a great lake. If she did all this she would get her lover back again. Then she gave her three things, which she was to take the greatest care of, namely, three large needles, a plough-wheel, and three nuts. With these she travelled onwards, and when she came to the glass mountain which was so slippery, she stuck the three needles first behind her feet and then before them, and so got over it, and when she was over it, she hid them in a place which she marked carefully. After this she came to the three piercing swords, and then she seated herself on her plough-wheel, and rolled over them. At last she arrived in front of a great lake, and when she had crossed it, she came to a large and beautiful castle. She went and asked for a place; she was a poor girl, she said, and would like to be hired. She knew, however, that the King’s son whom she had released from the iron stove in the great forest was in the castle. Then she was taken as a scullery-maid at low wages. But, already the King’s son had another maiden by his side whom he wanted to marry, for he thought that she had long been dead.

In the evening, when she had washed up and was done, she felt in her pocket and found the three nuts which the old toad had given her. She cracked one with her teeth, and was going to eat the kernel when lo and behold there was a stately royal garment in it! But when the bride heard of this she came and asked for the dress, and wanted to buy it, and said, “It is not a dress for a servant-girl.” But she said no, she would not sell it, but if the bride would grant her one thing she should have it, and that was, leave to sleep one night in her bridegroom’s chamber. The bride gave her permission because the dress was so pretty, and she had never had one like it. When it was evening she said to her bridegroom, “That silly girl will sleep in thy room.” “If thou art willing so am I,” said he. She, however, gave him a glass of wine in which she had poured a sleeping-draught. So the bridegroom and the scullery-maid went to sleep in the room, and he slept so soundly that she could not waken him.

She wept the whole night and cried, “I set thee free when thou wert in an iron stove in the wild forest, I sought thee, and walked over a glass mountain, and three sharp swords, and a great lake before I found thee, and yet thou wilt not hear me!”

The servants sat by the chamber-door, and heard how she thus wept the whole night through, and in the morning they told it to their lord. And the next evening when she had washed up, she opened the second nut, and a far more beautiful dress was within it, and when the bride beheld it, she wished to buy that also. But the girl would not take money, and begged that she might once again sleep in the bridegroom's chamber. The bride, however, gave him a sleeping-drink, and he slept so soundly that he could hear nothing. But the scullery-maid wept the whole night long, and cried, "I set thee free when thou wert in an iron stove in the wild forest, I sought thee, and walked over a glass mountain, and over three sharp swords and a great lake before I found thee, and yet thou wilt not hear me!" The servants sat by the chamber-door and heard her weeping the whole night through, and in the morning informed their lord of it. And on the third evening, when she had washed up, she opened the third nut, and within it was a still more beautiful dress which was stiff with pure gold. When the bride saw that she wanted to have it, but the maiden only gave it up on condition that she might for the third time sleep in the bridegroom's apartment. The King's son was, however, on his guard, and threw the sleeping-draught away. Now, therefore, when she began to weep and to cry, "Dearest love, I set thee free when thou wert in the iron stove in the terrible wild forest," the King's son leapt up and said, "Thou art the true one, thou art mine, and I am thine." Thereupon, while it was still night, he got into a carriage with her, and they took away the false bride's clothes so that she could not get up. When they came to the great lake, they sailed across it, and when they reached the three sharp-cutting swords they seated themselves on the plough-wheel, and when they got to the glass mountain they thrust the three needles in it, and so at length they got to the little old house; but when they went inside that, it was a great castle, and the toads were all disenchanted, and were King's children, and full of happiness. Then the wedding was celebrated, and the King's son and the princess remained in the castle, which was much larger than the castles of their fathers. As, however, the old King grieved at being left alone, they fetched him away, and brought him to live with them, and they had two kingdoms, and lived in happy wedlock.

A mouse did run,
This story is done.

The Lazy Spinner

In a certain village there once lived a man and his wife, and the wife was so idle that she would never work at anything; whatever her husband gave her to spin, she did not get done, and what she did spin she did not wind, but let it all remain entangled in a heap. If the man scolded her, she was always ready with her tongue, and said, “Well, how should I wind it, when I have no reel? Just you go into the forest and get me one.” “If that is all,” said the man, “then I will go into the forest, and get some wood for making reels.” Then the woman was afraid that if he had the wood he would make her a reel of it, and she would have to wind her yarn off, and then begin to spin again. She bethought herself a little, and then a lucky idea occurred to her, and she secretly followed the man into the forest, and when he had climbed into a tree to choose and cut the wood, she crept into the thicket below where he could not see her, and cried,

“He who cuts wood for reels shall die,
And he who winds, shall perish.”

The man listened, laid down his axe for a moment, and began to consider what that could mean. “Hollo,” he said at last, “what can that have been; my ears must have been singing, I won’t alarm myself for nothing.” So he again seized the axe, and began to hew, then again there came a cry from below:

“He who cuts wood for reels shall die,
And he who winds, shall perish.”

He stopped, and felt afraid and alarmed, and pondered over the circumstance. But when a few moments had passed, he took heart again, and a third time he stretched out his hand for the axe, and began to cut. But some one called out a third time, and said loudly,

“He who cuts wood for reels shall die,
And he who winds, shall perish.”

That was enough for him, and all inclination had departed from him, so he hastily descended the tree, and set out on his way home. The woman ran as fast as she could by by-ways so as to get home first. So when he entered the parlour, she put on an innocent look as if nothing had happened, and said, “Well, have you brought a nice piece of wood for reels?” “No,” said he, “I see very well that winding won’t do,” and told her what had happened to him in the forest, and from that time forth left her in peace about it. Neverthless after some time, the man again began to complain of the disorder in the house. “Wife,” said he, “it is really a shame that the spun yarn should lie there all entangled!” “I’ll tell you what,” said she, “as we still don’t come by any reel, go you up into the loft, and I will stand down below, and will throw the yarn up to you, and you will throw it down to me, and so we shall get a skein after all.” “Yes, that will do,” said the man. So they did that, and when it was done, he said, “The yarn is in skeins, now it must be boiled.” The woman was again distressed; She certainly said, “Yes, we will boil it next morning early.” but she was secretly contriving another trick.

Early in the morning she got up, lighted a fire, and put the kettle on, only instead of the yarn, she put in a lump of tow, and let it boil. After that she went to the man who was still lying in bed, and said to him, “I must just go out, you must get up and look after the yarn which is in the kettle on the fire, but you must be at hand at once; mind that, for if the cock should happen to crow, and you are not attending to the yarn, it will become tow.” The man was willing and took good care not to loiter. He got up as quickly as he could, and went into the kitchen. But when he reached the kettle and peeped in, he saw, to his horror, nothing but a lump of tow. Then the poor man was as still as a mouse, thinking he had neglected it, and was to blame, and in future said no more about yarn and spinning. But you yourself must own she was an odious woman!

The Four Skilful Brothers

There was once a poor man who had four sons, and when they were grown up, he said to them, “My dear children, you must now go out into the world, for I have nothing to give you, so set out, and go to some distance and learn a trade, and see how you can make your way.” So the four brothers took their sticks, bade their father farewell, and went through the town-gate together. When they had travelled about for some time, they came to a cross-way which branched off in four different directions. Then said the eldest, “Here we must separate, but on this day four years, we will meet each other again at this spot, and in the meantime we will seek our fortunes.”

Then each of them went his way, and the eldest met a man who asked him where he was going, and what he was intending to do? “I want to learn a trade,” he replied. Then the other said, “Come with me, and be a thief.” “No,” he answered, “that is no longer regarded as a reputable trade, and the end of it is that one has to swing on the gallows.” “Oh,” said the man, “you need not be afraid of the gallows; I will only teach you to get such things as no other man could ever lay hold of, and no one will ever detect you.” So he allowed himself to be talked into it, and while with the man became an accomplished thief, and so dexterous that nothing was safe from him, if he once desired to have it. The second brother met a man who put the same question to him what he wanted to learn in the world. “I don’t know yet,” he replied. “Then come with me, and be an astronomer; there is nothing better than that, for nothing is hid from you.” He liked the idea, and became such a skillful astronomer that when he had learnt everything, and was about to travel onwards, his master gave him a telescope and said to him, “With that you canst thou see whatsoever takes place either on earth or in heaven, and nothing can remain concealed from thee.” A huntsman took the third brother into training, and gave him such excellent instruction in everything which related to huntsmanship, that he became an experienced hunter. When he went away, his master gave him a gun and said, “It will never fail you; whatsoever you aim at, you are certain to hit.” The youngest brother also met a man who spoke to him, and inquired what his intentions were. “Would you not like to be a tailor?” said he. “Not that I know of,” said the youth; “sitting doubled up from morning till night, driving the needle and the goose backwards and forwards, is not to my taste.” “Oh, but you are speaking in ignorance,” answered the man; “with me you would learn a very different kind of tailoring, which is respectable and proper, and for the most part very honorable.” So he let himself be persuaded, and went with the man, and learnt his art from the very beginning. When they parted, the man gave the youth a needle, and said, “With this you can sew together whatever is given you, whether it is as soft as an egg or as hard as steel; and it will all become one piece of stuff, so that no seam will be visible.”

When the appointed four years were over, the four brothers arrived at the same time at the cross-roads, embraced and kissed each other, and returned home to their father. “So now,” said he, quite delighted, “the wind has blown you back again to me.” They told him of all that had happened to them, and that each had learnt his own trade. Now they were sitting just in front of the house under a large tree, and the father said, “I will put you all to the test, and see what you can do.” Then he looked up and said to his second son, “Between two branches up at the top of this tree, there is a chaffinch’s nest, tell me how many eggs there are in it?” The astronomer took his glass, looked up, and said, “There are five.” Then the father said to the eldest, “Fetch the eggs down without disturbing the bird which is sitting hatching them.” The skillful thief climbed up, and took the five eggs from beneath the bird, which never observed what he was doing, and remained quietly sitting where she was, and brought them down to his father. The father took them, and put one of them on each corner of the table, and the fifth in the middle, and said to the huntsman, “With one shot thou shalt shoot me the five eggs in two, through the middle.” The huntsman aimed, and shot the eggs, all five as the father had desired, and that at one shot. He certainly must have had some of the powder for shooting round corners. “Now it’s your turn,” said the father to the fourth son; “you shall sew the eggs together again, and the young birds that are inside them as well, and you must do it so that they are not hurt by the shot.” The tailor brought his needle, and sewed them as his father wished. When he had done this the thief had to climb up the tree again, and carry them to the nest, and put them back again under the bird without her being aware of it. The bird sat her full time, and after a few days the young ones crept out, and they had a red line round their necks where they had been sewn together by the tailor.

“Well,” said the old man to his sons, “I begin to think you are worth more than breen clover; you have used your time well, and learnt something good. I can’t say which of you deserves the most praise. That will be proved if you have but an early opportunity of using your talents.” Not long after this, there was a great uproar in the country, for the King’s daughter was carried off by a dragon. The King was full of trouble about it, both by day and night, and caused it to be proclaimed that whosoever brought her back should have her to wife. The four brothers said to each other, “This would be a fine opportunity for us to show what we can do!” and resolved to go forth together and liberate the King’s daughter. “I will soon know where she is,” said the astronomer, and looked through his telescope and said, “I see her already, she is far away from here on a rock in the sea, and the dragon is beside her watching her.” Then he went to the King, and asked for a ship for himself and his brothers, and sailed with them over the sea until they came to the rock. There the King’s daughter was sitting, and the dragon was lying asleep on her lap. The huntsman said, “I dare not fire, I should kill the beautiful maiden at the same time.” “Then I will try my art,” said the thief, and he crept thither and stole her away from under the dragon, so quietly and dexterously, that the monster never remarked it, but went on snoring. Full of joy, they hurried off with her on board ship, and steered out into the open sea; but the dragon, who when he awoke had found no princess there, followed them, and came snorting angrily through the air. Just as he was circling above the ship, and about to descend on it, the huntsman shouldered his gun, and shot him to the heart. The monster fell down dead, but was so large and powerful that his fall shattered the whole ship. Fortunately, however, they laid hold of a couple of planks, and swam about the wide sea. Then again they were in great peril, but the tailor, who was not idle, took his wondrous needle, and with a few stitches sewed the planks together, and they seated themselves upon them, and collected together all the fragments of the vessel. Then he sewed these so skilfully together, that in a very short time the ship was once more seaworthy, and they could go home again in safety.

When the King once more saw his daughter, there were great rejoicings. He said to the four brothers, “One of you shall have her to wife, but which of you it is to be you must settle among yourselves.” Then a warm contest arose among them, for each of them preferred his own claim. The astronomer said, “If I had not seen the princess, all your arts would have been useless, so she is mine.” The thief said, “What would have been the use of your seeing, if I had not got her away from the dragon? so she is mine.” The huntsman said, “You and the princess, and all of you, would have been torn to pieces by the dragon if my ball had not hit him, so she is mine.” The tailor said, “And if I, by my art, had not sewn the ship together again, you would all of you have been miserably drowned, so she is mine.” Then the King uttered this saying, “Each of you has an equal right, and as all of you cannot have the maiden, none of you shall have her, but I will give to each of you, as a reward, half a kingdom.” The brothers were pleased with this decision, and said, “It is better thus than that we should be at variance with each other.” Then each of them received half a kingdom, and they lived with their father in the greatest happiness as long as it pleased God.

One-eye, Two-eyes, and Three-eyes

THERE was once a woman who had three daughters, the eldest of whom was called One-eye, because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead, and the second, Two-eyes, because she had two eyes like other folks, and the youngest, Three-eyes, because she had three eyes; and her third eye was also in the centre of her forehead. However, as Two-eyes saw just as other human beings did, her sisters and her mother could not endure her. They said to her, “Thou, with thy two eyes, art no better than the common people; thou dost not belong to us!” They pushed her about, and threw old clothes to her, and gave her nothing to eat but what they left, and did everything that they could to make her unhappy. It came to pass that Two-eyes had to go out into the fields and tend the goat, but she was still quite hungry, because her sisters had given her so little to eat. So she sat down on a ridge and began to weep, and so bitterly that two streams ran down from her eyes. And once when she looked up in her grief, a woman was standing beside her, who said, “Why art thou weeping, little Two-eyes?” Two-Eyes answered, “Have I not reason to weep, when I have two eyes like other people, and my sisters and mother hate me for it, and push me from one corner to another, throw old clothes at me, and give me nothing to eat but the scraps they leave? To-day they have given me so little that I am still quite hungry.” Then the wise woman said, “Wipe away thy tears, Two-eyes, and I will tell thee something to stop thee ever suffering from hunger again; just say to thy goat,

“Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,”

and then a clean well-spread little table will stand before thee, with the most delicious food upon it of which thou mayst eat as much as thou art inclined for, and when thou hast had enough, and hast no more need of the little table, just say,

“Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,”

and then it will vanish again from thy sight.” Hereupon the wise woman departed. But Two-eyes thought, “I must instantly make a trial, and see if what she said is true, for I am far too hungry,” and she said,

“Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,”

and scarcely had she spoken the words than a little table, covered with a white cloth, was standing there, and on it was a plate with a knife and fork, and a silver spoon; and the most delicious food was there also, warm and smoking as if it had just come out of the kitchen. Then Two-eyes said the shortest prayer she knew, “Lord God, be with us always, Amen,” and helped herself to some food, and enjoyed it. And when she was satisfied, she said, as the wise woman had taught her,

“Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,”

and immediately the little table and everything on it was gone again. “That is a delightful way of keeping house!” thought Two-eyes, and was quite glad and happy.

In the evening, when she went home with her goat, she found a small earthenware dish with some food, which her sisters had set ready for her, but she did not touch it. Next day she again went out with her goat, and left the few bits of broken bread which had been handed to her, lying untouched. The first and second time that she did this, her sisters did not remark it at all, but as it happened every time, they did observe it, and said, “There is something wrong about Two-eyes, she always leaves her food untasted, and she used to eat up everything that was given her; she must have discovered other ways of getting food.” In order that they might learn the truth, they resolved to send One-eye with Two-eyes when she went to drive her goat to the pasture, to observe what Two-eyes did when she was there, and whether any one brought her anything to eat and drink. So when Two-eyes set out the next time, One-eye went to her and said, “I will go with you to the pasture, and see that the goat is well taken care of, and driven where there is food.” But Two-eyes knew what was in One-eye’s mind, and drove the goat into high grass and said, “Come, One-eye, we will sit down, and I will sing something to you.” One-eye sat down and was tired with the unaccustomed walk and the heat of the sun, and Two-eyes sang constantly,

“One eye, wakest thou?
One eye, sleepest thou?”

until One-eye shut her one eye, and fell asleep, and as soon as Two-eyes saw that One-eye was fast asleep, and could discover nothing, she said,

“Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,”

and seated herself at her table, and ate and drank until she was satisfied, and then she again cried,

“Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,”

and in an instant all was gone. Two-eyes now awakened One-eye, and said, “One-eye, you want to take care of the goat, and go to sleep while you are doing it, and in the meantime the goat might run all over the world. Come, let us go home again." So they went home, and again Two-eyes let her little dish stand untouched, and One-eye could not tell her mother why she would not eat it, and to excuse herself said, "I fell asleep when I was out."

Next day the mother said to Three-eyes, "This time thou shalt go and observe if Two-eyes eats anything when she is out, and if any one fetches her food and drink, for she must eat and drink in secret." So Three-eyes went to Two-eyes, and said, "I will go with you and see if the goat is taken proper care of, and driven where there is food." But Two-eyes knew what was in Three-eyes' mind, and drove the goat into high grass and said, "We will sit down, and I will sing something to you, Three-eyes." Three-eyes sat down and was tired with the walk and with the heat of the sun, and Two-eyes began the same song as before, and sang,

"Three eyes, are you waking?"

but then, instead of singing,

"Three eyes, are you sleeping?"

as she ought to have done, she thoughtlessly sang,

"Two eyes, are you sleeping?"

and sang all the time,

"Three eyes, are you waking?
Two eyes, are you sleeping?"

Then two of the eyes which Three-eyes had, shut and fell asleep, but the third, as it had not been named in the song, did not sleep. It is true that Three-eyes shut it, but only in her cunning, to pretend it was asleep too, but it blinked, and could see everything very well. And when Two-eyes thought that Three-eyes was fast asleep, she used her little charm,

"Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,"

and ate and drank as much as her heart desired, and then ordered the table to go away again,

"Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,"

and Three-eyes had seen everything. Then Two-eyes came to her, waked her and said, "Have you been asleep, Three-eyes? You are a good care-taker! Come, we will go home." And when they got home, Two-eyes again did not eat, and Three-eyes said to the mother, "Now, I know why that high-minded thing there does not eat. When she is out, she says to the goat,

"Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,"

and then a little table appears before her covered with the best of food, much better than any we have here, and when she has eaten all she wants, she says,

“Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,”

and all disappears. I watched everything closely. She put two of my eyes to sleep by using a certain form of words, but luckily the one in my forehead kept awake.” Then the envious mother cried, “Dost thou want to fare better than we do? The desire shall pass away,” and she fetched a butcher’s knife, and thrust it into the heart of the goat, which fell down dead.

When Two-eyes saw that, she went out full of trouble, seated herself on the ridge of grass at the edge of the field, and wept bitter tears. Suddenly the wise woman once more stood by her side, and said, “Two-eyes, why art thou weeping?” “Have I not reason to weep?” she answered. “The goat which covered the table for me every day when I spoke your charm, has been killed by my mother, and now I shall again have to bear hunger and want.” The wise woman said, “Two-eyes, I will give thee a piece of good advice; ask thy sisters to give thee the entrails of the slaughtered goat, and bury them in the ground in front of the house, and thy fortune will be made.” Then she vanished, and Two-eyes went home and said to her sisters, “Dear sisters, do give me some part of my goat; I don’t wish for what is good, but give me the entrails.” Then they laughed and said, “If that’s all you want, you can have it.” So Two-eyes took the entrails and buried them quietly in the evening, in front of the house-door, as the wise woman had counselled her to do.

Next morning, when they all awoke, and went to the house-door, there stood a strangely magnificent tree with leaves of silver, and fruit of gold hanging among them, so that in all the wide world there was nothing more beautiful or precious. They did not know how the tree could have come there during the night, but Two-eyes saw that it had grown up out of the entrails of the goat, for it was standing on the exact spot where she had buried them. Then the mother said to One-eye, “Climb up, my child, and gather some of the fruit of the tree for us.” One-eye climbed up, but when she was about to get hold of one of the golden apples, the branch escaped from her hands, and that happened each time, so that she could not pluck a single apple, let her do what she might. Then said the mother, “Three-eyes, do you climb up; you with your three eyes can look about you better than One-eye.” One-eye slipped down, and Three-eyes climbed up. Three-eyes was not more skilful, and might search as she liked, but the golden apples always escaped her. At length the mother grew impatient, and climbed up herself, but could get hold of the fruit no better than One-eye and Three-eyes, for she always clutched empty air. Then said Two-eyes, “I will just go up, perhaps I may succeed better.” The sisters cried, “You indeed, with your two eyes, what can you do?” But Two-eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did get out of her way, but came into her hand of their own accord, so that she could pluck them one after the other, and brought a whole apronful down with her. The mother took them away from her, and instead of treating poor Two-eyes any better for this, she and One-eye and Three-eyes were only envious, because Two-eyes alone had been able to get the fruit, and they treated her still more cruelly.

It so befell that once when they were all standing together by the tree, a young knight came up. “Quick, Two-eyes,” cried the two sisters, “creep under this, and don’t disgrace us!” and with all speed they turned an empty barrel which was standing close by the tree over poor Two-eyes, and they pushed the golden apples which she had been gathering, under it too. When the knight came nearer he was a handsome lord, who stopped and admired the magnificent gold and silver tree, and said to the two sisters, “To whom does this fine tree belong? Any one who would bestow one branch of it on me might in return for it ask whatsoever he desired.” Then One-eye and Three-eyes replied that the tree belonged to them, and that they would give him a branch. They both took great trouble, but they were not able to do it, for the branches and fruit both moved away from them every time. Then said the knight, “It is very strange that the tree should belong to you, and that you should still not be able to break a piece off.” They again asserted that the tree was their property. Whilst they were saying so, Two-eyes rolled out a couple of golden apples from under the barrel to the feet of the knight, for she was vexed with One-eye and Three-eyes, for not speaking the truth. When the knight saw the apples he was astonished, and asked where they came from. One-eye and Three-eyes answered that they had another sister, who was not allowed to show herself, for she had only two eyes like any common person. The knight, however, desired to see her, and cried, “Two-eyes, come forth.” Then Two-eyes, quite comforted, came from beneath the barrel, and the knight was surprised at her great beauty, and said, “Thou, Two-eyes, canst certainly break off a branch from the tree for me.” “Yes,” replied Two-eyes, “that I certainly shall be able to do, for the tree belongs to me.” And she climbed up, and with the greatest ease broke off a branch with beautiful silver leaves and golden fruit, and gave it to the knight. Then said the knight, “Two-eyes, what shall I give thee for it?” “Alas!” answered Two-eyes, “I suffer from hunger and thirst, grief and want, from early morning till late night; if you would take me with you, and deliver me from these things, I should be happy.” So the knight lifted Two-eyes on to his horse, and took her home with him to his father’s castle, and there he gave her beautiful clothes, and meat and drink to her heart’s content, and as he loved her so much he married her, and the wedding was solemnized with great rejoicing. When Two-eyes was thus carried away by the handsome knight, her two sisters grudged her good fortune in downright earnest. “The wonderful tree, however, still remains with us,” thought they, “and even if we can gather no fruit from it, still every one will stand still and look at it, and come to us and admire it. Who knows what good things may be in store for us?” But next morning, the tree had vanished, and all their hopes were at an end. And when Two-eyes looked out of the window of her own little room, to her great delight it was standing in front of it, and so it had followed her.

Two-eyes lived a long time in happiness. Once two poor women came to her in her castle, and begged for alms. She looked in their faces, and recognized her sisters, One-eye, and Three-eyes, who had fallen into such poverty that they had to wander about and beg their bread from door to door. Two-eyes, however, made them welcome, and was kind to them, and took care of them, so that they both with all their hearts repented the evil that they had done their sister in their youth.

Fair Katrinelje and Pif-Paf-Poltrie

"Good-day, Father Hollenthe." "Many thanks, Pif-paf-poltrie." "May I be allowed to have your daughter?" "Oh, yes, if Mother Malcho (Milch-cow), Brother High-and-Mighty, Sister Käsetraut, and fair Katrinelje are willing, you can have her."

"Where is Mother Malcho, then?" "She is in the cow-house, milking the cow."

"Good-day, Mother Malcho." "Many thanks, Pif-paf-poltrie." "May I be allowed to have your daughter?" "Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Brother High-and-Mighty, Sister Käsetraut, and fair Katrinelje are willing, you can have her." "Where is Brother High-and-Mighty, then?" "He is in the room chopping some wood." "Good-day, Brother High-and-Mighty." "Many thanks, Pif-paf-poltrie." "May I be allowed to have your sister?" "Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Sister Käsetraut, and fair Katrinelje are willing, you can have her." "Where is Sister Käsetraut, then?" "She is in the garden cutting cabbages." "Good-day, sister Käsetraut." "Many thanks, Pif-paf-poltrie." "May I be allowed to have your sister?" "Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Brother High-and- Mighty, and fair Katrinelje are willing, you may have her." "Where is fair Katrinelje, then?" "She is in the room counting out her farthings." "Good day, fair Katrinelje." "Many thanks, Pif-paf-poltrie." "Wilt thou be my bride?" "Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Brother High-and-Mighty, and Sister Käsetraut are willing, I am ready."

"Fair Katrinelje, how much dowry do hast thou?" "Fourteen farthings in ready money, three and a half groschen owing to me, half a pound of dried apples, a handful of fried bread, and a handful of spices.

And many other things are mine,
Have I not a dowry fine?

"Pif-paf-poltrie, what is thy trade? Art thou a tailor?" "Something better." "A shoemaker?" "Something better." "A husbandman?" "Something better." "A joiner?" "Something better." "A smith?" "Something better." "A miller?" "Something better." "Perhaps a broom-maker?" "Yes, that's what I am, is it not a fine trade?"

The Fox and the Horse

A peasant had a faithful horse which had grown old and could do no more work, so his master would no longer give him anything to eat and said, “I can certainly make no more use of thee, but still I mean well by thee; if thou provest thyself still strong enough to bring me a lion here, I will maintain thee, but now take thyself away out of my stable,” and with that he chased him into the open country. The horse was sad, and went to the forest to seek a little protection there from the weather. Then the fox met him and said, “Why dost thou hang thy head so, and go about all alone?” “Alas,” replied the horse, “avarice and fidelity do not dwell together in one house. My master has forgotten what services I have performed for him for so many years, and because I can no longer plough well, he will give me no more food, and has driven me out.” “Without giving thee a chance?” asked the fox. “The chance was a bad one. He said, if I were still strong enough to bring him a lion, he would keep me, but he well knows that I cannot do that.” The fox said, “I will help thee, just lay thyself down, stretch thyself out, as if thou wert dead, and do not stir.” The horse did as the fox desired, and the fox went to the lion, who had his den not far off, and said, “A dead horse is lying outside there, just come with me, thou canst have a rich meal.” The lion went with him, and when they were both standing by the horse the fox said, “After all, it is not very comfortable for thee here I tell thee what I will fasten it to thee by the tail, and then thou canst drag it into thy cave, and devour it in peace.”

This advice pleased the lion: he lay down, and in order that the fox might tie the horse fast to him, he kept quite quiet. But the fox tied the lion’s legs together with the horse’s tail, and twisted and fastened all so well and so strongly that no strength could break it. When he had finished his work, he tapped the horse on the shoulder and said, “Pull, white horse, pull.” Then up sprang the horse at once, and drew the lion away with him. The lion began to roar so that all the birds in the forest flew out in terror, but the horse let him roar, and drew him and dragged him over the country to his master’s door. When the master saw the lion, he was of a better mind, and said to the horse, “Thou shalt stay with me and fare well,” and he gave him plenty to eat until he died.

The Shoes That Were Danced to Pieces

THERE was once upon a time a King who had twelve daughters, each one more beautiful than the other. They all slept together in one chamber, in which their beds stood side by side, and every night when they were in them the King locked the door, and bolted it. But in the morning when he unlocked the door, he saw that their shoes were worn out with dancing, and no one could find out how that had come to pass. Then the King caused it to be proclaimed that whosoever could discover where they danced at night, should choose one of them for his wife and be King after his death, but that whosoever came forward and had not discovered it within three days and nights, should have forfeited his life. It was not long before a King's son presented himself, and offered to undertake the enterprise. He was well received, and in the evening was led into a room adjoining the princesses' sleeping-chamber. His bed was placed there, and he was to observe where they went and danced, and in order that they might do nothing secretly or go away to some other place, the door of their room was left open.

But the eyelids of the prince grew heavy as lead, and he fell asleep, and when he awoke in the morning, all twelve had been to the dance, for their shoes were standing there with holes in the soles. On the second and third nights it fell out just the same, and then his head was struck off without mercy. Many others came after this and undertook the enterprise, but all forfeited their lives. Now it came to pass that a poor soldier, who had a wound, and could serve no longer, found himself on the road to the town where the King lived. There he met an old woman, who asked him where he was going. "I hardly know myself," answered he, and added in jest, "I had half a mind to discover where the princesses danced their shoes into holes, and thus become King." "That is not so difficult," said the old woman, "you must not drink the wine which will be brought to you at night, and must pretend to be sound asleep." With that she gave him a little cloak, and said, "If you put on that, you will be invisible, and then you can steal after the twelve." When the soldier had received this good advice, he went into the thing in earnest, took heart, went to the King, and announced himself as a suitor. He was as well received as the others, and royal garments were put upon him. He was conducted that evening at bed-time into the ante-chamber, and as he was about to go to bed, the eldest came and brought him a cup of wine, but he had tied a sponge under his chin, and let the wine run down into it, without drinking a drop. Then he lay down and when he had lain a while, he began to snore, as if in the deepest sleep. The twelve princesses heard that, and laughed, and the eldest said, "He, too, might as well have saved his life." With that they got up, opened wardrobes, presses, cupboards, and brought out pretty dresses; dressed themselves before the mirrors, sprang about, and rejoiced at the prospect of the dance. Only the youngest said, "I know not how it is; you are very happy, but I feel very strange; some misfortune is certainly about to befall us." "Thou art a goose, who art always frightened," said the eldest. "Hast thou forgotten how many Kings' sons have already come here in vain? I had hardly any need to give the soldier a sleeping-draught, in any case the clown would not have awakened." When they were all ready they looked carefully at the soldier, but he had closed his eyes and did not move or stir, so they felt themselves quite secure. The eldest then went to her bed and tapped it; it immediately sank into the earth, and one after the other they descended through the opening, the eldest going first. The soldier, who had watched everything, tarried no longer, put on his little cloak, and went down last with the youngest. Half-way down the steps, he just trod a little on her dress; she was terrified at that, and cried out, "What is that? who is pulling my dress?" "Don't be so silly!" said the eldest, "you have caught it on a nail." Then they went all the way down, and when they were at the bottom, they were standing in a wonderfully pretty avenue of trees, all the leaves of which were of silver, and shone and glistened. The soldier thought, "I must carry a token away with me," and broke off a twig from one of them, on which the tree cracked with a loud report. The youngest cried out again. "Something is wrong, did you hear the crack?" But the eldest said, "It is a gun fired for joy, because we have got rid of our prince so quickly." After that they came into an avenue where all the leaves were of gold, and lastly into a third where they were of bright diamonds; he broke off a twig from each, which made such a crack each time that the youngest started back in terror, but the eldest still maintained that they were salutes. They went on and came to a great lake whereon stood twelve little boats, and in every boat sat a handsome prince, all of whom were waiting for the twelve, and each took one of them with him, but the soldier seated himself by the youngest. Then her prince said, "I can't tell why the boat is so much heavier to-day; I shall have to row with all my strength, if I am to get it across." "What should cause that," said the youngest, "but the warm weather? I feel very warm too." On the opposite side of the lake stood a splendid, brightly-lit castle, from whence resounded the joyous music of trumpets and kettle-drums. They rowed over there, entered, and each prince danced with the girl he loved, but the soldier danced with them unseen, and when one of them had a cup of wine in her hand he drank it up, so that the cup was empty when she carried it to her mouth; the youngest was alarmed at this, but the eldest always made her be silent. They danced there till three o'clock in the morning when all the shoes were danced into holes, and they were forced to leave off; the princes rowed them back again over the lake, and this time the soldier seated himself by the eldest. On the shore they took leave of their princes, and promised to return the following night. When they reached the stairs the soldier ran on in front and lay down in his bed, and when the twelve had come up slowly and wearily, he was already snoring so loudly that they could all hear him, and they said, "So far as he is concerned, we are safe." They took off their beautiful dresses, laid them away, put the worn-out shoes under the bed, and lay down. Next morning the soldier was resolved not to speak, but to watch the wonderful goings on, and again went with them. Then everything was done just as it had been done the first time, and each time they danced until their shoes were worn to pieces. But the third time he took a cup away with him as a token. When the hour had arrived for him to give his answer, he took the three twigs and the cup, and went to the King, but the twelve stood behind the door, and listened for what he was going to say. When the King put the question, “Where have my twelve daughters danced their shoes to pieces in the night?” he answered, “In an underground castle with twelve princes,” and related how it had come to pass, and brought out the tokens. The King then summoned his daughters, and asked them if the soldier had told the truth, and when they saw that they were betrayed, and that falsehood would be of no avail, they were obliged to confess all. Thereupon the King asked which of them he would have to wife? He answered, “I am no longer young, so give me the eldest.” Then the wedding was celebrated on the self-same day, and the kingdom was promised him after the King’s death. But the princes were bewitched for as many days as they had danced nights with the twelve.

The Six Servants

IN former times there lived an aged Queen who was a sorceress, and her daughter was the most beautiful maiden under the sun. The old woman, however, had no other thought than how to lure mankind to destruction, and when a wooer appeared, she said that whosoever wished to have her daughter, must first perform a task, or die. Many had been dazzled by the daughter's beauty, and had actually risked this, but they never could accomplish what the old woman enjoined them to do, and then no mercy was shown; they had to kneel down, and their heads were struck off. A certain King's son who had also heard of the maiden's beauty, said to his father, "Let me go there, I want to demand her in marriage." "Never," answered the King; "if you were to go, it would be going to your death." On this the son lay down and was sick unto death, and for seven years he lay there, and no physician could heal him. When the father perceived that all hope was over, with a heavy heart he said to him, "Go thither, and try your luck, for I know no other means of curing you." When the son heard that, he rose from his bed and was well again, and joyfully set out on his way.

And it came to pass that as he was riding across a heath, he saw from afar something like a great heap of hay lying on the ground, and when he drew nearer, he could see that it was the stomach of a man, who had laid himself down there, but the stomach looked like a small mountain. When the fat man saw the traveller, he stood up and said, "If you are in need of any one, take me into your service." The prince answered, "What can I do with such a great big man?" "Oh," said the Stout One, "this is nothing, when I stretch myself out well, I am three thousand times fatter." "If that's the case," said the prince, "I can make use of thee, come with me." So the Stout One followed the prince, and after a while they found another man who was lying on the ground with his ear laid to the turf. "What art thou doing there?" asked the King's son. "I am listening," replied the man. "What art thou listening to so attentively?" "I am listening to what is just going on in the world, for nothing escapes my ears; I even hear the grass growing." "Tell me," said the prince, "what thou hearest at the court of the old Queen who has the beautiful daughter." Then he answered, "I hear the whizzing of the sword that is striking off a wooer's head." The King's son said, "I can make use of thee, come with me." They went onwards, and then saw a pair of feet lying and part of a pair of legs, but could not see the rest of the body. When they had walked on for a great distance, they came to the body, and at last to the head also. "Why," said the prince, "what a tall rascal thou art!" "Oh," replied the Tall One, "that is nothing at all yet; when I really stretch out my limbs, I am three thousand times as tall, and taller than the highest mountain on earth. I will gladly enter your service, if you will take me." "Come with me," said the prince, "I can make use of thee." They went onwards and found a man sitting by the road who had bound up his eyes. The prince said to him, "Hast thou weak eyes, that thou canst not look at the light?" "No," replied the man, "but I must not remove the bandage, for whatsoever I look at with my eyes, splits to pieces, my glance is so powerful. If you can use that, I shall be glad to serve you." "Come with me," replied the King's son, "I can make use of thee." They journeyed onwards and found a man who was lying in the hot sunshine, trembling and shivering all over his body, so that not a limb was still. "How canst thou shiver when the sun is shining so warm?" said the King's son. "Alack," replied the man, "I am of quite a different nature. The hotter it is, the colder I am, and the frost pierces through all my bones; and the colder it is, the hotter I am. In the midst of ice, I cannot endure the heat, nor in the midst of fire, the cold." "Thou art a strange fellow," said the prince, "but if thou wilt enter my service, follow me." They travelled onwards, and saw a man standing who made a long neck and looked about him, and could see over all the mountains. "What art thou looking at so eagerly?" said the King's son. The man replied, "I have such sharp eyes that I can see into every forest and field, and hill and valley, all over the world." The prince said, "Come with me if thou wilt, for I am still in want of such an one."

And now the King's son and his six servants came to the town where the aged Queen dwelt. He did not tell her who he was, but said, "If you will give me your beautiful daughter, I will perform any task you set me." The sorceress was delighted to get such a handsome youth as this into her net, and said, "I will set thee three tasks, and if thou art able to perform them all, thou shalt be husband and master of my daughter." "What is the first to be?" "Thou shalt fetch me my ring which I have dropped into the Red Sea." So the King's son went home to his servants and said, "The first task is not easy. A ring is to be got out of the Red Sea. Come, find some way of doing it." Then the man with the sharp sight said, "I will see where it is lying," and looked down into the water and said, "It is sticking there, on a pointed stone." The Tall One carried them thither, and said, "I would soon get it out, if I could only see it." "Oh, is that all!" cried the Stout One, and lay down and put his mouth to the water, on which all the waves fell into it just as if it had been a whirlpool, and he drank up the whole sea till it was as dry as a meadow. The Tall One stooped down a little, and brought out the ring with his hand. Then the King's son rejoiced when he had the ring, and took it to the old Queen. She was astonished, and said, "Yes, it is the right ring. Thou hast safely performed the first task, but now comes the second. Dost thou see the meadow in front of my palace? Three hundred fat oxen are feeding there, and these must thou eat, skin, hair, bones, horns and all, and down below in my cellar lie three hundred casks of wine, and these thou must drink up as well, and if one hair of the oxen, or one little drop of the wine is left, thy life will be forfeited to me." "May I invite no guests to this repast?" inquired the prince, "no dinner is good without some company." The old woman laughed maliciously, and replied, "Thou mayst invite one for the sake of companionship, but no more."

The King's son went to his servants and said to the Stout One, "Thou shalt be my guest to-day, and shalt eat thy fill." Hereupon the Stout One stretched himself out and ate the three hundred oxen without leaving one single hair, and then he asked if he was to have nothing but his breakfast. He drank the wine straight from the casks without feeling any need of a glass, and he licked the last drop from his finger-nails. When the meal was over, the prince went to the old woman, and told her that the second task also was performed. She wondered at this and said, “No one has ever done so much before, but one task still remains,” and she thought to herself, “Thou shalt not escape me, and wilt not keep thy head on thy shoulders! This night,” said she, “I will bring my daughter to thee in thy chamber, and thou shalt put thine arms round her, but when you are sitting there together, beware of falling asleep. When twelve o’clock is striking, I will come, and if she is then no longer in thine arms, thou art lost.” The prince thought, “The task is easy, I will most certainly keep my eyes open.” Nevertheless he called his servants, told them what the old woman had said, and remarked, “Who knows what treachery lurks behind this? Foresight is a good thing keep watch, and take care that the maiden does not go out of my room again.” When night fell, the old woman came with her daughter, and gave her into the princes’s arms, and then the Tall One wound himself round the two in a circle, and the Stout One placed himself by the door, so that no living creature could enter. There the two sat, and the maiden spake never a word, but the moon shone through the window on her face, and the prince could behold her wondrous beauty. He did nothing but gaze at her, and was filled with love and happiness, and his eyes never felt weary. This lasted until eleven o’clock, when the old woman cast such a spell over all of them that they fell asleep, and at the self-same moment the maiden was carried away.

Then they all slept soundly until a quarter to twelve, when the magic lost its power, and all awoke again. “Oh, misery and misfortune!” cried the prince, “now I am lost!” The faithful servants also began to lament, but the Listener said, “Be quiet, I want to listen.” Then he listened for an instant and said, “She is on a rock, three hundred leagues from hence, bewailing her fate. Thou alone, Tall One, canst help her; if thou wilt stand up, thou wilt be there in a couple of steps.”

“Yes,” answered the Tall One, “but the one with the sharp eyes must go with me, that we may destroy the rock.” Then the Tall One took the one with bandaged eyes on his back, and in the twinkling of an eye they were on the enchanted rock. The Tall One immediately took the bandage from the other’s eyes, and he did but look round, and the rock shivered into a thousand pieces. Then the Tall One took the maiden in his arms, carried her back in a second, then fetched his companion with the same rapidity, and before it struck twelve they were all sitting as they had sat before, quite merrily and happily. When twelve struck, the aged sorceress came stealing in with a malicious face, which seemed to say, “Now he is mine!” for she believed that her daughter was on the rock three hundred leagues off. But when she saw her in the prince’s arms, she was alarmed, and said, “Here is one who knows more than I do!” She dared not make any opposition, and was forced to give him her daughter. But she whispered in her ear, “It is a disgrace to thee to have to obey common people, and that thou art not allowed to choose a husband to thine own liking.”

On this the proud heart of the maiden was filled with anger, and she meditated revenge. Next morning she caused three hundred great bundles of wood to be got together, and said to the prince that though the three tasks were performed, she would still not be his wife until some one was ready to seat himself in the midst of the wood, and bear the fire. She thought that none of his servants would let themselves be burnt for him, and that out of love for her, he himself would place himself upon it, and then she would be free. But the servants said, “Every one of us has done something except the Frosty One, he must set to work,” and they put him in the middle of the pile, and set fire to it. Then the fire began to burn, and burnt for three days until all the wood was consumed, and when the flames had burnt out, the Frosty One was standing amid the ashes, trembling like an aspen leaf, and saying, “I never felt such a frost during the whole course of my life; if it had lasted much longer, I should have been benumbed!”

As no other pretext was to be found, the beautiful maiden was now forced to take the unknown youth as a husband. But when they drove away to church, the old woman said, “I cannot endure the disgrace,” and sent her warriors after them with orders to cut down all who opposed them, and bring back her daughter. But the Listener had sharpened his ears, and heard the secret discourse of the old woman. “What shall we do?” said he to the Stout One. But he knew what to do, and spat out once or twice behind the carriage some of the sea-water which he had drunk, and a great sea arose in which the warriors were caught and drowned. When the sorceress perceived that, she sent her mailed knights; but the Listener heard the rattling of their armour, and undid the bandage from one eye of Sharp-eyes, who looked for a while rather fixedly at the enemy’s troops, on which they all sprang to pieces like glass. Then the youth and the maiden went on their way undisturbed, and when the two had been blessed in church, the six servants took leave, and said to their master, “Your wishes are now satisfied, you need us no longer, we will go our way and seek our fortunes.”

Half a league from the palace of the prince’s father was a village near which a swineherd tended his herd, and when they came thither the prince said to his wife, “Do you know who I really am? I am no prince, but a herder of swine, and the man who is there with that herd, is my father. We two shall have to set to work also, and help him.” Then he alighted with her at the inn, and secretly told the innkeepers to take away her royal apparel during the night. So when she awoke in the morning, she had nothing to put on, and the innkeeper’s wife gave her an old gown and a pair of worsted stockings, and at the same time seemed to consider it a great present, and said, “If it were not for the sake of your husband I should have given you nothing at all!” Then the princess believed that he really was a swineherd, and tended the herd with him, and thought to herself, “I have deserved this for my haughtiness and pride.” This lasted for a week, and then she could endure it no longer, for she had sores on her feet. And now came a couple of people who asked if she knew who her husband was. “Yes,” she answered, “he is a swineherd, and has just gone out with cords and ropes to try to drive a little bargain.” But they said, “Just come with us, and we will take you to him,” and they took her up to the palace, and when she entered the hall, there stood her husband in kingly raiment. But she did not recognize him until he took her in his arms, kissed her, and said, “I suffered much for thee and now thou, too, hast had to suffer for me.” And then the wedding was celebrated, and he who has told you all this, wishes that he, too, had been present at it.

The White Bride and the Black One

A WOMAN was going about the unenclosed land with her daughter and her step-daughter cutting fodder, when the Lord came walking towards them in the form of a poor man, and asked, “Which is the way into the village?” “If you want to know,” said the mother, “seek it for yourself,” and the daughter added, “If you are afraid you will not find it, take a guide with you.” But the step-daughter said, “Poor man, I will take you there, come with me.” Then God was angry with the mother and daughter, and turned his back on them, and wished that they should become as black as night and as ugly as sin. To the poor step-daughter, however, God was gracious, and went with her, and when they were near the village, he said a blessing over her, and spake, “Choose three things for thyself, and I will grant them to thee.” Then said the maiden, “I should like to be as beautiful and fair as the sun,” and instantly she was white and fair as day. “Then I should like to have a purse of money which would never grow empty.” That the Lord gave her also, but he said, “Do not forget what is best of all.” Said she, “For my third wish, I desire, after my death, to inhabit the eternal kingdom of Heaven.” That also was granted unto her, and then the Lord left her. When the step-mother came home with her daughter, and they saw that they were both as black as coal and ugly, but that the step-daughter was white and beautiful, wickedness increased still more in their hearts, and they thought of nothing else but how they could do her an injury. The step-daughter, however, had a brother called Reginer, whom she loved much, and she told him all that had happened. Once on a time Reginer said to her, “Dear sister, I will take thy likeness, that I may continually see thee before mine eyes, for my love for thee is so great that I should like always to look at thee.” Then she answered, “But, I pray thee, let no one see the picture.” So he painted his sister and hung up the picture in his room; he, however, dwelt in the King’s palace, for he was his coachman. Every day he went and stood before the picture, and thanked God for the happiness of having such a dear sister. Now it happened that the King whom he served, had just lost his wife, who had been so beautiful that no one could be found to compare with her, and on this account the King was in deep grief. The attendants about the court, however, remarked that the coachman stood daily before this beautiful picture, and they were jealous of him, so they informed the King. Then the latter ordered the picture to be brought to him, and when he saw that it was like his lost wife in every respect, except that it was still more beautiful, he fell mortally in love with it. He caused the coachman to be brought before him, and asked whom the portrait represented? The coachman said it was his sister, so the King resolved to take no one but her as his wife, and gave him a carriage and horses and splendid garments of cloth of gold, and sent him forth to fetch his chosen bride. When Reginer came on this errand, his sister was glad, but the black maiden was jealous of her good fortune, and grew angry above all measure, and said to her mother, “Of what use are all your arts to us now when you cannot procure such a piece of luck for me?” “Be quiet,” said the old woman, “I will soon divert it to you,” and by her arts of witchcraft, she so troubled the eyes of the coachman that he was half-blind, and she stopped the ears of the white maiden so that she was half-deaf. Then they got into the carriage, first the bride in her noble royal apparel, then the step-mother with her daughter, and Reginer sat on the box to drive. When they had been on the way for some time the coachman cried,

“Cover thee well, my sister dear, That the rain may not wet thee, That the wind may not load thee with dust, That thou may’st be fair and beautiful When thou appearest before the King.”

The bride asked, “What is my dear brother saying?” “Ah,” said the old woman, “he says that you ought to take off your golden dress and give it to your sister.” Then she took it off, and put it on the black maiden, who gave her in exchange for it a shabby grey gown. They drove onwards, and a short time afterwards, the brother again cried,

“Cover thee well, my sister dear, That the rain may not wet thee, That the wind may not load thee with dust, That thou may’st be fair and beautiful When thou appearest before the King.”

The bride asked, “What is my dear brother saying?” “Ah,” said the old woman, “he says that you ought to take off your golden hood and give it to your sister.” So she took off the hood and put it on her sister, and sat with her own head uncovered. And they drove on farther. After a while, the brother once more cried,

“Cover thee well, my sister dear, That the rain may not wet thee, That the wind may not load thee with dust, That thou may’st be fair and beautiful When thou appearest before the King.”

The bride asked, “What is my dear brother saying?” “Ah,” said the old woman, “he says you must look out of the carriage.” They were, however, just on a bridge, which crossed deep water. When the bride stood up and leant forward out of the carriage, they both pushed her out, and she fell into the middle of the water. At the same moment that she sank, a snow-white duck arose out of the mirror-smooth water, and swam down the river. The brother had observed nothing of it, and drove the carriage on until they reached the court. Then he took the black maiden to the King as his sister, and thought she really was so, because his eyes were dim, and he saw the golden garments glittering. When the King saw the boundless ugliness of his intended bride, he was very angry, and ordered the coachman to be thrown into a pit which was full of adders and nests of snakes. The old witch, however, knew so well how to flatter the King and deceive his eyes by her arts, that he kept her and her daughter until she appeared quite endurable to him, and he really married her.

One evening when the black bride was sitting on the King’s knee, a white duck came swimming up the gutter to the kitchen, and said to the kitchen-boy, “Boy, light a fire, that I may warm my feathers.” The kitchen-boy did it, and lighted a fire on the hearth. Then came the duck and sat down by it, and shook herself and smoothed her feathers to rights with her bill. While she was thus sitting and enjoying herself, she asked, “What is my brother Reginer doing?” The scullery-boy replied, “He is imprisoned in the pit with adders and with snakes.” Then she asked, “What is the black witch doing in the house?” The boy answered, “She is loved by the King and happy.”

“May God have mercy on him,” said the duck, and swam forth by the sink.

The next night she came again and put the same questions, and the third night also. Then the kitchen-boy could bear it no longer, and went to the King and discovered all to him. The King, however, wanted to see it for himself, and next evening went thither, and when the duck thrust her head in through the sink, he took his sword and cut through her neck, and suddenly she changed into a most beautiful maiden, exactly like the picture, which her brother had made of her. The King was full of joy, and as she stood there quite wet, he caused splendid apparel to be brought and had her clothed in it. Then she told how she had been betrayed by cunning and falsehood, and at last thrown down into the water, and her first request was that her brother should be brought forth from the pit of snakes, and when the King had fulfilled this request, he went into the chamber where the old witch was, and asked, What does she deserve who does this and that? and related what had happened. Then was she so blinded that she was aware of nothing and said, “She deserves to be stripped naked, and put into a barrel with nails, and that a horse should be harnessed to the barrel, and the horse sent all over the world.” All of which was done to her, and to her black daughter. But the King married the white and beautiful bride, and rewarded her faithful brother, and made him a rich and distinguished man.

Iron John

THERE was once on a time a King who had a great forest near his palace, full of all kinds of wild animals. One day he sent out a huntsman to shoot him a roe, but he did not come back. “Perhaps some accident has befallen him,” said the King, and the next day he sent out two more huntsmen who were to search for him, but they too stayed away. Then on the third day, he sent for all his huntsmen, and said, “Scour the whole forest through, and do not give up until ye have found all three.” But of these also, none came home again, and of the pack of hounds which they had taken with them, none were seen more. From that time forth, no one would any longer venture into the forest, and it lay there in deep stillness and solitude, and nothing was seen of it, but sometimes an eagle or a hawk flying over it. This lasted for many years, when a strange huntsman announced himself to the King as seeking a situation, and offered to go into the dangerous forest. The King, however, would not give his consent, and said, “It is not safe in there; I fear it would fare with thee no better than with the others, and thou wouldst never come out again.” The huntsman replied, “Lord, I will venture it at my own risk, of fear I know nothing.”

The huntsman therefore betook himself with his dog to the forest. It was not long before the dog fell in with some game on the way, and wanted to pursue it; but hardly had the dog run two steps when it stood before a deep pool, could go no farther, and a naked arm stretched itself out of the water, seized it, and drew it under, When the huntsman saw that, he went back and fetched three men to come with buckets and bale out the water. When they could see to the bottom there lay a wild man whose body was brown like rusty iron, and whose hair hung over his face down to his knees. They bound him with cords, and led him away to the castle. There was great astonishment over the wild man; the King, however, had him put in an iron cage in his court-yard, and forbade the door to be opened on pain of death, and the Queen herself was to take the key into her keeping. And from this time forth every one could again go into the forest with safety.

The King had a son of eight years, who was once playing in the court-yard, and while he was playing, his golden ball fell into the cage. The boy ran thither and said, “Give me my ball out.” “Not till thou hast opened the door for me,” answered the man. “No,” said the boy, “I will not do that; the King has forbidden it,” and ran away. The next day he again went and asked for his ball; the wild man said, “Open my door,” but the boy would not. On the third day the King had ridden out hunting, and the boy went once more and said, “I cannot open the door even if I wished, for I have not the key.” Then the wild man said, “It lies under thy mother’s pillow, thou canst get it there.” The boy, who wanted to have his ball back, cast all thought to the winds, and brought the key. The door opened with difficulty, and the boy pinched his fingers. When it was open the wild man stepped out, gave him the golden ball, and hurried away. The boy had become afraid; he called and cried after him, “Oh, wild man, do not go away, or I shall be beaten!” The wild man turned back, took him up, set him on his shoulder, and went with hasty steps into the forest. When the King came home, he observed the empty cage, and asked the Queen how that had happened? She knew nothing about it, and sought the key, but it was gone. She called the boy, but no one answered. The King sent out people to seek for him in the fields, but they did not find him. Then he could easily guess what had happened, and much grief reigned in the royal court.

When the wild man had once more reached the dark forest, he took the boy down from his shoulder, and said to him, “Thou wilt never see thy father and mother again, but I will keep thee with me, for thou hast set me free, and I have compassion on thee. If thou dost all I bid thee, thou shalt fare well. Of treasure and gold have I enough, and more than anyone in the world.” He made a bed of moss for the boy on which he slept, and the next morning the man took him to a well, and said, “Behold, the gold well is as bright and clear as crystal, thou shalt sit beside it, and take care that nothing falls into it, or it will be polluted. I will come every evening to see if thou hast obeyed my order.” The boy placed himself by the margin of the well, and often saw a golden fish or a golden snake show itself therein, and took care that nothing fell in. As he was thus sitting, his finger hurt him so violently that he involuntarily put it in the water. He drew it quickly out again, but saw that it was quite gilded, and whatsoever pains he took to wash the gold off again, all was to no purpose. In the evening Iron John came back, looked at the boy, and said, “What has happened to the well?” “Nothing, nothing,” he answered, and held his finger behind his back, that the man might not see it. But he said, “Thou hast dipped thy finger into the water, this time it may pass, but take care thou dost not again let anything go in.” By daybreak the boy was already sitting by the well and watching it. His finger hurt him again and he passed it over his head, and then unhappily a hair fell down into the well. He took it quickly out, but it was already quite gilded. Iron John came, and already knew what had happened. “Thou hast let a hair fall into the well,” said he. “I will allow thee to watch by it once more, but if this happens for the third time then the well is polluted, and thou canst no longer remain with me.”

On the third day, the boy sat by the well, and did not stir his finger, however much it hurt him. But the time was long to him, and he looked at the reflection of his face on the surface of the water. And as he still bent down more and more while he was doing so, and trying to look straight into the eyes, his long hair fell down from his shoulders into the water. He raised himself up quickly, but the whole of the hair of his head was already golden and shone like the sun. You may imagine how terrified the poor boy was! He took his pocket-handkerchief and tied it round his head, in order that the man might not see it. When he came he already knew everything, and said, “Take the handkerchief off.” Then the golden hair streamed forth, and let the boy excuse himself as he might, it was of no use. “Thou hast not stood the trial, and canst stay here no longer. Go forth into the world, there thou wilt learn what poverty is. But as thou hast not a bad heart, and as I mean well by thee, there is one thing I will grant thee; if thou fallest into any difficulty, come to the forest and cry, ‘Iron John,’ and then I will come and help thee. My power is great, greater than thou thinkest, and I have gold and silver in abundance.”

Then the King’s son left the forest, and walked by beaten and unbeaten paths ever onwards until at length he reached a great city. There he looked for work, but could find none, and he had learnt nothing by which he could help himself. At length he went to the palace, and asked if they would take him in. The people about court did not at all know what use they could make of him, but they liked him, and told him to stay. At length the cook took him into his service, and said he might carry wood and water, and rake the cinders together. Once when it so happened that no one else was at hand, the cook ordered him to carry the food to the royal table, but as he did not like to let his golden hair be seen, he kept his little cap on. Such a thing as that had never yet come under the King’s notice, and he said, “When thou comest to the royal table thou must take thy hat off.” He answered, “Ah, Lord, I cannot; I have a bad sore place on my head.” Then the King had the cook called before him and scolded him, and asked how he could take such a boy as that into his service; and that he was to turn him off at once. The cook, however, had pity on him, and exchanged him for the gardener’s boy.

And now the boy had to plant and water the garden, hoe and dig, and bear the wind and bad weather. Once in summer when he was working alone in the garden, the day was so warm he took his little cap off that the air might cool him. As the sun shone on his hair it glittered and flashed so that the rays fell into the bed-room of the King’s daughter, and up she sprang to see what that could be. Then she saw the boy, and cried to him, “Boy, bring me a wreath of flowers.” He put his cap on with all haste, and gathered wild field-flowers and bound them together. When he was ascending the stairs with them, the gardener met him, and said, “How canst thou take the King’s daughter a garland of such common flowers? Go quickly, and get another, and seek out the prettiest and rarest.” “Oh, no,” replied the boy, “the wild ones have more scent, and will please her better.” When he got into the room, the King’s daughter said, “Take thy cap off, it is not seemly to keep it on in my presence.” He again said, “I may not, I have a sore head.” She, however, caught at his cap and pulled it off, and then his golden hair rolled down on his shoulders, and it was splendid to behold. He wanted to run out, but she held him by the arm, and gave him a handful of ducats. With these he departed, but he cared nothing for the gold pieces. He took them to the gardener, and said, “I present them to thy children, they can play with them.” The following day the King’s daughter again called to him that he was to bring her a wreath of field-flowers, and when he went in with it, she instantly snatched at his cap, and wanted to take it away from him, but he held it fast with both hands. She again gave him a handful of ducats, but he would not keep them, and gave them to the gardener for playthings for his children. On the third day things went just the same; she could not get his cap away from him, and he would not have her money.

Not long afterwards, the country was overrun by war. The King gathered together his people, and did not know whether or not he could offer any opposition to the enemy, who was superior in strength and had a mighty army. Then said the gardener’s boy, “I am grown up, and will go to the wars also, only give me a horse.” The others laughed, and said, “Seek one for thyself when we are gone, we will leave one behind us in the stable for thee.” When they had gone forth, he went into the stable, and got the horse out; it was lame of one foot, and limped hobblety jig, hobblety jig; nevertheless he mounted it, and rode away to the dark forest. When he came to the outskirts, he called “Iron John,” three times so loudly that it echoed through the trees. Thereupon the wild man appeared immediately, and said, “What dost thou desire?” “I want a strong steed, for I am going to the wars.” “That thou shalt have, and still more than thou askest for.” Then the wild man went back into the forest, and it was not long before a stable-boy came out of it, who led a horse that snorted with its nostrils, and could hardly be restrained, and behind them followed a great troop of soldiers entirely equipped in iron, and their swords flashed in the sun. The youth made over his three-legged horse to the stable-boy, mounted the other, and rode at the head of the soldiers. When he got near the battle-field a great part of the King’s men had already fallen, and little was wanting to make the rest give way. Then the youth galloped thither with his iron soldiers, broke like a hurricane over the enemy, and beat down all who opposed him. They began to fly, but the youth pursued, and never stopped, until there was not a single man left. Instead, however, of returning to the King, he conducted his troop by bye-ways back to the forest, and called forth Iron John. “What dost thou desire?” asked the wild man. “Take back thy horse and thy troops, and give me my three-legged horse again.” All that he asked was done, and soon he was riding on his three-legged horse. When the King returned to his palace, his daughter went to meet him, and wished him joy of his victory. “I am not the one who carried away the victory,” said he, “but a stranger knight who came to my assistance with his soldiers.” The daughter wanted to hear who the strange knight was, but the King did not know, and said, “He followed the enemy, and I did not see him again.” She inquired of the gardener where his boy was, but he smiled, and said, “He has just come home on his three-legged horse, and the others have been mocking him, and crying, “Here comes our hobblety jig back again!” They asked, too, “Under what hedge hast thou been lying sleeping all the time?” He, however, said, “I did the best of all, and it would have gone badly without me.” And then he was still more ridiculed.”

The King said to his daughter, “I will proclaim a great feast that shall last for three days, and thou shalt throw a golden apple. Perhaps the unknown will come to it.” When the feast was announced, the youth went out to the forest, and called Iron John. “What dost thou desire?” asked he. “That I may catch the King’s daughter’s golden apple.” “It is as safe as if thou hadst it already,” said Iron John. “Thou shalt likewise have a suit of red armour for the occasion, and ride on a spirited chestnut-horse.” When the day came, the youth galloped to the spot, took his place amongst the knights, and was recognized by no one. The King’s daughter came forward, and threw a golden apple to the knights, but none of them caught it but he, only as soon as he had it he galloped away.

On the second day Iron John equipped him as a white knight, and gave him a white horse. Again he was the only one who caught the apple, and he did not linger an instant, but galloped off with it. The King grew angry, and said, “That is not allowed; he must appear before me and tell his name.” He gave the order that if the knight who caught the apple, should go away again they should pursue him, and if he would not come back willingly, they were to cut him down and stab him.

On the third day, he received from Iron John a suit of black armour and a black horse, and again he caught the apple. But when he was riding off with it, the King’s attendants pursued him, and one of them got so near him that he wounded the youth’s leg with the point of his sword. The youth nevertheless escaped from them, but his horse leapt so violently that the helmet fell from the youth’s head, and they could see that he had golden hair. They rode back and announced this to the King.

The following day the King’s daughter asked the gardener about his boy. “He is at work in the garden; the queer creature has been at the festival too, and only came home yesterday evening; he has likewise shown my children three golden apples which he has won.”

The King had him summoned into his presence, and he came and again had his little cap on his head. But the King’s daughter went up to him and took it off, and then his golden hair fell down over his shoulders, and he was so handsome that all were amazed. “Art thou the knight who came every day to the festival, always in different colours, and who caught the three golden apples?” asked the King. “Yes,” answered he, “and here the apples are,” and he took them out of his pocket, and returned them to the King. “If you desire further proof, you may see the wound which your people gave me when they followed me. But I am likewise the knight who helped you to your victory over your enemies.” “If thou canst perform such deeds as that, thou art no gardener’s boy; tell me, who is thy father?” “My father is a mighty King, and gold have I in plenty as great as I require.” “I well see,” said the King, “that I owe thanks to thee; can I do anything to please thee?” “Yes,” answered he, “that indeed you can. Give me your daughter to wife.” The maiden laughed, and said, “He does not stand much on ceremony, but I have already seen by his golden hair that he was no gardener’s boy,” and then she went and kissed him. His father and mother came to the wedding, and were in great delight, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their dear son again. And as they were sitting at the marriage-feast, the music suddenly stopped, the doors opened, and a stately King came in with a great retinue. He went up to the youth, embraced him and said, “I am Iron John, and was by enchantment a wild man, but thou hast set me free; all the treasures which I possess, shall be thy property.”

The Three Black Princesses

EAST INDIA was besieged by an enemy who would not retire until he had received six hundred dollars. Then the townsfolk caused it to be proclaimed by beat of drum that whosoever was able to procure the money should be burgomaster. Now there was a poor fisherman who fished on the lake with his son, and the enemy came and took the son prisoner, and gave the father six hundred dollars for him. So the father went and gave them to the great men of the town, and the enemy departed, and the fisherman became burgomaster. Then it was proclaimed that whosoever did not say, “Mr. Burgomaster,” should be put to death on the gallows.

The son got away again from the enemy, and came to a great forest on a high mountain. The mountain opened, and he went into a great enchanted castle, wherein chairs, tables, and benches were all hung with black. Then came three young princesses who were entirely dressed in black, but had a little white on their faces; they told him he was not to be afraid, they would not hurt him, and that he could deliver them. He said he would gladly do that, if he did but know how. At this, they told him he must for a whole year not speak to them and also not look at them, and what he wanted to have he was just to ask for, and if they dared give him an answer they would do so. When he had been there for a long while he said he should like to go to his father, and they told him he might go. He was to take with him this purse with money, put on this coat, and in a week he must be back there again.

Then he was caught up, and was instantly in East India. He could no longer find his father in the fisherman’s hut, and asked the people where the poor fisherman could be, and they told him he must not say that, or he would come to the gallows. Then he went to his father and said, “Fisherman, how hast thou got here?” Then the father said, “Thou must not say that, if the great men of the town knew of that, thou wouldst come to the gallows.” He, however, would not stop, and was brought to the gallows. When he was there, he said, “O, my masters, just give me leave to go to the old fisherman’s hut.” Then he put on his old smock-frock, and came back to the great men, and said, “Do ye not now see? Am I not the son of the poor fisherman? Did I not earn bread for my father and mother in this dress?” Hereupon his father knew him again, and begged his pardon, and took him home with him, and then he related all that had happened to him, and how he had got into a forest on a high mountain, and the mountain had opened and he had gone into an enchanted castle, where all was black, and three young princesses had come to him who were black except a little white on their faces. And they had told him not to fear, and that he could deliver them. Then his mother said that might very likely not be a good thing to do, and that he ought to take a holy-water vessel with him, and drop some boiling water on their faces.

He went back again, and he was in great fear, and he dropped the water on their faces as they were sleeping, and they all turned half-white. Then all the three princesses sprang up, and said, “Thou accursed dog, our blood shall cry for vengeance on thee! Now there is no man born in the world, nor will any ever be born who can set us free! We have still three brothers who are bound by seven chains they shall tear thee to pieces.” Then there was a loud shrieking all over the castle, and he sprang out of the window, and broke his leg, and the castle sank into the earth again, the mountain shut to again, and no one knew where the castle had stood.

Knoist and his Three Sons

Between Werrel and Soist there lived a man whose name was Knoist, and he had three sons. One was blind, the other lame, and the third stark-naked. Once on a time they went into a field, and there they saw a hare. The blind one shot it, the lame one caught it, the naked one put it in his pocket. Then they came to a mighty big lake, on which there were three boats, one sailed, one sank, the third had no bottom to it. They all three got into the one with no bottom to it. Then they came to a mighty big forest in which there was a mighty big tree; in the tree was a mighty big chapel in the chapel was a sexton made of beech-wood and a box-wood parson, who dealt out holy-water with cudgels.

"How truly happy is that one Who can from holy water run!"

The Maid of Brakel

A girl from Brakel once went to St. Anne's Chapel at the foot of the Hinnenberg, and as she wanted to have a husband, and thought there was no one else in the chapel, she sang,

"Oh, holy Saint Anne! Help me soon to a man. Thou know'st him right well, By Suttmer gate does he dwell, His hair it is golden, Thou know'st him right well."

The clerk, however, was standing behind the altar and heard that, so he cried in a very gruff voice, "Thou shalt not have him! Thou shalt not have him!" The maiden thought that the child Mary who stood by her mother Anne had called out that to her, and was angry, and cried, "Fiddle de dee, conceited thing, hold your tongue, and let your mother speak!"

Domestic Servants

“Whither goest thou?” “To Walpe.” “I to Walpe, thou to Walpe, so, so, together we’ll go.”

“Hast thou a man? What is his name?” “Cham.” “My man Cham, thy man Cham; I to Walpe, thou to Walpe; so, so, together we’ll go.” “Hast thou a child; how is he styled?” “Wild.” “My child Wild, thy child Wild; my man Cham, thy man Cham; I to Walpe, thou to Walpe, so, so, together we’ll go.” “Hast thou a cradle? How callest thou thy cradle?” “Hippodadle.” “My cradle Hippodadle, my child Wild, thy child Wild, my man Cham, thy man Cham; I to Walpe, thou to Walpe, so, so, together we’ll go.”

“Hast thou also a drudge? what name has thy drudge?” “From-thy-work-do-not-budge.” “My drudge, From-thy-work-do-not-budge: my child Wild, thy child Wild; my man Cham, thy man Cham; I to Walpe, thou to Walpe; so, so, together we’ll go.”

The Lambkin and the Little Fish

THERE were once a little brother and a little sister, who loved each other with all their hearts. Their own mother was, however, dead, and they had a step-mother, who was not kind to them, and secretly did everything she could to hurt them. It so happened that the two were playing with other children in a meadow before the house, and there was a pond in the meadow which came up to one side of the house. The children ran about it, and caught each other, and played at counting out.

“Eneke Beneke, let me live, And I to thee my bird will give. The little bird, it straw shall seek, The straw I’ll give to the cow to eat. The pretty cow shall give me milk, The milk I’ll to the baker take. The baker he shall bake a cake, The cake I’ll give unto the cat. The cat shall catch some mice for that, The mice I’ll hang up in the smoke, And then you’ll see the snow.”

They stood in a circle while they played this, and the one to whom the word snow fell, had to run away and all the others ran after him and caught him. As they were running about so merrily the step-mother watched them from the window, and grew angry. And as she understood arts of witchcraft she bewitched them both, and changed the little brother into a fish, and the little sister into a lamb. Then the fish swam here and there about the pond and was very sad, and the lambkin walked up and down the meadow, and was miserable, and could not eat or touch one blade of grass. Thus passed a long time, and then strangers came as visitors to the castle. The false step-mother thought, “This is a good opportunity,” and called the cook and said to him, “Go and fetch the lamb from the meadow and kill it, we have nothing else for the visitors.” Then the cook went away and got the lamb, and took it into the kitchen and tied its feet, and all this it bore patiently. When he had drawn out his knife and was whetting it on the door-step to kill the lamb, he noticed a little fish swimming backwards and forwards in the water, in front of the kitchen-sink and looking up at him. This, however, was the brother, for when the fish saw the cook take the lamb away, it followed them and swam along the pond to the house; then the lamb cried down to it,

“Ah, brother, in the pond so deep, How sad is my poor heart! Even now the cook he whets his knife To take away my tender life.”

The little fish answered,

“Ah, little sister, up on high
How sad is my poor heart
While in this pond I lie.”

When the cook heard that the lambkin could speak and said such sad words to the fish down below, he was terrified and thought this could be no common lamb, but must be bewitched by the wicked woman in the house. Then said he, “Be easy, I will not kill thee,” and took another sheep and made it ready for the guests, and conveyed the lambkin to a good peasant woman, to whom he related all that he had seen and heard.

The peasant was, however, the very woman who had been foster-mother to the little sister, and she suspected at once who the lamb was, and went with it to a wise woman. Then the wise woman pronounced a blessing over the lambkin and the little fish, by means of which they regained their human forms, and after this she took them both into a little hut in a great forest, where they lived alone, but were contented and happy.

Simeli Mountain

There were once two brothers, the one rich, the other poor. The rich one, however, gave nothing to the poor one, and he gained a scanty living by trading in corn, and often did so badly that he had no bread for his wife and children. Once when he was wheeling a barrow through the forest he saw, on one side of him, a great, bare, naked-looking mountain, and as he had never seen it before, he stood still and stared at it with amazement.

While he was thus standing he saw a twelve great, wild men coming towards him, and as he believed they were robbers he pushed his barrow into the thicket, climbed up a tree, and waited to see what would happen. The twelve men, however, went to the mountain and cried, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, open,” and immediately the barren mountain opened down the middle, and the twelve went into it, and as soon as they were within, it shut. After a short time, however, it opened again, and the men came forth carrying heavy sacks on their shoulders, and when they were all once more in the daylight they said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, shut thyself;” then the mountain closed together, and there was no longer any entrance to be seen to it, and the twelve went away.

When they were quite out of sight the poor man got down from the tree, and was curious to know what really was secretly hidden in the mountain. So he went up to it and said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, open,” and the mountain opened to him also. The he went inside, and the whole mountain was a cavern full of silver and gold, and behind lay great piles of pearls and sparkling jewels, heaped up like corn. The poor man hardly knew what to do, and whether he might take any of these treasures for himself or not; but at last he filled his pockets with gold, but he left the pearls and precious stones where they were. When he came out again he also said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, shut thyself;” and the mountain closed itself, and he went home with his barrow.

And now he had no more cause for anxiety, but could buy bread for his wife and children with his gold, and wine into the bargain. He lived joyously and uprightly, gave help to the poor, and did good to every one. When, however, the money came to an end he went to his brother, borrowed a measure that held a bushel, and brought himself some more, but did not touch any of the most valuable things. When for the third time he wanted to fetch something, he again borrowed the measure of his brother. The rich man had, however, long been envious of his brother’s possessions, and of the handsome way of living which he had set on foot, and could not understand from whence the riches came, and what his brother wanted with the measure. Then he thought of a cunning trick, and covered the bottom of the measure with pitch, and when he got the measure back a piece of money was sticking in it. He at once went to his brother and asked him, “What hast thou been measuring in the bushel measure?” “Corn and barley,” said the other. Then he showed him the piece of money, and threatened that if he did not tell the truth he would accuse him before a court of justice. The poor man then told him everything, just as it happened. The rich man, however, ordered his carriage to be made ready, and drove away, resolved to use the opportunity better than his brother had done, and to bring back with him quite different treasures.

When he came to the mountain he cried, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, open.” The mountain opened, and he went inside it. There lay the treasures all before him, and for a long time he did not know which to clutch at first. At length he loaded himself with as many precious stones as he could carry. He wished to carry his burden outside, but, as his heart and soul were entirely full of the treasures, he had forgotten the name of the mountain, and cried, “Simeli mountain, Simeli mountain, open.” That, however, was not the right name, and the mountain never stirred, but remained shut. Then he was alarmed, but the longer he thought about it the more his thoughts confused themselves, and his treasures were no more of any use to him. In the evening the mountain opened, and the twelve robbers came in, and when they saw him they laughed, and cried out, “Bird, have we caught thee at last! Didst thou think we had never noticed that thou hadst been in here twice? We could not catch thee then; this third time thou shalt not get out again!” Then he cried, “It was not I, it was my brother,” but let him beg for his life and say what he would, they cut his head off.

Going A-Travelling

There was once a poor woman who had a son, who much wished to travel, but his mother said, “How canst thou travel? We have no money at all for thee to take away with thee.” Then said the son, “I will manage very well for myself; I will always say, Not much, not much, not much.”

So he walked for a long time and always said, “Not much, not much, not much.” Then he passed by a company of fishermen and said, “God speed you! not much, not much, not much.” “What sayst thou churl, ‘not much?’” And when the net was drawn out they had not caught much fish. So one of them fell on the youth with a stick and said, “Hast thou never seen me threshing?” “What ought I to say, then?” asked the youth. “Thou must say, ‘Get it full, get it full.’” After this he again walked a long time, and said, “Get it full, get it full,” until he came to the gallows, where they had got a poor sinner whom they were about to hang. Then said he, “Good morning; get it full, get it full.” “What sayst thou, knave, get it full? Dost thou want to make out that there are still more wicked people in the world is not this enough?” And he again got some blows on his back. “What am I to say, then?” said he. “Thou must say, may God have pity on the poor soul.”

Again the youth walked on for a long while and said, “May God have pity on the poor soul!” Then he came to a pit by which stood a knacker who was cutting up a horse. The youth said, “Good morning; God have pity on the poor soul!” “What dost thou say, thou ill-tempered knave?” and the knacker gave him such a box on the ear, that he could not see out of his eyes. “What am I to say, then?” “Thou must say, ‘There lies the carrion in the pit!’”

So he walked on, and always said, “There lies the carrion in the pit, there lies the carrion in the pit.” And he came to a cart full of people, so he said, “Good morning, there lies the carrion in the pit!” Then the cart pushed him into a hole, and the driver took his whip and cracked it upon the youth, till he was forced to crawl back to his mother, and as long as he lived he never went out a-travelling again.

The Donkey

Once on a time there lived a King and a Queen, who were rich, and had everything they wanted, but no children. The Queen lamented over this day and night, and said, “I am like a field on which nothing grows.” At last God gave her her wish, but when the child came into the world, it did not look like a human child, but was a little donkey. When the mother saw that, her lamentations and outcries began in real earnest; she said she would far rather have had no child at all than have a donkey, and that they were to throw it into the water that the fishes might devour it. But the King said, “No, since God has sent him he shall be my son and heir, and after my death sit on the royal throne, and wear the kingly crown.” The donkey, therefore, was brought up and grew bigger, and his ears grew up beautifully high and straight. He was, however, of a merry disposition, jumped about, played and had especial pleasure in music, so that he went to a celebrated musician and said, “Teach me thine art, that I may play the lute as well as thou dost.” “Ah, dear little master,” answered the musician, “that would come very hard to you, your fingers are certainly not suited to it, and are far too big. I am afraid the strings would not last.” No excuses were of any use. The donkey was determined to play the lute; he was persevering and industrious, and at last learnt to do it as well as the master himself. The young lordling once went out walking full of thought and came to a well, he looked into it and in the mirror-clear water saw his donkey’s form. He was so distressed about it, that he went out into the wide world and only took with him one faithful companion. They travelled up and down, and at last they came into a kingdom where an old King reigned who had an only but wonderfully beautiful daughter. The donkey said, “Here we will stay,” knocked at the gate, and cried, “A guest is without open, that he may enter.” As, however, the gate was not opened, he sat down, took his lute and played it in the most delightful manner with his two fore-feet. Then the door-keeper opened his eyes most wonderfully wide, and ran to the King and said, “Outside by the gate sits a young donkey which plays the lute as well as an experienced master!” “Then let the musician come to me,” said the King. When, however, a donkey came in, every one began to laugh at the lute-player. And now the donkey was asked to sit down and eat with the servants. He, however, was unwilling, and said, “I am no common stable-ass, I am a noble one.” Then they said, “If that is what thou art, seat thyself with the men of war.” “No,” said he, “I will sit by the King.” The King smiled, and said good-humouredly, “Yes, it shall be as thou wilt, little ass, come here to me.” Then he asked, “Little ass, how does my daughter please thee?” The donkey turned his head towards her, looked at her, nodded and said, “I like her above measure, I have never yet seen anyone so beautiful as she is.” “Well, then, thou shalt sit next her too,” said the King. “That is exactly what I wish,” said the donkey, and he placed himself by her side, ate and drank, and knew how to behave himself daintily and cleanly. When the noble beast had stayed a long time at the King’s court, he thought, “What good does all this do me, I shall still have to go home again?” let his head hang sadly, and went to the King and asked for his dismissal. But the King had grown fond of him, and said, “Little ass, what ails thee? Thou lookest as sour as a jug of vinegar, I will give thee what thou wantest. Dost thou want gold?” “No,” said the donkey, and shook his head. “Dost thou want jewels and rich dress?” “No.” “Dost thou wish for half my kingdom?” “Indeed, no.” Then said the King, “if I did but know what would make thee content. Wilt thou have my pretty daughter to wife?” “Ah, yes,” said the ass, “I should indeed like her,” and all at once he became quite merry and full of happiness, for that was exactly what he was wishing for. So a great and splendid wedding was held. In the evening, when the bride and bridegroom were led into their bed-room, the King wanted to know if the ass would behave well, and ordered a servant to hide himself there. When they were both within, the bridegroom bolted the door, looked around, and as he believed that they were quite alone, he suddenly threw off his ass’s skin, and stood there in the form of a handsome royal youth. “Now,” said he, “thou seest who I am, and seest also that I am not unworthy of thee.” Then the bride was glad, and kissed him, and loved him dearly. When morning came, he jumped up, put his animal’s skin on again, and no one could have guessed what kind of a form was hidden beneath it. Soon came the old King, “Ah,” cried he, “is the little ass merry? But surely thou art sad?” said he to his daughter, “that thou hast not got a proper man for thy husband?” “Oh, no, dear father, I love him as well as if he were the handsomest in the world, and I will keep him as long as I live.” The King was surprised, but the servant who had concealed himself came and revealed everything to him. The King said, “That cannot be true.” “Then watch yourself the next night, and you will see it with your own eyes; and hark you, lord King, if you were to take his skin away and throw it in the fire, he would be forced to show himself in his true shape.” “Thy advice is good,” said the King, and at night when they were asleep, he stole in, and when he got to the bed he saw by the light of the moon a noble-looking youth lying there, and the skin lay stretched on the ground. So he took it away, and had a great fire lighted outside, and threw the skin into it, and remained by it himself until it was all burnt to ashes. As, however, he was anxious to know how the robbed man would behave himself, he stayed awake the whole night and watched. When the youth had slept his sleep out, he got up by the first light of morning, and wanted to put on the ass’s skin, but it was not to be found. On this he was alarmed, and, full of grief and anxiety, said, “Now I shall have to contrive to escape.” But when he went out, there stood the King, who said, “My son, whither away in such haste? what hast thou in mind? Stay here, thou art such a handsome man, thou shalt not go away from me. I will now give thee half my kingdom, and after my death thou shalt have the whole of it.” “Then I hope that what begins so well may end well, and I will stay with you,” said the youth. And the old man gave him half the kingdom, and in a year’s time, when he died, the youth had the whole, and after the death of his father he had another kingdom as well, and lived in all magnificence.

The Ungrateful Son

A man and his wife were once sitting by the door of their house, and they had a roasted chicken set before them, and were about to eat it together. Then the man saw that his aged father was coming, and hastily took the chicken and hid it, for he would not permit him to have any of it. The old man came, took a drink, and went away. Now the son wanted to put the roasted chicken on the table again, but when he took it up, it had become a great toad, which jumped into his face and sat there and never went away again, and if any one wanted to take it off, it looked venomously at him as if it would jump in his face, so that no one would venture to touch it. And the ungrateful son was forced to feed the toad every day, or else it fed itself on his face; and thus he went about the world without knowing rest.

The Turnip

THERE were once two brothers who both served as soldiers; one of them was rich, and the other poor. Then the poor one, to escape from his poverty, put off his soldier's coat, and turned farmer. He dug and hoed his bit of land, and sowed it with turnip-seed. The seed came up, and one turnip grew there which became large and vigorous, and visibly grew bigger and bigger, and seemed as if it would never stop growing, so that it might have been called the princess of turnips, for never was such an one seen before, and never will such an one be seen again.

At length it was so enormous that by itself it filled a whole cart, and two oxen were required to draw it, and the farmer had not the least idea what he was to do with the turnip, or whether it would be a fortune to him or a misfortune. At last he thought, "If thou sellest it, what wilt thou get for it that is of any importance, and if thou eatest it thyself, why, the small turnips would do thee just as much good; it would be better to take it to the King, and make him a present of it."

So he placed it on a cart, harnessed two oxen, took it to the palace, and presented it to the King. "What strange thing is this?" said the King. "Many wonderful things have come before my eyes, but never such a monster as this! From what seed can this have sprung, or are you a luck-child and have met with it by chance?" "Ah, no!" said the farmer, "no luck-child am I. I am a poor soldier, who because he could no longer support himself hung his soldier's coat on a nail and took to farming land. I have a brother who is rich and well known to you, Lord King, but I, because I have nothing, am forgotten by every one."

Then the King felt compassion for him, and said, "Thou shalt be raised from thy poverty, and shalt have such gifts from me that thou shalt be equal to thy rich brother." Then he bestowed on him much gold, and lands, and meadows, and herds, and made him immensely rich, so that the wealth of the other brother could not be compared with his. When the rich brother heard what the poor one had gained for himself with one single turnip, he envied him, and thought in every way how he also could get hold of a similar piece of luck. He would, however, set about it in a much wiser way, and took gold and horses and carried them to the King, and made certain the King would give him a much larger present in return. If his brother had got so much for one turnip, what would he not carry away with him in return for such beautiful things as these? The King accepted his present, and said he had nothing to give him in return that was more rare and excellent than the great turnip. So the rich man was obliged to put his brother's turnip in a cart and have it taken to his home. When there he did not know on whom to vent his rage and anger, until bad thoughts came to him, and he resolved to kill his brother. He hired murderers, who were to lie in ambush, and then he went to his brother and said, "Dear brother, I know of a hidden treasure, we will dig it up together, and divide it between us." The other agreed to this, and accompanied him without suspicion. While they were on their way, however, the murderers fell on him, bound him, and would have hanged him to a tree. But just as they were doing this, loud singing and the sound of a horse's feet were heard in the distance. On this their hearts were filled with terror, and they pushed their prisoner head first into the sack, hung it on a branch, and took to flight. He, however, worked up there until he had made a hole in the sack through which he could put his head. The man who was coming by was no other than a travelling student, a young fellow who rode on his way through the wood joyously singing his song. When he who was aloft saw that someone was passing below him, he cried, "Good day! You have come at a lucky time." The student looked round on every side, but did not know whence the voice came. At last he said, "Who calls me?" Then an answer came from the top of the tree, "Raise your eyes; here I sit aloft in the Sack of Wisdom. In a short time have I learnt great things; compared with this all schools are a jest; in a very short time I shall have learnt everything, and shall descend wiser than all other men. I understand the stars, and the signs of the Zodiac, and the tracks of the winds, the sand of the sea, the healing of illness, and the virtues of all herbs, birds, and stones. If you were once within it you would feel what noble things issue forth from the Sack of Knowledge."

The student, when he heard all this, was astonished, and said, "Blessed be the hour in which I have found thee! May not I also enter the sack for a while?" He who was above replied as if unwillingly, "For a short time I will let you get into it, if you reward me and give me good words; but you must wait an hour longer, for one thing remains which I must learn before I do it." When the student had waited a while he became impatient, and begged to be allowed to get in at once, his thirst for knowledge was so very great. So he who was above pretended at last to yield, and said, "In order that I may come forth from the house of knowledge you must let it down by the rope, and then you shall enter it." So the student let the sack down, untied it, and set him free, and then cried, "Now draw me up at once," and was about to get into the sack. "Halt!" said the other, "that won't do," and took him by the head and put him upside down into the sack, fastened it, and drew the disciple of wisdom up the tree by the rope. Then he swung him in the air and said, "How goes it with thee, my dear fellow? Behold, already thou feelest wisdom coming, and art gaining valuable experience. Keep perfectly quiet until thou becomest wiser." Thereupon he mounted the student's horse and rode away, but in an hour's time sent some one to let the student out again.

The Old Man Made Young Again

In the time when our Lord still walked this earth, he and St. Peter stopped one evening at a smith's and received free quarters. Then it came to pass that a poor beggar, hardly pressed by age and infirmity, came to this house and begged alms of the smith. St. Peter had compassion on him and said, "Lord and master, if it please thee, cure his torments that he may be able to win his own bread." The Lord said kindly, "Smith, lend me thy forge, and put on some coals for me, and then I will make this ailing old man young again." The smith was quite willing, and St. Peter blew the bellows, and when the coal fire sparkled up large and high our Lord took the little old man, pushed him in the forge in the midst of the red-hot fire, so that he glowed like a rose-bush, and praised God with a loud voice. After that the Lord went to the quenching tub, put the glowing little man into it so that the water closed over him, and after he had carefully cooled him, gave him his blessing, when behold the little man sprang nimbly out, looking fresh, straight, healthy, and as if he were but twenty. The smith, who had watched everything closely and attentively, invited them all to supper. He, however, had an old half-blind crooked, mother-in-law who went to the youth, and with great earnestness asked if the fire had burnt him much. He answered that he had never felt more comfortable, and that he had sat in the red heat as if he had been in cool dew. The youth's words echoed in the ears of the old woman all night long, and early next morning, when the Lord had gone on his way again and had heartily thanked the smith, the latter thought he might make his old mother-in-law young again likewise, as he had watched everything so carefully, and it lay in the province of his trade. So he called to ask her if she, too, would like to go bounding about like a girl of eighteen. She said, "With all my heart, as the youth has come out of it so well." So the smith made a great fire, and thrust the old woman into it, and she writhed about this way and that, and uttered terrible cries of murder. "Sit still; why art thou screaming and jumping about so?" cried he, and as he spoke he blew the bellows again until all her rags were burnt. The old woman cried without ceasing, and the smith thought to himself, "I have not quite the right art," and took her out and threw her into the cooling-tub. Then she screamed so loudly that the smith's wife upstairs and her daughter-in-law heard, and they both ran downstairs, and saw the old woman lying in a heap in the quenching-tub, howling and screaming, with her face wrinkled and shrivelled and all out of shape. Thereupon the two, who were both with child, were so terrified that that very night two boys were born who were not made like men but apes, and they ran into the woods, and from them sprang the race of apes.

The Lord’s Animals and the Devil’s

The Lord God had created all animals, and had chosen out the wolf to be his dog, but he had forgotten the goat. Then the Devil made ready and began to create also, and created goats with fine long tails. Now when they went to pasture, they generally remained caught in the hedges by their tails, then the Devil had to go there and disentangle them, with a great deal of trouble. This enraged him at last, and he went and bit off the tail of every goat, as may be seen to this day by the stump. Then he let them go to pasture alone, but it came to pass that the Lord God perceived how at one time they gnawed away at a fruitful tree, at another injured the noble vines, or destroyed other tender plants. This distressed him, so that in his goodness and mercy he summoned his wolves, who soon tore in pieces the goats that went there. When the devil observed this, he went before the Lord and said, “Thy creatures have destroyed mine.” The Lord answered, “Why didst thou create things to do harm?” The Devil said, “I was compelled to do it: inasmuch as my thoughts run on evil, what I create can have no other nature, and thou must pay me heavy damages.” “I will pay thee as soon as the oak leaves fall; come then, thy money will then be ready counted out.” When the oak-leaves had fallen, the Devil came and demanded what was due to him. But the Lord said, “In the church of Constantinople stands a tall oak-tree which still has all its leaves.” With raging and curses, the Devil departed, and went to seek the oak, wandered in the wilderness for six months before he found it, and when he returned, all the oaks had in the meantime covered themselves again with green leaves. Then he had to forfeit his indemnity, and in his rage he put out the eyes of all the remaining goats, and put his own in instead.

This is why all goats have devil’s eyes, and their tails bitten off, and why he likes to assume their shape.

The Beam

There was once an enchanter who was standing in the midst of a great crowd of people performing his wonders. He had a cock brought in, which lifted a heavy beam and carried it as if it were as light as a feather. But a girl was present who had just found a bit of four-leaved clover, and had thus become so wise that no deception could stand out against her, and she saw that the beam was nothing but a straw. So she cried, “You people, do you not see that it is a straw that the cock is carrying, and no beam?” Immediately the enchantment vanished, and the people saw what it was, and drove the magician away in shame and disgrace. He, however, full of inward anger, said, “I will soon revenge myself?”

After some time the girl’s wedding-day came, and she was decked out, and went in a great procession over the fields to the place where the church was. All at once she came to a stream which was very much swollen, and there was no bridge and no plank to cross it. Then the bride nimbly took her clothes up, and wanted to wade through it. And just as she was thus standing in the water, a man, and it was the enchanter, cried mockingly close beside her, “Aha! Where are thine eyes that thou takest that for water?” Then her eyes were opened, and she saw that she was standing with her clothes lifted up in the middle of a field that was blue with the flowers of blue flax. Then all the people saw it likewise, and chased her away with ridicule and laughter.

The Old Beggar-Woman

There was once an old woman, but thou hast surely seen an old woman go a-begging before now? This woman begged likewise, and when she got anything she said, “May God reward you.” The beggar-woman came to a door, and there by the fire a friendly rogue of a boy was standing warming himself. The boy said kindly to the poor old woman as she was standing shivering thus by the door, “Come, old mother, and warm yourself.” She came in, but stood too near the fire, so that her old rags began to burn, and she was not aware of it. The boy stood and saw that, but he ought to have put the flames out. Is it not true that he ought to have put them out? And if he had not any water, then should he have wept all the water in his body out of his eyes, and that would have supplied two pretty streams with which to extinguish them.

The Three Sluggards

A certain King had three sons who were all equally dear to him, and he did not know which of them to appoint as his successor after his own death. When the time came when he was about to die, he summoned them to his bedside and said, “Dear children, I have been thinking of something which I will declare unto you; whichsoever of you is the laziest shall have the kingdom.” The eldest said, “Then, father, the kingdom is mine, for I am so idle that if I lie down to rest, and a drop falls in my eye, I will not open it that I may sleep.” The second said; “Father, the kingdom belongs to me, for I am so idle that when I am sitting by the fire warming myself, I would rather let my heel be burnt off than draw back my leg.” The third said, “Father, the kingdom is mine, for I am so idle that if I were going to be hanged, and had the rope already round my neck, and any one put a sharp knife into my hand with which I might cut the rope, I would rather let myself be hanged than raise my hand to the rope.” When the father heard that, he said, “Thou hast carried it the farthest, and shalt be King.”

151* The Twelve Idle Servants

Twelve servants who had done nothing all the day would not exert themselves at night either, but laid themselves on the grass and boasted of their idleness. The first said, “What is your laziness to me, I have to concern myself about mine own? The care of my body is my principal work, I eat not a little and drink still more. When I have had four meals, I fast a short time until I feel hunger again, and that suits me best. To rise betimes is not for me; when it is getting near mid-day, I already seek out a resting-place for myself. If the master call, I do exactly as if I had not heard him, and if he call for the second time, I wait awhile before I get up, and go to him very slowly. In this way life is endurable.”

The second said, “I have a horse to look after, but I leave the bit in his mouth, and if I do not want to do it, I give him no food, and I say he has had it already. I, however, lay myself in the oat-chest and sleep for four hours. After this I stretch out one foot and move it a couple of times over the horse’s body, and then he is combed and cleaned. Who is going to make a great business of that? Nevertheless service is too toilsome for me.”

The third said, “Why plague oneself with work? Nothing comes of it! I laid myself in the sun, and fell asleep. It began to rain a little, but why should I get up? I let it rain on in God’s name. At last came a splashing shower, so heavy indeed, that it pulled the hair out of my head and washed it away, and I got a hole in the skull; I put a plaster on it, and then it was all right. I have already had several injuries of that kind.”

The fourth said, “If I am to undertake a piece of work, I first loiter about for an hour that I may save up my strength. After that I begin quite slowly, and ask if no one is there who could help me. Then I let him do the chief of the work, and in reality only look on; but that also is still too much for me.”

The fifth said, “What does that matter? Just think, I am to take away the manure from the horse’s stable, and load the cart with it. I let it go on slowly, and if I have taken anything on the fork, I only half-raise it up, and then I rest just a quarter of an hour until I quite throw it in. It is enough and to spare if I take out a cartful in the day. I have no fancy for killing myself with work.”

The sixth said, “Shame on ye; I am afraid of no work, but I lie down for three weeks, and never once take my clothes off. What is the use of buckling your shoes on? For aught I care they may fall off my feet, it is no matter. If I am going up some steps, I drag one foot slowly after the other on to the first step, and then I count the rest of them that I may know where I must rest.”

The seventh said, “That will not do with me; my master looks after my work, only he is not at home the whole day. But I neglect nothing, I run as fast as it is possible to do when one crawls. If I am to get on, four sturdy men must push me with all their might. I came where six men were lying sleeping on a bed beside each other. I lay down by them and slept too. There was no wakening me again, and when they wanted to have me home, they had to carry me.” The eighth said, “I see plainly that I am the only active fellow; if a stone lie before me, I do not give myself the trouble to raise my legs and step over it. I lay myself down on the ground, and if I am wet and covered with mud and dirt, I stay lying until the sun has dried me again. At the very most, I only turn myself so that it can shine on me.” The ninth said, “That is the right way! To-day the bread was before me, but I was too idle to take it, and nearly died of hunger! Moreover a jug stood by it, but it was so big and heavy that I did not like to lift it up, and preferred bearing thirst. Just to turn myself round was too much for me, I remained lying like a log the whole day.” The tenth said, “Laziness has brought misfortune on me, a broken leg and swollen calf. Three of us were lying in the road, and I had my legs stretched out. Some one came with a cart, and the wheels went over me. I might indeed have drawn my legs back, but I did not hear the cart coming, for the midges were humming about my ears, and creeping in at my nose and out again at my mouth; who can take the trouble to drive the vermin away?”

The eleventh said, “I gave up my place yesterday. I had no fancy for carrying the heavy books to my master any longer or fetching them away again. There was no end of it all day long. But to tell the truth, he gave me my dismissal, and would not keep me any longer, for his clothes, which I had left lying in the dust, were all moth-eaten, and I am very glad of it.”

The twelfth said, “To-day I had to drive the cart into the country, and made myself a bed of straw on it, and had a good sleep. The reins slipped out of my hand, and when I awoke, the horse had nearly torn itself loose, the harness was gone, the strap which fastened the horse to the shafts was gone, and so were the collar, the bridle and bit. Some one had come by, who had carried all off. Besides this, the cart had got into a quagmire and stuck fast. I left it standing, and stretched myself on the straw again. At last the master came himself, and pushed the cart out, and if he had not come I should not be lying here but there, and sleeping in full tranquillity.”

The Shepherd Boy

There was once on a time a shepherd boy whose fame spread far and wide because of the wise answers which he gave to every question. The King of the country heard of it likewise, but did not believe it, and sent for the boy. Then he said to him, “If thou canst give me an answer to three questions which I will ask thee, I will look on thee as my own child, and thou shalt dwell with me in my royal palace.” The boy said, “What are the three questions?” The King said, “The first is, how many drops of water are there in the ocean?” The shepherd boy answered, “Lord King, if you will have all the rivers on earth dammed up so that not a single drop runs from them into the sea until I have counted it, I will tell you how many drops there are in the sea.” The King said, “The next question is, how many stars are there in the sky?” The shepherd boy said, “Give me a great sheet of white paper,” and then he made so many fine points on it with a pen that they could scarcely be seen, and it was all but impossible to count them; any one who looked at them would have lost his sight. Then he said, “There are as many stars in the sky as there are points on the paper; just count them.” But no one was able to do it. The King said, “The third question is, how many seconds of time are there in eternity.” Then said the shepherd boy, “In Lower Pomerania is the Diamond Mountain, which is two miles and a half high, two miles and a half wide, and two miles and a half in depth; every hundred years a little bird comes and sharpens its beak on it, and when the whole mountain is worn away by this, then the first second of eternity will be over.”

The King said, “Thou hast answered the three questions like a wise man, and shalt henceforth dwell with me in my royal palace, and I will regard thee as my own child.”

The Star-Money

There was once on a time a little girl whose father and mother were dead, and she was so poor that she no longer had any little room to live in, or bed to sleep in, and at last she had nothing else but the clothes she was wearing and a little bit of bread in her hand which some charitable soul had given her. She was, however, good and pious. And as she was thus forsaken by all the world, she went forth into the open country, trusting in the good God. Then a poor man met her, who said, “Ah, give me something to eat, I am so hungry!” She reached him the whole of her piece of bread, and said, “May God bless it to thy use,” and went onwards. Then came a child who moaned and said, “My head is so cold, give me something to cover it with.” So she took off her hood and gave it to him; and when she had walked a little farther, she met another child who had no jacket and was frozen with cold. Then she gave it her own; and a little farther on one begged for a frock, and she gave away that also. At length she got into a forest and it had already become dark, and there came yet another child, and asked for a little shirt, and the good little girl thought to herself, “It is a dark night and no one sees thee, thou canst very well give thy little shirt away,” and took it off, and gave away that also. And as she so stood, and had not one single thing left, suddenly some stars from heaven fell down, and they were nothing else but hard smooth pieces of money, and although she had just given her little shirt away, she had a new one which was of the very finest linen. Then she gathered together the money into this, and was rich all the days of her life.

The Stolen Farthings

A father was one day sitting at dinner with his wife and his children, and a good friend who had come on a visit was with them. And as they thus sat, and it was striking twelve o'clock, the stranger saw the door open, and a very pale child dressed in snow-white clothes came in. It did not look around, and it did not speak; but went straight into the next room. Soon afterwards it came back, and went out at the door again in the same quiet manner. On the second and on the third day, it came also exactly in the same way. At last the stranger asked the father to whom the beautiful child that went into the next room every day at noon belonged? "I have never seen it," said he, neither did he know to whom it could belong. The next day when it again came, the stranger pointed it out to the father, who however did not see it, and the mother and the children also all saw nothing. On this the stranger got up, went to the room door, opened it a little, and peeped in. Then he saw the child sitting on the ground, and digging and seeking about industriously amongst the crevices between the boards of the floor, but when it saw the stranger, it disappeared. He now told what he had seen and described the child exactly, and the mother recognized it, and said, "Ah, it is my dear child who died a month ago." They took up the boards and found two farthings which the child had once received from its mother that it might give them to a poor man; it, however, had thought, "Thou canst buy thyself a biscuit for that," and had kept the farthings, and hidden them in the openings between the boards; and therefore it had had no rest in its grave, and had come every day at noon to seek for these farthings. The parents gave the money at once to a poor man, and after that the child was never seen again.

Brides On Their Trial

There was once a young shepherd who wished much to marry, and was acquainted with three sisters who were all equally pretty, so that it was difficult to him to make a choice, and he could not decide to give the preference to any one of them. Then he asked his mother for advice, and she said, “Invite all three, and set some cheese before them, and watch how they eat it.” The youth did so; the first, however, swallowed the cheese with the rind on; the second hastily cut the rind off the cheese, but she cut it so quickly that she left much good cheese with it, and threw that away also; the third peeled the rind off carefully, and cut neither too much nor too little. The shepherd told all this to his mother, who said, “Take the third for thy wife.” This he did, and lived contentedly and happily with her.

Odds And Ends

There was once on a time a maiden who was pretty, but idle and negligent. When she had to spin she was so out of temper that if there was a little knot in the flax, she at once pulled out a whole heap of it, and strewed it about on the ground beside her. Now she had a servant who was industrious, and gathered together the bits of flax which were thrown away, cleaned them, span them fine, and had a beautiful gown made out of them for herself. A young man had wooed the lazy girl, and the wedding was to take place. On the eve of the wedding, the industrious one was dancing merrily about in her pretty dress, and the bride said, —

“Ah, how that girl does jump about, dressed in my odds and ends.”

The bridegroom heard that, and asked the bride what she meant by it? Then she told him that the girl was wearing a dress make of the flax which she had thrown away. When the bridegroom heard that, and saw how idle she was, and how industrious the poor girl was, he gave her up and went to the other, and chose her as his wife.

The Sparrow And His Four Children

A sparrow had four young ones in a swallow's nest. When they were fledged, some naughty boys pulled out the nest, but fortunately all the birds got safely away in the high wind. Then the old bird was grieved that as his sons had all gone out into the world, he had not first warned them of every kind of danger, and given them good instruction how to deal with each. In the autumn a great many sparrows assembled together in a wheatfield, and there the old bird met his four children again, and full of joy took them home with him. "Ah, my dear sons, what pain I have been in about you all through the summer, because you got away in the wind without my teaching; listen to my words, obey your father, and be well on your guard. Little birds have to encounter great dangers!" And then he asked the eldest where he had spent the summer, and how he had supported himself? "I stayed in the gardens, and looked for caterpillars and small worms, until the cherries got ripe." "Ah, my son," said the father, "tit-bits are not bad, but there is great risk about them; on that account take great care of thyself henceforth, and particularly when people are going about the gardens who carry long green poles which are hollow inside and have a little hole at the top." "Yes, father, but what if a little green leaf is stuck over the hole with wax?" said the son. "Where hast thou seen that?" "In a merchant's garden," said the youngster. "Oh, my son, merchant folks are quick folks," said the father. "If thou hast been among the children of the world, thou hast learned worldly shiftiness enough, only see that thou usest it well, and do not be too confident." After this he asked the next, "Where hast thou passed thy time?" "At court," said the son. "Sparrows and silly little birds are of no use in that place — there one finds much gold, velvet, silk, armour, harnesses, sparrow-hawks, screech-owls and hen-harriers; keep to the horses' stable where they winnow oats, or thresh, and then fortune may give thee thy daily grain of corn in peace." "Yes, father," said the son, "but when the stable-boys make traps and fix their gins and snares in the straw, many a one is caught fast." "Where hast thou seen that?" said the old bird. "At court, among the stable-boys." "Oh, my son, court boys are bad boys! If thou hast been to court and among the lords, and hast left no feathers there, thou hast learnt a fair amount, and wilt know very well how to go about the world, but look around thee and above thee, for the wolves devour the wisest dogs." The father examined the third also: "Where didst thou seek thy safety?" "I have broken up tubs and ropes on the cart-roads and highways, and sometimes met with a grain of corn or barley." "That is indeed dainty fare," said the father, "but take care what thou art about and look carefully around, especially when thou seest any one stooping and about to pick up a stone, there is not much time to stay then." "That is true," said the son, "but what if any one should carry a bit of rock, or ore, ready beforehand in his breast or pocket?" "Where hast thou seen that?" "Among the mountaineers, dear father; when they go out, they generally take little bits of ore with them."

“Mountain folks are working folks, and clever folks. If thou hast been among mountain lads, thou hast seen and learnt something, but when thou goest thither beware, for many a sparrow has been brought to a bad end by a mountain boy.” At length the father came to the youngest son: “Thou, my dear chirping nestling, wert always the silliest and weakest; stay with me, the world has many rough, wicked birds which have crooked beaks and long claws, and lie in wait for poor little birds and swallow them. Keep with those of thine own kind, and pick up little spiders and caterpillars from the trees, or the house, and then thou wilt live long in peace.” “My dear father, he who feeds himself without injury to other people fares well, and no sparrow-hawk, eagle, or kite will hurt him if he specially commits himself and his lawful food, evening and morning, faithfully to God, who is the Creator and Preserver of all forest and village birds, who likewise heareth the cry and prayer of the young ravens, for no sparrow or wren ever falls to the ground except by his will.” “Where hast thou learnt this?” The son answered, “When the great blast of wind tore me away from thee I came to a church, and there during the summer I have picked up the flies and spiders from the windows, and heard this discourse preached. The Father of all sparrows fed me all the summer through, and kept me from all mischance and from ferocious birds.”

“In sooth, my dear son, if thou takest refuge in the churches and helpest to clear away spiders and buzzing flies, and criest unto God like the young ravens, and commendest thyself to the eternal Creator, all will be well with thee, and that even if the whole world were full of wild malicious birds.”

“He who to God commits his ways, In silence suffers, waits, and prays,
Preserves his faith and conscience pure, He is of God’s protection sure.”

The Story of Schlauraffen Land

In the time of Schlauraffen I went there, and saw Rome and the Lateran hanging by a small silken thread, and a man without feet who outran a swift horse, and a keen sharp sword that cut through a bridge. There I saw a young ass with a silver nose which pursued two fleet hares, and a lime-tree that was very large, on which hot cakes were growing. There I saw a lean old goat which carried about a hundred cart-loads of fat on his body, and sixty loads of salt. Have I not told enough lies? There I saw a plough ploughing without horse or cow, and a child of one year threw four millstones from Ratisbon to Treves, and from Treves to Strasburg, and a hawk swam over the Rhine, which he had a perfect right to do. There I heard some fishes begin to make such a disturbance with each other, that it resounded as far as heaven, and sweet honey flowed like water from a deep valley at the top of a high mountain, and these were strange things. There were two crows which were mowing a meadow, and I saw two gnats building a bridge, and two doves tore a wolf to pieces; two children brought forth two kids, and two frogs threshed corn together. There I saw two mice consecrating a bishop, and two cats scratching out a bear's tongue. Then a snail came running up and killed two furious lions. There stood a barber and shaved a woman's beard off; and two sucking-children bade their mother hold her tongue. There I saw two greyhounds which brought a mill out of the water; and a sorry old horse was beside it, and said it was right. And four horses were standing in the yard threshing corn with all their might, and two goats were heating the stove, and a red cow shot the bread into the oven. Then a cock crowed, Cock-a-doodle-doo! The story is all told, — Cock-a-doodle-doo!

The Ditmarsch Tale of Wonders

I will tell you something. I saw two roasted fowls flying; they flew quickly and had their breasts turned to heaven and their backs to hell, and an anvil and a mill-stone swam across the Rhine prettily, slowly, and gently, and a frog sat on the ice at Whitsuntide and ate a ploughshare. Three fellows who wanted to catch a hare, went on crutches and stilts; one of them was deaf, the second blind, the third dumb, and the fourth could not stir a step. Do you want to know how it was done? First, the blind man saw the hare running across the field, the dumb one called to the lame one, and the lame one seized it by the neck.

There were certain men who wished to sail on dry land, and they set their sails in the wind, and sailed away over great fields. Then they sailed over a high mountain, and there they were miserably drowned. A crab was chasing a hare which was running away at full speed, and high up on the roof lay a cow which had climbed up there. In that country the flies are as big as the goats are here. Open the window, that the lies may fly out.

A Riddling Tale

Three women were changed into flowers which grew in the field, but one of them was allowed to be in her own home at night. Then once when day was drawing near, and she was forced to go back to her companions in the field and become a flower again, she said to her husband, “If thou wilt come this afternoon and gather me, I shall be set free and henceforth stay with thee.” And he did so. Now the question is, how did her husband know her, for the flowers were exactly alike, and without any difference? Answer: as she was at her home during the night and not in the field, no dew fell on her as it did on the others, and by this her husband knew her.

Snow-White and Rose-Red

There was once a poor widow who lived in a lonely cottage. In front of the cottage was a garden wherein stood two rose-trees, one of which bore white and the other red roses. She had two children who were like the two rose-trees, and one was called Snow-white, and the other Rose-red. They were as good and happy, as busy and cheerful as ever two children in the world were, only Snow-white was more quiet and gentle than Rose- red. Rose-red liked better to run about in the meadows and fields seeking flowers and catching butterflies; but Snow-white sat at home with her mother, and helped her with her house-work, or read to her when there was nothing to do.

The two children were so fond of each another that they always held each other by the hand when they went out together, and when Snow-white said, "We will not leave each other," Rose-red answered, "Never so long as we live," and their mother would add, "What one has she must share with the other."

They often ran about the forest alone and gathered red berries, and no beasts did them any harm, but came close to them trustfully. The little hare would eat a cabbage-leaf out of their hands, the roe grazed by their side, the stag leapt merrily by them, and the birds sat still upon the boughs, and sang whatever they knew.

No mishap overtook them; if they had stayed too late in the forest, and night came on, they laid themselves down near one another upon the moss, and slept until morning came, and their mother knew this and had no distress on their account.

Once when they had spent the night in the wood and the dawn had roused them, they saw a beautiful child in a shining white dress sitting near their bed. He got up and looked quite kindly at them, but said nothing and went away into the forest. And when they looked round they found that they had been sleeping quite close to a precipice, and would certainly have fallen into it in the darkness if they had gone only a few paces further. And their mother told them that it must have been the angel who watches over good children.

Snow-white and Rose-red kept their mother's little cottage so neat that it was a pleasure to look inside it. In the summer Rose-red took care of the house, and every morning laid a wreath of flowers by her mother's bed before she awoke, in which was a rose from each tree. In the winter Snow-white lit the fire and hung the kettle on the wrekin. The kettle was of copper and shone like gold, so brightly was it polished. In the evening, when the snowflakes fell, the mother said, "Go, Snow-white, and bolt the door," and then they sat round the hearth, and the mother took her spectacles and read aloud out of a large book, and the two girls listened as they sat and span. And close by them lay a lamb upon the floor, and behind them upon a perch sat a white dove with its head hidden beneath its wings.

One evening, as they were thus sitting comfortably together, some one knocked at the door as if he wished to be let in. The mother said, “Quick, Rose-red, open the door, it must be a traveller who is seeking shelter.” Rose-red went and pushed back the bolt, thinking that it was a poor man, but it was not; it was a bear that stretched his broad, black head within the door.

Rose-red screamed and sprang back, the lamb bleated, the dove fluttered, and Snow-white hid herself behind her mother’s bed. But the bear began to speak and said, “Do not be afraid, I will do you no harm! I am half-frozen, and only want to warm myself a little beside you.”

“Poor bear,” said the mother, “lie down by the fire, only take care that you do not burn your coat.” Then she cried, “Snow-white, Rose-red, come out, the bear will do you no harm, he means well.” So they both came out, and by-and-by the lamb and dove came nearer, and were not afraid of him. The bear said, “Here, children, knock the snow out of my coat a little;” so they brought the broom and swept the bear’s hide clean; and he stretched himself by the fire and growled contentedly and comfortably. It was not long before they grew quite at home, and played tricks with their clumsy guest. They tugged his hair with their hands, put their feet upon his back and rolled him about, or they took a hazel-switch and beat him, and when he growled they laughed. But the bear took it all in good part, only when they were too rough he called out, “Leave me alive, children,

“Snowy-white, Rosy-red,
Will you beat your lover dead?”

When it was bed-time, and the others went to bed, the mother said to the bear, “You can lie there by the hearth, and then you will be safe from the cold and the bad weather.” As soon as day dawned the two children let him out, and he trotted across the snow into the forest.

Henceforth the bear came every evening at the same time, laid himself down by the hearth, and let the children amuse themselves with him as much as they liked; and they got so used to him that the doors were never fastened until their black friend had arrived.

When spring had come and all outside was green, the bear said one morning to Snow-white, “Now I must go away, and cannot come back for the whole summer.” “Where are you going, then, dear bear?” asked Snow-white. “I must go into the forest and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs. In the winter, when the earth is frozen hard, they are obliged to stay below and cannot work their way through; but now, when the sun has thawed and warmed the earth, they break through it, and come out to pry and steal; and what once gets into their hands, and in their caves, does not easily see daylight again.”

Snow-white was quite sorry for his going away, and as she unbolted the door for him, and the bear was hurrying out, he caught against the bolt and a piece of his hairy coat was torn off, and it seemed to Snow-white as if she had seen gold shining through it, but she was not sure about it. The bear ran away quickly, and was soon out of sight behind the trees.

A short time afterwards the mother sent her children into the forest to get fire-wood. There they found a big tree which lay felled on the ground, and close by the trunk something was jumping backwards and forwards in the grass, but they could not make out what it was. When they came nearer they saw a dwarf with an old withered face and a snow-white beard a yard long. The end of the beard was caught in a crevice of the tree, and the little fellow was jumping backwards and forwards like a dog tied to a rope, and did not know what to do.

He glared at the girls with his fiery red eyes and cried, “Why do you stand there? Can you not come here and help me?” “What are you about there, little man?” asked Rose-red. “You stupid, prying goose!” answered the dwarf; “I was going to split the tree to get a little wood for cooking. The little bit of food that one of us wants gets burnt up directly with thick logs; we do not swallow so much as you coarse, greedy folk. I had just driven the wedge safely in, and everything was going as I wished; but the wretched wood was too smooth and suddenly sprang asunder, and the tree closed so quickly that I could not pull out my beautiful white beard; so now it is tight in and I cannot get away, and the silly, sleek, milk-faced things laugh! Ugh! how odious you are!”

The children tried very hard, but they could not pull the beard out, it was caught too fast. “I will run and fetch some one,” said Rose-red. “You senseless goose!” snarled the dwarf; “why should you fetch some one? You are already two too many for me; can you not think of something better?” “Don’t be impatient,” said Snow-white, “I will help you,” and she pulled her scissors out of her pocket, and cut off the end of the beard.

As soon as the dwarf felt himself free he laid hold of a bag which lay amongst the roots of the tree, and which was full of gold, and lifted it up, grumbling to himself, “Uncouth people, to cut off a piece of my fine beard. Bad luck to you!” and then he swung the bag upon his back, and went off without even once looking at the children.

Some time after that Snow-white and Rose-red went to catch a dish of fish. As they came near the brook they saw something like a large grasshopper jumping towards the water, as if it were going to leap in. They ran to it and found it was the dwarf. “Where are you going?” said Rose-red; “you surely don’t want to go into the water?” “I am not such a fool!” cried the dwarf; “don’t you see that the accursed fish wants to pull me in?” The little man had been sitting there fishing, and unluckily the wind had twisted his beard with the fishing-line; just then a big fish bit, and the feeble creature had not strength to pull it out; the fish kept the upper hand and pulled the dwarf towards him. He held on to all the reeds and rushes, but it was of little good, he was forced to follow the movements of the fish, and was in urgent danger of being dragged into the water.

The girls came just in time; they held him fast and tried to free his beard from the line, but all in vain, beard and line were entangled fast together. Nothing was left but to bring out the scissors and cut the beard, whereby a small part of it was lost. When the dwarf saw that he screamed out, “Is that civil, you toad-stool, to disfigure one’s face? Was it not enough to clip off the end of my beard? Now you have cut off the best part of it. I cannot let myself be seen by my people. I wish you had been made to run the soles off your shoes!” Then he took out a sack of pearls which lay in the rushes, and without saying a word more he dragged it away and disappeared behind a stone.

It happened that soon afterwards the mother sent the two children to the town to buy needles and thread, and laces and ribbons. The road led them across a heath upon which huge pieces of rock lay strewn here and there. Now they noticed a large bird hovering in the air, flying slowly round and round above them; it sank lower and lower, and at last settled near a rock not far off. Directly afterwards they heard a loud, piteous cry. They ran up and saw with horror that the eagle had seized their old acquaintance the dwarf, and was going to carry him off.

The children, full of pity, at once took tight hold of the little man, and pulled against the eagle so long that at last he let his booty go. As soon as the dwarf had recovered from his first fright he cried with his shrill voice, “Could you not have done it more carefully! You dragged at my brown coat so that it is all torn and full of holes, you helpless clumsy creatures!” Then he took up a sack full of precious stones, and slipped away again under the rock into his hole. The girls, who by this time were used to his thanklessness, went on their way and did their business in the town.

As they crossed the heath again on their way home they surprised the dwarf, who had emptied out his bag of precious stones in a clean spot, and had not thought that anyone would come there so late. The evening sun shone upon the brilliant stones; they glittered and sparkled with all colors so beautifully that the children stood still and looked at them. “Why do you stand gaping there?” cried the dwarf, and his ashen-gray face became copper-red with rage. He was going on with his bad words when a loud growling was heard, and a black bear came trotting towards them out of the forest. The dwarf sprang up in a fright, but he could not get to his cave, for the bear was already close. Then in the dread of his heart he cried, “Dear Mr. Bear, spare me, I will give you all my treasures; look, the beautiful jewels lying there! Grant me my life; what do you want with such a slender little fellow as I? you would not feel me between your teeth. Come, take these two wicked girls, they are tender morsels for you, fat as young quails; for mercy’s sake eat them!” The bear took no heed of his words, but gave the wicked creature a single blow with his paw, and he did not move again.

The girls had run away, but the bear called to them, “Snow-white and Rose-red, do not be afraid; wait, I will come with you.” Then they knew his voice and waited, and when he came up to them suddenly his bearskin fell off, and he stood there, a handsome man, clothed all in gold. “I am a King’s son,” he said, “and I was bewitched by that wicked dwarf, who had stolen my treasures; I have had to run about the forest as a savage bear until I was freed by his death. Now he has got his well-deserved punishment.”

Snow-white was married to him, and Rose-red to his brother, and they divided between them the great treasure which the dwarf had gathered together in his cave. The old mother lived peacefully and happily with her children for many years. She took the two rose-trees with her, and they stood before her window, and every year bore the most beautiful roses, white and red.

The Wise Servant

How fortunate is the master, and how well all goes in his house, when he has a wise servant who listens to his orders and does not obey them, but prefers following his own wisdom. A clever John of this kind was once sent out by his master to seek a lost cow. He stayed away a long time, and the master thought, “Faithful John does not spare any pains over his work!” As, however, he did not come back at all, the master was afraid lest some misfortune had befallen him, and set out himself to look for him. He had to search a long time, but at last he perceived the boy who was running up and down a large field. “Now, dear John,” said the master when he had got up to him, “hast thou found the cow which I sent thee to seek?” “No, master,” he answered, “I have not found the cow, but then I have not looked for it.” “Then what hast thou looked for, John?” “Something better, and that luckily I have found.” “What is that, John?” “Three blackbirds,” answered the boy. “And where are they?” asked the master. “I see one of them, I hear the other, and I am running after the third,” answered the wise boy.

Take example by this, do not trouble yourselves about your masters or their orders, but rather do what comes into your head and pleases you, and then you will act just as wisely as prudent John.

The Glass Coffin

Let no one ever say that a poor tailor cannot do great things and win high honors; all that is needed is that he should go to the right smithy, and what is of most consequence, that he should have good luck. A civil, adroit tailor's apprentice once went out travelling, and came into a great forest, and, as he did not know the way, he lost himself. Night fell, and nothing was left for him to do, but to seek a bed in this painful solitude. He might certainly have found a good bed on the soft moss, but the fear of wild beasts let him have no rest there, and at last he was forced to make up his mind to spend the night in a tree. He sought out a high oak, climbed up to the top of it, and thanked God that he had his goose with him, for otherwise the wind which blew over the top of the tree would have carried him away.

After he had spent some hours in the darkness, not without fear and trembling, he saw at a very short distance the glimmer of a light, and as he thought that a human habitation might be there, where he would be better off than on the branches of a tree, he got carefully down and went towards the light. It guided him to a small hut that was woven together of reeds and rushes. He knocked boldly, the door opened, and by the light which came forth he saw a little hoary old man who wore a coat made of bits of colored stuff sewn together. "Who are you, and what do you want?" asked the man in a grumbling voice. "I am a poor tailor," he answered, "whom night has surprised here in the wilderness, and I earnestly beg you to take me into your hut until morning." "Go your way," replied the old man in a surly voice, "I will have nothing to do with runagates; seek for yourself a shelter elsewhere." After these words he was about to slip into his hut again, but the tailor held him so tightly by the corner of his coat, and pleaded so piteously, that the old man, who was not so ill-natured as he wished to appear, was at last softened, and took him into the hut with him where he gave him something to eat, and then pointed out to him a very good bed in a corner.

The weary tailor needed no rocking; but slept sweetly till morning, but even then would not have thought of getting up, if he had not been aroused by a great noise. A violent sound of screaming and roaring forced its way through the thin walls of the hut. The tailor, full of unwonted courage, jumped up, put his clothes on in haste, and hurried out. Then close by the hut, he saw a great black bull and a beautiful stag, which were just preparing for a violent struggle. They rushed at each other with such extreme rage that the ground shook with their trampling, and the air resounded with their cries. For a long time it was uncertain which of the two would gain the victory; at length the stag thrust his horns into his adversary's body, whereupon the bull fell to the earth with a terrific roar, and was thoroughly despatched by a few strokes from the stag.

The tailor, who had watched the fight with astonishment, was still standing there motionless, when the stag in full career bounded up to him, and before he could escape, caught him up on his great horns. He had not much time to collect his thoughts, for it went in a swift race over stock and stone, mountain and valley, wood and meadow. He held with both hands to the tops of the horns, and resigned himself to his fate. It seemed, however, to him just as if he were flying away. At length the stag stopped in front of a wall of rock, and gently let the tailor down. The tailor, more dead than alive, required a longer time than that to come to himself. When he had in some degree recovered, the stag, which had remained standing by him, pushed its horns with such force against a door which was in the rock, that it sprang open. Flames of fire shot forth, after which followed a great smoke, which hid the stag from his sight. The tailor did not know what to do, or whither to turn, in order to get out of this desert and back to human beings again. Whilst he was standing thus undecided, a voice sounded out of the rock, which cried to him, “Enter without fear, no evil shall befall you thee.” He hesitated, but driven by a mysterious force, he obeyed the voice and went through the iron-door into a large spacious hall, whose ceiling, walls and floor were made of shining polished square stones, on each of which were cut letters which were unknown to him. He looked at everything full of admiration, and was on the point of going out again, when he once more heard the voice which said to him, “Step on the stone which lies in the middle of the hall, and great good fortune awaits thee.”

His courage had already grown so great that he obeyed the order. The stone began to give way under his feet, and sank slowly down into the depths. When it was once more firm, and the tailor looked round, he found himself in a hall which in size resembled the former. Here, however, there was more to look at and to admire. Hollow places were cut in the walls, in which stood vases of transparent glass which were filled with colored spirit or with a bluish vapour. On the floor of the hall two great glass chests stood opposite to each other, which at once excited his curiosity. When he went to one of them he saw inside it a handsome structure like a castle surrounded by farm-buildings, stables and barns, and a quantity of other good things. Everything was small, but exceedingly carefully and delicately made, and seemed to be cut out by a dexterous hand with the greatest exactitude.

He might not have turned away his eyes from the consideration of this rarity for some time, if the voice had not once more made itself heard. It ordered him to turn round and look at the glass chest which was standing opposite. How his admiration increased when he saw therein a maiden of the greatest beauty! She lay as if asleep, and was wrapped in her long fair hair as in a precious mantle. Her eyes were closely shut, but the brightness of her complexion and a ribbon which her breathing moved to and fro, left no doubt that she was alive. The tailor was looking at the beauty with beating heart, when she suddenly opened her eyes, and started up at the sight of him in joyful terror. “Just Heaven!” cried she, “my deliverance is at hand! Quick, quick, help me out of my prison; if thou pushest back the bolt of this glass coffin, then I shall be free.” The tailor obeyed without delay, and she immediately raised up the glass lid, came out and hastened into the corner of the hall, where she covered herself with a large cloak. Then she seated herself on a stone, ordered the young man to come to her, and after she had imprinted a friendly kiss on his lips, she said, “My long-desired deliverer, kind Heaven has guided thee to me, and put an end to my sorrows. On the self- same day when they end, shall thy happiness begin. Thou art the husband chosen for me by Heaven, and shalt pass thy life in unbroken joy, loved by me, and rich to overflowing in every earthly possession. Seat thyself, and listen to the story of my life:

“I am the daughter of a rich count. My parents died when I was still in my tender youth, and recommended me in their last will to my elder brother, by whom I was brought up. We loved each other so tenderly, and were so alike in our way of thinking and our inclinations, that we both embraced the resolution never to marry, but to stay together to the end of our lives. In our house there was no lack of company; neighbors and friends visited us often, and we showed the greatest hospitality to every one. So it came to pass one evening that a stranger came riding to our castle, and, under pretext of not being able to get on to the next place, begged for shelter for the night. We granted his request with ready courtesy, and he entertained us in the most agreeable manner during supper by conversation intermingled with stories. My brother liked the stranger so much that he begged him to spend a couple of days with us, to which, after some hesitation, he consented. We did not rise from table until late in the night, the stranger was shown to room, and I hastened, as I was tired, to lay my limbs in my soft bed. Hardly had I slept for a short time, when the sound of faint and delightful music awoke me. As I could not conceive from whence it came, I wanted to summon my waiting-maid who slept in the next room, but to my astonishment I found that speech was taken away from me by an unknown force. I felt as if a mountain were weighing down my breast, and was unable to make the very slightest sound. In the meantime, by the light of my night-lamp, I saw the stranger enter my room through two doors which were fast bolted. He came to me and said, that by magic arts which were at his command, he had caused the lovely music to sound in order to awaken me, and that he now forced his way through all fastenings with the intention of offering me his hand and heart. My repugnance to his magic arts was, however, so great, that I vouchsafed him no answer. He remained for a time standing without moving, apparently with the idea of waiting for a favorable decision, but as I continued to keep silence, he angrily declared he would revenge himself and find means to punish my pride, and left the room. I passed the night in the greatest disquietude, and only fell asleep towards morning. When I awoke, I hurried to my brother, but did not find him in his room, and the attendants told me that he had ridden forth with the stranger to the chase by daybreak.

“I at once suspected nothing good. I dressed myself quickly, ordered my palfrey to be saddled, and accompanied only by one servant, rode full gallop to the forest. The servant fell with his horse, and could not follow me, for the horse had broken its foot. I pursued my way without halting, and in a few minutes I saw the stranger coming towards me with a beautiful stag which he led by a cord. I asked him where he had left my brother, and how he had come by this stag, out of whose great eyes I saw tears flowing. Instead of answering me, he began to laugh loudly. I fell into a great rage at this, pulled out a pistol and discharged it at the monster; but the ball rebounded from his breast and went into my horse's head. I fell to the ground, and the stranger muttered some words which deprived me of consciousness.

"When I came to my senses again I found myself in this underground cave in a glass coffin. The magician appeared once again, and said he had changed my brother into a stag, my castle with all that belonged to it, diminished in size by his arts, he had shut up in the other glass chest, and my people, who were all turned into smoke, he had confined in glass bottles. He told me that if I would now comply with his wish, it was an easy thing for him to put everything back in its former state, as he had nothing to do but open the vessels, and everything would return once more to its natural form. I answered him as little as I had done the first time. He vanished and left me in my prison, in which a deep sleep came on me. Amongst the visions which passed before my eyes, that was the most comforting in which a young man came and set me free, and when I opened my eyes to-day I saw thee, and beheld my dream fulfilled. Help me to accomplish the other things which happened in those visions. The first is that we lift the glass chest in which my castle is enclosed, on to that broad stone."

As soon as the stone was laden, it began to rise up on high with the maiden and the young man, and mounted through the opening of the ceiling into the upper hall, from whence they then could easily reach the open air. Here the maiden opened the lid, and it was marvellous to behold how the castle, the houses, and the farm buildings which were enclosed, stretched themselves out and grew to their natural size with the greatest rapidity. After this, the maiden and the tailor returned to the cave beneath the earth, and had the vessels which were filled with smoke carried up by the stone. The maiden had scarcely opened the bottles when the blue smoke rushed out and changed itself into living men, in whom she recognized her servants and her people. Her joy was still more increased when her brother, who had killed the magician in the form of the bull, came out of the forest towards them in his human form, and on the self-same day the maiden, in accordance with her promise, gave her hand at the altar to the lucky tailor.

Lazy Harry

Harry was lazy, and although he had nothing else to do but drive his goat daily to pasture, he nevertheless groaned when he went home after his day's work was done. "It is indeed a heavy burden," said he, "and a wearisome employment to drive a goat into the field this way year after year, till late into the autumn! If one could but lie down and sleep, but no, one must have one's eyes open lest it hurts the young trees, or squeezes itself through the hedge into a garden, or runs away altogether. How can one have any rest, or peace of one's life?" He seated himself, collected his thoughts, and considered how he could set his shoulders free from this burden. For a long time all thinking was to no purpose, but suddenly it was as if scales fell from his eyes. "I know what I will do," he cried, "I will marry fat Trina who has also a goat, and can take mine out with hers, and then I shall have no more need to trouble myself."

So Harry got up, set his weary legs in motion, and went right across the street, for it was no farther, to where the parents of fat Trina lived, and asked for their industrious and virtuous daughter in marriage. The parents did not reflect long. "Birds of a feather, flock together," they thought, and consented.

So fat Trina became Harry's wife, and led out both the goats. Harry had a good time of it, and had no work that he required to rest from but his own idleness. He only went out with her now and then, and said, "I merely do it that I may afterwards enjoy rest more, otherwise one loses all feeling for it."

But fat Trina was no less idle. "Dear Harry," said she one day, "why should we make our lives so toilsome when there is no need for it, and thus ruin the best days of our youth? Would it not be better for us to give the two goats which disturb us every morning in our sweetest sleep with their bleating, to our neighbor, and he will give us a beehive for them. We will put the beehive in a sunny place behind the house, and trouble ourselves no more about it. Bees do not require to be taken care of, or driven into the field; they fly out and find the way home again for themselves, and collect honey without giving the very least trouble." "Thou hast spoken like a sensible woman," replied Harry. "We will carry out thy proposal without delay, and besides all that, honey tastes better and nourishes one better than goat's milk, and it can be kept longer too."

The neighbor willingly gave a beehive for the two goats. The bees flew in and out from early morning till late evening without ever tiring, and filled the hive with the most beautiful honey, so that in autumn Harry was able to take a whole pitcherful out of it.

They placed the jug on a board which was fixed to the wall of their bed-room, and as they were afraid that it might be stolen from them, or that the mice might find it, Trina brought in a stout hazel-stick and put it beside her bed, so that without unnecessary getting up she might reach it with her hand, and drive away the uninvited guests. Lazy Harry did not like to leave his bed before noon. “He who rises early,” said he, “wastes his substance.”

One morning when he was still lying amongst the feathers in broad daylight, resting after his long sleep, he said to his wife, “Women are fond of sweet things, and thou art always tasting the honey in private; it will be better for us to exchange it for a goose with a young gosling, before thou eatest up the whole of it.” “But,” answered Trina, “not before we have a child to take care of them! Am I to worry myself with the little geese, and spend all my strength on them to no purpose.” “Dost thou think,” said Harry, “that the youngster will look after geese? Now-a-days children no longer obey, they do according to their own fancy, because they consider themselves cleverer than their parents, just like that lad who was sent to seek the cow and chased three blackbirds.” “Oh,” replied Trina, “this one shall fare badly if he does not do what I say! I will take a stick and belabour his skin for him with more blows than I can count. Look, Harry,” cried she in her zeal, and seized the stick which she had to drive the mice away with, “Look, this is the way I will fall on him!” She reached her arm out to strike, but unhappily hit the honey-pitcher above the bed. The pitcher struck against the wall and fell down in fragments, and the fine honey streamed down on the ground. “There lie the goose and the young gosling,” said Harry, “and want no looking after. But it is lucky that the pitcher did not fall on my head. We have all reason to be satisfied with our lot.” And then as he saw that there was still some honey in one of the fragments he stretched out his hand for it, and said quite gaily, “The remains, my wife, we will still eat with a relish, and we will rest a little after the fright we have had. What matters if we do get up a little later the day is always long enough.” “Yes,” answered Trina, “we shall always get to the end of it at the proper time. Dost thou know that the snail was once asked to a wedding and set out to go, but arrived at the christening. In front of the house it fell over the fence, and said, ‘Speed does no good.’”

The Griffin

There was once upon a time a King, but where he reigned and what he was called, I do not know. He had no son, but an only daughter who had always been ill, and no doctor had been able to cure her. Then it was foretold to the King that his daughter should eat herself well with an apple. So he ordered it to be proclaimed throughout the whole of his kingdom, that whosoever brought his daughter an apple with which she could eat herself well, should have her to wife, and be King. This became known to a peasant who had three sons, and he said to the eldest, “Go out into the garden and take a basketful of those beautiful apples with the red cheeks and carry them to the court; perhaps the King’s daughter will be able to eat herself well with them, and then thou wilt marry her and be King.” The lad did so, and set out.

When he had gone a short way he met a little iron man who asked him what he had there in the basket, to which replied Uele, for so was he named, “Frogs’ legs.” On this the little man said, “Well, so shall it be, and remain,” and went away. At length Uele arrived at the palace, and made it known that he had brought apples which would cure the King’s daughter if she ate them. This delighted the King hugely, and he caused Uele to be brought before him; but, alas! when he opened the basket, instead of having apples in it he had frogs’ legs which were still kicking about. On this the King grew angry, and had him driven out of the house. When he got home he told his father how it had fared with him. Then the father sent the next son, who was called Seame, but all went with him just as it had gone with Uele. He also met the little iron man, who asked what he had there in the basket. Seame said, “Hogs’ bristles,” and the iron man said, “well, so shall it be, and remain.” When Seame got to the King’s palace and said he brought apples with which the King’s daughter might eat herself well, they did not want to let him go in, and said that one fellow had already been there, and had treated them as if they were fools. Seame, however, maintained that he certainly had the apples, and that they ought to let him go in. At length they believed him, and led him to the King. But when he uncovered the basket, he had but hogs’ bristles. This enraged the King most terribly, so he caused Seame to be whipped out of the house. When he got home he related all that had befallen him, then the youngest boy, whose name was Hans, but who was always called Stupid Hans, came and asked his father if he might go with some apples. “Oh!” said the father, “thou wouldst be just the right fellow for such a thing! If the clever ones can’t manage it, what canst thou do?” The boy, however, did not believe him, and said, “Indeed, father, I wish to go.” “Just get away, thou stupid fellow, thou must wait till thou art wiser,” said the father to that, and turned his back. Hans, however, pulled at the back of his smock-frock and said, “Indeed, father, I wish to go.” “Well, then, so far as I am concerned thou mayst go, but thou wilt soon come home again!” replied the old man in a spiteful voice. The boy, however, was tremendously delighted and jumped for joy. “Well, act like a fool! thou growest more stupid every day!” said the father again. Hans, however, did not care about that, and did not let it spoil his pleasure, but as it was then night, he thought he might as well wait until the morrow, for he could not get to court that day. All night long he could not sleep in his bed, and if he did doze for a moment, he dreamt of beautiful maidens, of palaces, of gold, and of silver, and all kinds of things of that sort. Early in the morning, he went forth on his way, and directly afterwards the little shabby-looking man in his iron clothes, came to him and asked what he was carrying in the basket. Hans gave him the answer that he was carrying apples with which the King’s daughter was to eat herself well. “Then,” said the little man, “so shall they be, and remain.” But at the court they would none of them let Hans go in, for they said two had already been there who had told them that they were bringing apples, and one of them had frogs’ legs, and the other hogs’ bristles. Hans, however, resolutely maintained that he most certainly had no frogs’ legs, but some of the most beautiful apples in the whole kingdom. As he spoke so pleasantly, the door-keeper thought he could not be telling a lie, and asked him to go in, and he was right, for when Hans uncovered his basket in the King’s presence, golden-yellow apples came tumbling out. The King was delighted, and caused some of them to be taken to his daughter, and then waited in anxious expectation until news should be brought to him of the effect they had. But before much time had passed by, news was brought to him: but who do you think it was who came? it was his daughter herself! As soon as she had eaten of those apples, she was cured, and sprang out of her bed. The joy the King felt cannot be described! but now he did not want to give his daughter in marriage to Hans, and said he must first make him a boat which would go quicker on dry land than on water. Hans agreed to the conditions, and went home, and related how it had fared with him. Then the father sent Uele into the forest to make a boat of that kind. He worked diligently, and whistled all the time. At mid-day, when the sun was at the highest, came the little iron man and asked what he was making? Uele gave him for answer, “Wooden bowls for the kitchen.” The iron man said, “So it shall be, and remain.” By evening Uele thought he had now made the boat, but when he wanted to get into it, he had nothing but wooden bowls. The next day Seame went into the forest, but everything went with him just as it had done with Uele. On the third day Stupid Hans went. He worked away most industriously, so that the whole forest resounded with the heavy strokes, and all the while he sang and whistled right merrily. At mid-day, when it was the hottest, the little man came again, and asked what he was making? “A boat which will go quicker on dry land than on the water,” replied Hans, “and when I have finished it, I am to have the King’s daughter for my wife.” “Well,” said the little man, “such an one shall it be, and remain.” In the evening, when the sun had turned into gold, Hans finished his boat, and all that was wanted for it. He got into it and rowed to the palace. The boat went as swiftly as the wind. The King saw it from afar, but would not give his daughter to Hans yet, and said he must first take a hundred hares out to pasture from early morning until late evening, and if one of them got away, he should not have his daughter. Hans was contented with this, and the next day went with his flock to the pasture, and took great care that none of them ran away.

Before many hours had passed came a servant from the palace, and told Hans that he must give her a hare instantly, for some visitors had come unexpectedly. Hans, however, was very well aware what that meant, and said he would not give her one; the King might set some hare soup before his guest next day. The maid, however, would not believe in his refusal, and at last she began to get angry with him. Then Hans said that if the King's daughter came herself, he would give her a hare. The maid told this in the palace, and the daughter did go herself. In the meantime, however, the little man came again to Hans, and asked him what he was doing there? He said he had to watch over a hundred hares and see that none of them ran away, and then he might marry the King's daughter and be King. "Good," said the little man, "there is a whistle for thee, and if one of them runs away, just whistle with it, and then it will come back again." When the King's daughter came, Hans gave her a hare into her apron; but when she had gone about a hundred steps with it, he whistled, and the hare jumped out of the apron, and before she could turn round was back to the flock again. When the evening came the hare-herd whistled once more, and looked to see if all were there, and then drove them to the palace. The King wondered how Hans had been able to take a hundred hares to graze without losing any of them; he would, however, not give him his daughter yet, and said he must now bring him a feather from the Griffin's tail. Hans set out at once, and walked straight forwards. In the evening he came to a castle, and there he asked for a night's lodging, for at that time there were no inns. The lord of the castle promised him that with much pleasure, and asked where he was going? Hans answered, "To the Griffin." "Oh! to the Griffin! They tell me he knows everything, and I have lost the key of an iron money-chest; so you might be so good as to ask him where it is." "Yes, indeed," said Hans, "I will do that." Early the next morning he went onwards, and on his way arrived at another castle in which he again stayed the night. When the people who lived there learnt that he was going to the Griffin, they said they had in the house a daughter who was ill, and that they had already tried every means to cure her, but none of them had done her any good, and he might be so kind as to ask the Griffin what would make their daughter healthy again? Hans said he would willingly do that, and went onwards. Then he came to a lake, and instead of a ferry-boat, a tall, tall man was there who had to carry everybody across. The man asked Hans whither he was journeying? "To the Griffin," said Hans. "Then when you get to him," said the man, "just ask him why I am forced to carry everybody over the lake." "Yes, indeed, most certainly I'll do that," said Hans. Then the man took him up on his shoulders, and carried him across. At length Hans arrived at the Griffin's house, but the wife only was at home, and not the Griffin himself. Then the woman asked him what he wanted? Thereupon he told her everything; — that he had to get a feather out of the Griffin's tail, and that there was a castle where they had lost the key of their money-chest, and he was to ask the Griffin where it was? — that in another castle the daughter was ill, and he was to learn what would cure her? — and then not far from thence there was a lake and a man beside it, who was forced to carry people across it, and he was very anxious to learn why the man was obliged to do it. Then said the woman, “But look here, my good friend, no Christian can speak to the Griffin; he devours them all; but if you like, you can lie down under his bed, and in the night, when he is quite fast asleep, you can reach out and pull a feather out of his tail, and as for those things which you are to learn, I will ask about them myself.” Hans was quite satisfied with this, and got under the bed. In the evening, the Griffin came home, and as soon as he entered the room, said, “Wife, I smell a Christian.” “Yes,” said the woman, “one was here to-day, but he went away again;” and on that the Griffin said no more.

In the middle of the night when the Griffin was snoring loudly, Hans reached out and plucked a feather from his tail. The Griffin woke up instantly, and said, “Wife, I smell a Christian, and it seems to me that somebody was pulling at my tail.” His wife said, “Thou hast certainly been dreaming, and I told thee before that a Christian was here to-day, but that he went away again. He told me all kinds of things that in one castle they had lost the key of their money-chest, and could find it nowhere.” “Oh! the fools!” said the Griffin; “the key lies in the wood- house under a log of wood behind the door.” “And then he said that in another castle the daughter was ill, and they knew no remedy that would cure her.” “Oh! the fools!” said the Griffin; “under the cellar-steps a toad has made its nest of her hair, and if she got her hair back she would be well.” “And then he also said that there was a place where there was a lake and a man beside it who was forced to carry everybody across.” “Oh, the fool!” said the Griffin; “if he only put one man down in the middle, he would never have to carry another across.” Early the next morning the Griffin got up and went out. Then Hans came forth from under the bed, and he had a beautiful feather, and had heard what the Griffin had said about the key, and the daughter, and the ferry-man. The Griffin’s wife repeated it all once more to him that he might not forget it, and then he went home again. First he came to the man by the lake, who asked him what the Griffin had said, but Hans replied that he must first carry him across, and then he would tell him. So the man carried him across, and when he was over Hans told him that all he had to do was to set one person down in the middle of the lake, and then he would never have to carry over any more. The man was hugely delighted, and told Hans that out of gratitude he would take him once more across, and back again. But Hans said no, he would save him the trouble, he was quite satisfied already, and pursued his way. Then he came to the castle where the daughter was ill; he took her on his shoulders, for she could not walk, and carried her down the cellar-steps and pulled out the toad’s nest from beneath the lowest step and gave it into her hand, and she sprang off his shoulder and up the steps before him, and was quite cured. Then were the father and mother beyond measure rejoiced, and they gave Hans gifts of gold and of silver, and whatsoever else he wished for, that they gave him. And when he got to the other castle he went at once into the wood-house, and found the key under the log of wood behind the door, and took it to the lord of the castle. He also was not a little pleased, and gave Hans as a reward much of the gold that was in the chest, and all kinds of things besides, such as cows, and sheep, and goats. When Hans arrived before the King, with all these things — with the money, and the gold, and the silver and the cows, sheep and goats, the King asked him how he had come by them. Then Hans told him that the Griffin gave every one whatsoever he wanted. So the King thought he himself could make such things useful, and set out on his way to the Griffin; but when he got to the lake, it happened that he was the very first who arrived there after Hans, and the man put him down in the middle of it and went away, and the King was drowned. Hans, however, married the daughter, and became King.

Strong Hans

There were once a man and a woman who had an only child, and lived quite alone in a solitary valley. It came to pass that the mother once went into the wood to gather branches of fir, and took with her little Hans, who was just two years old. As it was spring-time, and the child took pleasure in the many-coloured flowers, she went still further onwards with him into the forest. Suddenly two robbers sprang out of the thicket, seized the mother and child, and carried them far away into the black forest, where no one ever came from one year's end to another. The poor woman urgently begged the robbers to set her and her child free, but their hearts were made of stone, they would not listen to her prayers and entreaties, and drove her on farther by force. After they had worked their way through bushes and briars for about two miles, they came to a rock where there was a door, at which the robbers knocked and it opened at once. They had to go through a long dark passage, and at last came into a great cavern, which was lighted by a fire which burnt on the hearth. On the wall hung swords, sabres, and other deadly weapons which gleamed in the light, and in the midst stood a black table at which four other robbers were sitting gambling, and the captain sat at the head of it. As soon as he saw the woman he came and spoke to her, and told her to be at ease and have no fear, they would do nothing to hurt her, but she must look after the house-keeping, and if she kept everything in order, she should not fare ill with them. Thereupon they gave her something to eat, and showed her a bed where she might sleep with her child.

The woman stayed many years with the robbers, and Hans grew tall and strong. His mother told him stories, and taught him to read an old book of tales about knights which she found in the cave. When Hans was nine years old, he made himself a strong club out of a branch of fir, hid it behind the bed, and then went to his mother and said, "Dear mother, pray tell me who is my father; I must and will know." His mother was silent and would not tell him, that he might not become home-sick; moreover she knew that the godless robbers would not let him go away, but it almost broke her heart that Hans should not go to his father. In the night, when the robbers came home from their robbing expedition, Hans brought out his club, stood before the captain, and said, "I now wish to know who is my father, and if thou dost not at once tell me I will strike thee down." Then the captain laughed, and gave Hans such a box on the ear that he rolled under the table. Hans got up again, held his tongue, and thought, "I will wait another year and then try again, perhaps I shall do better then." When the year was over, he brought out his club again, rubbed the dust off it, looked at it well, and said, "It is a stout strong club." At night the robbers came home, drank one jug of wine after another, and their heads began to be heavy. Then Hans brought out his club, placed himself before the captain, and asked him who was his father? But the captain again gave him such a vigorous box on the ear that Hans rolled under the table, but it was not long before he was up again, and beat the captain and the robbers so with his club, that they could no longer move either their arms or their legs. His mother stood in a corner full of admiration of his bravery and strength. When Hans had done his work, he went to his mother, and said, “Now I have shown myself to be in earnest, but now I must also know who is my father.” “Dear Hans,” answered the mother, “come, we will go and seek him until we find him.” She took from the captain the key to the entrance-door, and Hans fetched a great meal-sack and packed into it gold and silver, and whatsoever else he could find that was beautiful, until it was full, and then he took it on his back. They left the cave, but how Hans did open his eyes when he came out of the darkness into daylight, and saw the green forest, and the flowers, and the birds, and the morning sun in the sky. He stood there and wondered at everything just as if he had not been very wise. His mother looked for the way home, and when they had walked for a couple of hours, they got safely into their lonely valley and to their little house. The father was sitting in the doorway. He wept for joy when he recognized his wife and heard that Hans was his son, for he had long regarded them both as dead. But Hans, although he was not twelve years old, was a head taller than his father. They went into the little room together, but Hans had scarcely put his sack on the bench by the stove, than the whole house began to crack the bench broke down and then the floor, and the heavy sack fell through into the cellar. “God save us!” cried the father, “what’s that? Now thou hast broken our little house to pieces!” “Don’t grow any grey hairs about that, dear father,” answered Hans; “there, in that sack, is more than is wanting for a new house.” The father and Hans at once began to build a new house; to buy cattle and land, and to keep a farm. Hans ploughed the fields, and when he followed the plough and pushed it into the ground, the bullocks had scarcely any need to draw. The next spring, Hans said, “Keep all the money and get a walking-stick that weighs a hundred-weight made for me that I may go a-travelling.” When the wished-for stick was ready, he left his father’s house, went forth, and came to a deep, dark forest. There he heard something crunching and cracking, looked round, and saw a fir-tree which was wound round like a rope from the bottom to the top, and when he looked upwards he saw a great fellow who had laid hold of the tree and was twisting it like a willow-wand. “Hollo!” cried Hans, “what art thou doing up there?” the fellow replied, “I got some faggots together yesterday and am twisting a rope for them.” “That is what I like,” thought Hans, “he has some strength,” and he called to him, “Leave that alone, and come with me.” The fellow came down, and he was taller by a whole head than Hans, and Hans was not little. “Thy name is now Fir-twister,” said Hans to him. Thereupon they went further and heard something knocking and hammering with such force that the ground shook at every stroke. Shortly afterwards they came to a mighty rock, before which a giant was standing and striking great pieces of it away with his fist. When Hans asked what he was about, he answered, “At night, when I want to sleep, bears, wolves, and other vermin of that kind come, which sniff and snuffle about me and won’t let me rest; so I want to build myself a house and lay myself inside it, so that I may have some peace." "Oh, indeed," thought Hans, "I can make use of this one also;" and said to him, "Leave thy house-building alone, and go with me; thou shalt be called Rock-splitter." The man consented, and they all three roamed through the forest, and wherever they went the wild beasts were terrified, and ran away from them. In the evening they came to an old deserted castle, went up into it, and laid themselves down in the hall to sleep. The next morning Hans went into the garden. It had run quite wild, and was full of thorns and bushes. And as he was thus walking round about, a wild boar rushed at him; he, however, gave it such a blow with his club that it fell directly. He took it on his shoulders and carried it in, and they put it on a spit, roasted it, and enjoyed themselves. Then they arranged that each day, in turn, two should go out hunting, and one should stay at home, and cook nine pounds of meat for each of them. Fir-twister stayed at home the first, and Hans and Rock-splitter went out hunting. When Fir-twister was busy cooking, a little shrivelled-up old mannikin came to him in the castle, and asked for some meat. "Be off, sly hypocrite," he answered, "thou needest no meat." But how astonished Fir-twister was when the little insignificant dwarf sprang up at him, and belaboured him so with his fists that he could not defend himself, but fell on the ground and gasped for breath! The dwarf did not go away until he had thoroughly vented his anger on him. When the two others came home from hunting, Fir-twister said nothing to them of the old mannikin and of the blows which he himself had received, and thought, "When they stay at home, they may just try their chance with the little scrubbing-brush;" and the mere thought of that gave him pleasure already.

The next day Rock-splitter stayed at home, and he fared just as Fir-twister had done, he was very ill-treated by the dwarf because he was not willing to give him any meat. When the others came home in the evening, Fir-twister easily saw what he had suffered, but both kept silence, and thought, "Hans also must taste some of that soup."

Hans, who had to stay at home the next day, did his work in the kitchen as it had to be done, and as he was standing skimming the pan, the dwarf came and without more ado demanded a bit of meat. Then Hans thought, "He is a poor wretch, I will give him some of my share, that the others may not run short," and handed him a bit. When the dwarf had devoured it, he again asked for some meat, and good-natured Hans gave it to him, and told him it was a handsome piece, and that he was to be content with it. But the dwarf begged again for the third time. "Thou art shameless!" said Hans, and gave him none. Then the malicious dwarf wanted to spring on him and treat him as he had treated Fir-twister and Rock-splitter, but he had got to the wrong man. Hans, without exerting himself much, gave him a couple of blows which made him jump down the castle steps. Hans was about to run after him, but fell right over him, for he was so tall. When he rose up again, the dwarf had got the start of him. Hans hurried after him as far as the forest, and saw him slip into a hole in the rock. Hans now went home, but he had marked the spot. When the two others came back, they were surprised that

Hans was so well. He told them what had happened, and then they no longer concealed how it had fared with them. Hans laughed and said, “It served you quite right; why were you so greedy with your meat? It is a disgrace that you who are so big should have let yourselves be beaten by the dwarf.” Thereupon they took a basket and a rope, and all three went to the hole in the rock into which the dwarf had slipped, and let Hans and his club down in the basket. When Hans had reached the bottom, he found a door, and when he opened it a maiden was sitting there who was lovely as any picture, nay, so beautiful that no words can express it, and by her side sat the dwarf and grinned at Hans like a sea-cat! She, however, was bound with chains, and looked so mournfully at him that Hans felt great pity for her, and thought to himself, “Thou must deliver her out of the power of the wicked dwarf,” and gave him such a blow with his club that he fell down dead. Immediately the chains fell from the maiden, and Hans was enraptured with her beauty. She told him she was a King’s daughter whom a savage count had stolen away from her home, and imprisoned there among the rocks, because she would have nothing to say to him. The count had, however, set the dwarf as a watchman, and he had made her bear misery and vexation enough. And now Hans placed the maiden in the basket and had her drawn up; the basket came down again, but Hans did not trust his two companions, and thought, “They have already shown themselves to be false, and told me nothing about the dwarf; who knows what design they may have against me?” So he put his club in the basket, and it was lucky he did; for when the basket was half-way up, they let it fall again, and if Hans had really been sitting in it he would have been killed. But now he did not know how he was to work his way out of the depths, and when he turned it over and over in his mind he found no counsel. “It is indeed sad,” said he to himself, “that I have to waste away down here,” and as he was thus walking backwards and forwards, he once more came to the little chamber where the maiden had been sitting, and saw that the dwarf had a ring on his finger which shone and sparkled. Then he drew it off and put it on, and when he turned it round on his finger, he suddenly heard something rustle over his head. He looked up and saw spirits of the air hovering above, who told him he was their master, and asked what his desire might be? Hans was at first struck dumb, but afterwards he said that they were to carry him above again. They obeyed instantly, and it was just as if he had flown up himself. When, however, he was above again, he found no one in sight. Fir-twister and Rock-splitter had hurried away, and had taken the beautiful maiden with them. But Hans turned the ring, and the spirits of the air came and told him that the two were on the sea. Hans ran and ran without stopping, until he came to the sea-shore, and there far, far out on the water, he perceived a little boat in which his faithless comrades were sitting; and in fierce anger he leapt, without thinking what he was doing, club in hand into the water, and began to swim, but the club, which weighed a hundredweight, dragged him deep down until he was all but drowned. Then in the very nick of time he turned his ring, and immediately the spirits of the air came and bore him as swift as lightning into the boat.

He swung his club and gave his wicked comrades the reward they merited and threw them into the water, and then he sailed with the beautiful maiden, who had been in the greatest alarm, and whom he delivered for the second time, home to her father and mother, and married her, and all rejoiced exceedingly.

The Peasant in Heaven

Once on a time a poor pious peasant died, and arrived before the gate of heaven. At the same time a very rich, rich lord came there who also wanted to get into heaven. Then Saint Peter came with the key, and opened the door, and let the great man in, but apparently did not see the peasant, and shut the door again. And now the peasant outside, heard how the great man was received in heaven with all kinds of rejoicing, and how they were making music, and singing within. At length all became quiet again, and Saint Peter came and opened the gate of heaven, and let the peasant in. The peasant, however, expected that they would make music and sing when he went in also, but all remained quite quiet; he was received with great affection, it is true, and the angels came to meet him, but no one sang. Then the peasant asked Saint Peter how it was that they did not sing for him as they had done when the rich man went in, and said that it seemed to him that there in heaven things were done with just as much partiality as on earth. Then said Saint Peter, “By no means, thou art just as dear to us as any one else, and wilt enjoy every heavenly delight that the rich man enjoys, but poor fellows like thee come to heaven every day, but a rich man like this does not come more than once in a hundred years!”

Lean Lisa

Lean Lisa was of a very different way of thinking from lazy Harry and fat Trina, who never let anything disturb their peace. She scoured everything with ashes, from morning till evening, and burdened her husband, Long Laurence, with so much work that he had heavier weights to carry than an ass with three sacks. It was, however, all to no purpose, they had nothing and came to nothing. One night as she lay in bed, and could hardly move one limb for weariness, she still did not allow her thoughts to go to sleep. She thrust her elbows into her husband's side, and said, "Listen, Lenz, to what I have been thinking: if I were to find one florin and one was given to me, I would borrow another to put to them, and thou too shouldst give me another, and then as soon as I had got the four florins together, I would buy a young cow." This pleased the husband right well. "It is true," said he, "that I do not know where I am to get the florin which thou wantest as a gift from me; but, if thou canst get the money together, and canst buy a cow with it, thou wilt do well to carry out thy project. I shall be glad," he added, "if the cow has a calf, and then I shall often get a drink of milk to refresh me." "The milk is not for thee," said the woman, "we must let the calf suck that it may become big and fat, and we may be able to sell it well." "Certainly," replied the man, "but still we will take a little milk; that will do no harm." "Who has taught thee to manage cows?" said the woman; "Whether it does harm or not, I will not allow it, and even if thou wert to stand on thy head for it, thou shouldst not have a drop of the milk! Dost thou think, because there is no satisfying thee, Long Laurence, that thou art to eat up what I earn with so much difficulty?" "Wife," said the man, "be quiet, or I will give thee a blow on thy mouth!" "What!" cried she, "thou threatenest me, thou glutton, thou rascal, thou lazy Harry!" She was just laying hold of his hair, but long Laurence got up, seized both Lean Lisa's withered arms in one hand, and with the other he pressed down her head into the pillow, let her scold, and held her until she fell asleep for very weariness. Whether she continued to wrangle when she awoke next morning, or whether she went out to look for the florin which she wanted to find, that I know not.

The Hut in the Forest

A poor wood-cutter lived with his wife and three daughters in a little hut on the edge of a lonely forest. One morning as he was about to go to his work, he said to his wife, “Let my dinner be brought into the forest to me by my eldest daughter, or I shall never get my work done, and in order that she may not miss her way,” he added, “I will take a bag of millet with me and strew the seeds on the path.” When, therefore, the sun was just above the center of the forest, the girl set out on her way with a bowl of soup, but the field-sparrows, and wood-sparrows, larks and finches, blackbirds and siskins had picked up the millet long before, and the girl could not find the track. Then trusting to chance, she went on and on, until the sun sank and night began to fall. The trees rustled in the darkness, the owls hooted, and she began to be afraid. Then in the distance she perceived a light which glimmered between the trees. “There ought to be some people living there, who can take me in for the night,” thought she, and went up to the light. It was not long before she came to a house the windows of which were all lighted up. She knocked, and a rough voice from inside cried, “Come in.” The girl stepped into the dark entrance, and knocked at the door of the room. “Just come in,” cried the voice, and when she opened the door, an old gray-haired man was sitting at the table, supporting his face with both hands, and his white beard fell down over the table almost as far as the ground. By the stove lay three animals, a hen, a cock, and a brindled cow. The girl told her story to the old man, and begged for shelter for the night. The man said,

“Pretty little hen, Pretty little cock, And pretty brindled cow, What say ye to that?”

“Duks,” answered the animals, and that must have meant, “We are willing,” for the old man said, “Here you shall have shelter and food, go to the fire, and cook us our supper.” The girl found in the kitchen abundance of everything, and cooked a good supper, but had no thought of the animals. She carried the full dishes to the table, seated herself by the gray-haired man, ate and satisfied her hunger. When she had had enough, she said, “But now I am tired, where is there a bed in which I can lie down, and sleep?” The animals replied,

“Thou hast eaten with him, Thou hast drunk with him, Thou hast had no thought for us, So find out for thyself where thou canst pass the night.”

Then said the old man, “Just go upstairs, and thou wilt find a room with two beds, shake them up, and put white linen on them, and then I, too, will come and lie down to sleep.” The girl went up, and when she had shaken the beds and put clean sheets on, she lay down in one of them without waiting any longer for the old man. After some time, however, the gray-haired man came, took his candle, looked at the girl and shook his head. When he saw that she had fallen into a sound sleep, he opened a trap-door, and let her down into the cellar.

Late at night the wood-cutter came home, and reproached his wife for leaving him to hunger all day. “It is not my fault,” she replied, “the girl went out with your dinner, and must have lost herself, but she is sure to come back to-morrow.” The wood-cutter, however, arose before dawn to go into the forest, and requested that the second daughter should take him his dinner that day. “I will take a bag with lentils,” said he; “the seeds are larger than millet, the girl will see them better, and can’t lose her way.” At dinner-time, therefore, the girl took out the food, but the lentils had disappeared. The birds of the forest had picked them up as they had done the day before, and had left none. The girl wandered about in the forest until night, and then she too reached the house of the old man, was told to go in, and begged for food and a bed. The man with the white beard again asked the animals,

“Pretty little hen, Pretty little cock, And pretty brindled cow, What say ye to that?”

The animals again replied “Duks,” and everything happened just as it had happened the day before. The girl cooked a good meal, ate and drank with the old man, and did not concern herself about the animals, and when she inquired about her bed they answered,

“Thou hast eaten with him, Thou hast drunk with him, Thou hast had no thought for us, To find out for thyself where thou canst pass the night.”

When she was asleep the old man came, looked at her, shook his head, and let her down into the cellar.

On the third morning the wood-cutter said to his wife, “Send our youngest child out with my dinner to-day, she has always been good and obedient, and will stay in the right path, and not run about after every wild humble-bee, as her sisters did.” The mother did not want to do it, and said, “Am I to lose my dearest child, as well?”

“Have no fear,” he replied, “the girl will not go astray; she is too prudent and sensible; besides I will take some peas with me, and strew them about. They are still larger than lentils, and will show her the way.” But when the girl went out with her basket on her arm, the wood-pigeons had already got all the peas in their crops, and she did not know which way she was to turn. She was full of sorrow and never ceased to think how hungry her father would be, and how her good mother would grieve, if she did not go home. At length when it grew dark, she saw the light and came to the house in the forest. She begged quite prettily to be allowed to spend the night there, and the man with the white beard once more asked his animals,

“Pretty little hen, Pretty little cock, And beautiful brindled cow,
What say ye to that?”

“Duks,” said they. Then the girl went to the stove where the animals were lying, and petted the cock and hen, and stroked their smooth feathers with her hand, and caressed the brindled cow between her horns, and when, in obedience to the old man’s orders, she had made ready some good soup, and the bowl was placed upon the table, she said, “Am I to eat as much as I want, and the good animals to have nothing? Outside is food in plenty, I will look after them first." So she went and brought some barley and stewed it for the cock and hen, and a whole armful of sweet-smelling hay for the cow. "I hope you will like it, dear animals," said she, "and you shall have a refreshing draught in case you are thirsty." Then she fetched in a bucketful of water, and the cock and hen jumped on to the edge of it and dipped their beaks in, and then held up their heads as the birds do when they drink, and the brindled cow also took a hearty draught. When the animals were fed, the girl seated herself at the table by the old man, and ate what he had left. It was not long before the cock and the hen began to thrust their heads beneath their wings, and the eyes of the cow likewise began to blink. Then said the girl, "Ought we not to go to bed?"

"Pretty little hen, Pretty little cock, And pretty brindled cow, What say ye to that?"

The animals answered "Duks,"

"Thou hast eaten with us, Thou hast drunk with us, Thou hast had kind thought for all of us, We wish thee good-night."

Then the maiden went upstairs, shook the feather-beds, and laid clean sheets on them, and when she had done it the old man came and lay down on one of the beds, and his white beard reached down to his feet. The girl lay down on the other, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

She slept quietly till midnight, and then there was such a noise in the house that she awoke. There was a sound of cracking and splitting in every corner, and the doors sprang open, and beat against the walls. The beams groaned as if they were being torn out of their joints, it seemed as if the staircase were falling down, and at length there was a crash as if the entire roof had fallen in. As, however, all grew quiet once more, and the girl was not hurt, she stayed quietly lying where she was, and fell asleep again. But when she woke up in the morning with the brilliancy of the sunshine, what did her eyes behold? She was lying in a vast hall, and everything around her shone with royal splendor; on the walls, golden flowers grew up on a ground of green silk, the bed was of ivory, and the canopy of red velvet, and on a chair close by, was a pair of shoes embroidered with pearls. The girl believed that she was in a dream, but three richly clad attendants came in, and asked what orders she would like to give? "If you will go," she replied, "I will get up at once and make ready some soup for the old man, and then I will feed the pretty little hen, and the cock, and the beautiful brindled cow." She thought the old man was up already, and looked round at his bed; he, however, was not lying in it, but a stranger. And while she was looking at him, and becoming aware that he was young and handsome, he awoke, sat up in bed, and said, "I am a King's son, and was bewitched by a wicked witch, and made to live in this forest, as an old gray-haired man; no one was allowed to be with me but my three attendants in the form of a cock, a hen, and a brindled cow. The spell was not to be broken until a girl came to us whose heart was so good that she showed herself full of love, not only towards mankind, but towards animals — and that thou hast done, and by thee at midnight we were set free, and the old hut in the forest was changed back again into my royal palace.” And when they had arisen, the King’s son ordered the three attendants to set out and fetch the father and mother of the girl to the marriage feast. “But where are my two sisters?” inquired the maiden. “I have locked them in the cellar, and to-morrow they shall be led into the forest, and shall live as servants to a charcoal-burner, until they have grown kinder, and do not leave poor animals to suffer hunger.”

Sharing Joy and Sorrow

There was once a tailor, who was a quarrelsome fellow, and his wife, who was good, industrious, and pious, never could please him. Whatever she did, he was not satisfied, but grumbled and scolded, and knocked her about and beat her. As the authorities at last heard of it, they had him summoned, and put in prison in order to make him better. He was kept for a while on bread and water, and then set free again. He was forced, however, to promise not to beat his wife any more, but to live with her in peace, and share joy and sorrow with her, as married people ought to do. All went on well for a time, but then he fell into his old ways, and was surly and quarrelsome. And because he dared not beat her, he would seize her by the hair and tear it out. The woman escaped from him, and sprang out into the yard, but he ran after her with his yard-measure and scissors, and chased her about, and threw the yard-measure and scissors at her, and whatever else came his way. When he hit her he laughed, and when he missed her, he stormed and swore. This went on so long that the neighbors came to the wife's assistance. The tailor was again summoned before the magistrates, and reminded of his promise. "Dear gentlemen," said he, "I have kept my word, I have not beaten her, but have shared joy and sorrow with her." "How can that be," said the judge, "when she continually brings such heavy complaints against you?" "I have not beaten her, but just because she looked so strange I wanted to comb her hair with my hand; she, however, got away from me, and left me quite spitefully. Then I hurried after her, and in order to bring her back to her duty, I threw at her as a well-meant admonition whatever came readily to hand. I have shared joy and sorrow with her also, for whenever I hit her I was full of joy, and she of sorrow, and if I missed her, then she was joyful, and I sorry." The judges were not satisfied with this answer, but gave him the reward he deserved.

The Willow-Wren

In former days every sound still had its meaning and application. When the smith's hammer resounded, it cried, "Strike away! strike away." When the carpenter's plane grated, it said, "Here goes! here goes." If the mill wheel began to clack, it said, "Help, Lord God! help, Lord God!" And if the miller was a cheat and happened to leave the mill, it spoke high German, and first asked slowly, "Who is there? Who is there?" and then answered quickly, "The miller! the miller!" and at last quite in a hurry, "He steals bravely! he steals bravely! three pecks in a bushel."

At this time the birds also had their own language which every one understood; now it only sounds like chirping, screeching, and whistling, and to some like music without words. It came into the bird's mind, however, that they would no longer be without a ruler, and would choose one of themselves to be their King. One alone amongst them, the green plover, was opposed to this. He had lived free, and would die free, and anxiously flying hither and thither, he cried, "Where shall I go? where shall I go?" He retired into a solitary and unfrequented marsh, and showed himself no more among his fellows.

The birds now wished to discuss the matter, and on a fine May morning they all gathered together from the woods and fields: eagles and chaffinches, owls and crows, larks and sparrows, how can I name them all? Even the cuckoo came, and the hoopoe, his clerk, who is so called because he is always heard a few days before him, and a very small bird which as yet had no name, mingled with the band. The hen, which by some accident had heard nothing of the whole matter, was astonished at the great assemblage. "What, what, what is going to be done?" she cackled; but the cock calmed his beloved hen, and said, "Only rich people," and told her what they had on hand. It was decided, however, that the one who could fly the highest should be King. A tree-frog which was sitting among the bushes, when he heard that, cried a warning, "No, no, no! no!" because he thought that many tears would be shed because of this; but the crow said, "Caw, caw," and that all would pass off peaceably. It was now determined that on this fine morning they should at once begin to ascend, so that hereafter no one should be able to say, "I could easily have flown much higher, but the evening came on, and I could do no more." On a given signal, therefore, the whole troop rose up in the air. The dust ascended from the land, and there was tremendous fluttering and whirring and beating of wings, and it looked as if a black cloud was rising up. The little birds were, however, soon left behind. They could go no farther, and fell back to the ground. The larger birds held out longer, but none could equal the eagle, who mounted so high that he could have picked the eyes out of the sun. And when he saw that the others could not get up to him, he thought, "Why shouldst thou fly still higher, thou art the King?" and began to let himself down again. The birds beneath him at once cried to him. "Thou must be our King, no one has flown so high as thou." "Except me," screamed the little fellow without a name, who had crept into the breast-feathers of the eagle. And as he was not at all tired, he rose up and mounted so high that he reached heaven itself. When, however, he had gone as far as this, he folded his wings together, and called down with clear and penetrating voice, "I am King! I am King."

"Thou, our King?" cried the birds angrily. "Thou hast compassed it by trick and cunning!" So they made another condition. He should be King who could go down lowest in the ground. How the goose did flap about with its broad breast when it was once more on the land! How quickly the cock scratched a hole! The duck came off the worst of all, for she leapt into a ditch, but sprained her legs, and waddled away to a neighboring pond, crying, "Cheating, cheating!" The little bird without a name, however, sought out a mouse-hole, slipped down into it, and cried out of it with his small voice, "I am King! I am King!"

"Thou our King!" cried the birds still more angrily. "Dost thou think thy cunning shall prevail?" They determined to keep him a prisoner in the hole and starve him out. The owl was placed as sentinel in front of it, and was not to let the rascal out if she had any value for her life. When evening was come all the birds were feeling very tired after exerting their wings so much, so they went to bed with their wives and children. The owl alone remained standing by the mouse-hole, gazing steadfastly into it with her great eyes. In the meantime she, too, had grown tired and thought to herself, "You might certainly shut one eye, you will still watch with the other, and the little miscreant shall not come out of his hole." So she shut one eye, and with the other looked straight at the mouse-hole. The little fellow put his head out and peeped, and wanted to slip away, but the owl came forward immediately, and he drew his head back again. Then the owl opened the one eye again, and shut the other, intending to shut them in turn all through the night.

But when she next shut the one eye, she forgot to open the other, and as soon as both her eyes were shut she fell asleep. The little fellow soon observed that, and slipped away.

From that day forth, the owl has never dared to show herself by daylight, for if she does the other birds chase her and pluck her feathers out. She only flies out by night, but hates and pursues mice because they make such ugly holes. The little bird, too, is very unwilling to let himself be seen, because he is afraid it will cost him his life if he is caught. He steals about in the hedges, and when he is quite safe, he sometimes cries, "I am King," and for this reason, the other birds call him in mockery, 'King of the hedges' (Zaunkönig). No one, however, was so happy as the lark at not having to obey the little King. As soon as the sun appears, she ascends high in the air and cries, "Ah, how beautiful that is! beautiful that is! beautiful, beautiful! ah, how beautiful that is!"

The Sole

The fishes had for a long time been discontented because no order prevailed in their kingdom. None of them turned aside for the others, but all swam to the right or the left as they fancied, or darted between those who wanted to stay together, or got into their way; and a strong one gave a weak one a blow with its tail, which drove it away, or else swallowed it up without more ado. “How delightful it would be,” said they, “if we had a king who enforced law and justice among us!” and they met together to choose for their ruler, the one who could cleave through the water most quickly, and give help to the weak ones.

They placed themselves in rank and file by the shore, and the pike gave the signal with his tail, on which they all started. Like an arrow, the pike darted away, and with him the herring, the gudgeon, the perch, the carp, and all the rest of them. Even the sole swam with them, and hoped to reach the winning-place. All at once, the cry was heard, “The herring is first!” “Who is first?” screamed angrily the flat envious sole, who had been left far behind, “who is first?” “The herring! The herring,” was the answer. “The naked herring?” cried the jealous creature, “the naked herring?” Since that time the sole’s mouth has been at one side for a punishment.

The Bittern and the Hoopoe

“Where do you like best to feed your flocks?” said a man to an old cowherd. “Here, sir, where the grass is neither too rich nor too poor, or else it is no use.” “Why not?” asked the man. “Do you hear that melancholy cry from the meadow there?” answered the shepherd, “that is the bittern; he was once a shepherd, and so was the hoopoe also, — I will tell you the story. The bittern pastured his flocks on rich green meadows where flowers grew in abundance, so his cows became wild and unmanageable. The hoopoe drove his cattle on to high barren hills, where the wind plays with the sand, and his cows became thin, and got no strength. When it was evening, and the shepherds wanted to drive their cows homewards, the bittern could not get his together again; they were too high- spirited, and ran away from him. He called, “Come, cows, come,” but it was of no use; they took no notice of his calling. The hoopoe, however, could not even get his cows up on their legs, so faint and weak had they become. “Up, up, up,” screamed he, but it was in vain, they remained lying on the sand. That is the way when one has no moderation. And to this day, though they have no flocks now to watch, the bittern cries, “Come, cows, come,” and the hoopoe, “Up, up, up.”

The Owl

Two or three hundred years ago, when people were far from being so crafty and cunning as they are now-a-day, an extraordinary event took place in a little town. By some mischance one of the great owls, called horned owls, had come from the neighboring woods into the barn of one of the townsfolk in the night-time, and when day broke did not dare to venture forth again from her retreat, for fear of the other birds, which raised a terrible outcry whenever she appeared. In the morning when the man-servant went into the barn to fetch some straw, he was so mightily alarmed at the sight of the owl sitting there in a corner, that he ran away and announced to his master that a monster, the like of which he had never set eyes on in his life, and which could devour a man without the slightest difficulty, was sitting in the barn, rolling its eyes about in its head. “I know you already,” said the master, “you have courage enough to chase a blackbird about the fields, but when you see a dead hen lying, you have to get a stick before you go near it. I must go and see for myself what kind of a monster it is,” added the master, and went quite boldly into the granary and looked round him. When, however, he saw the strange grim creature with his own eyes, he was no less terrified than the servant had been. With two bounds he sprang out, ran to his neighbours, and begged them imploringly to lend him assistance against an unknown and dangerous beast, or else the whole town might be in danger if it were to break loose out of the barn, where it was shut up. A great noise and clamour arose in all the streets, the townsmen came armed with spears, hay-forks, scythes, and axes, as if they were going out against an enemy; finally, the senators appeared with the burgomaster at their head. When they had drawn up in the market-place, they marched to the barn, and surrounded it on all sides. Thereupon one of the most courageous of them stepped forth and entered with his spear lowered, but came running out immediately afterwards with a shriek and as pale as death, and could not utter a single word. Yet two others ventured in, but they fared no better. At last one stepped forth; a great strong man who was famous for his warlike deeds, and said, “You will not drive away the monster by merely looking at him; we must be in earnest here, but I see that you have all tuned into women, and not one of you dares to encounter the animal.” He ordered them to give him some armour, had a sword and spear brought, and armed himself. All praised his courage, though many feared for his life. The two barn-doors were opened, and they saw the owl, which in the meantime had perched herself on the middle of a great cross-beam. He had a ladder brought, and when he raised it, and made ready to climb up, they all cried out to him that he was to bear himself bravely, and commended him to St. George, who slew the dragon. When he had just got to the top, and the owl perceived that he had designs on her, and was also bewildered by the crowd and the shouting, and knew not how to escape, she rolled her eyes, ruffled her feathers, flapped her wings, snapped her beak, and cried, “Tuwhit, tuwhoo,” in a harsh voice.

“Strike home! strike home!” screamed the crowd outside to the valiant hero. “Any one who was standing where I am standing,” answered he, “would not cry, strike home!” He certainly did plant his foot one rung higher on the ladder, but then he began to tremble, and half-fainting, went back again.

And now there was no one left who dared to put himself in such danger. “The monster,” said they, “has poisoned and mortally wounded the very strongest man among us, by snapping at him and just breathing on him! Are we, too, to risk our lives?” They took counsel as to what they ought to do to prevent the whole town being destroyed. For a long time everything seemed to be of no use, but at length the burgomaster found an expedient. “My opinion,” said he, “is that we ought, out of the common purse, to pay for this barn, and whatsoever corn, straw, or hay it contains, and thus indemnify the owner, and then burn down the whole building, and the terrible beast with it. Thus no one will have to endanger his life. This is no time for thinking of expense, and niggardliness would be ill applied.” All agreed with him. So they set fire to the barn at all four corners, and with it the owl was miserably burnt. Let any one who will not believe it, go thither and inquire for himself.

The Moon

In days gone by there was a land where the nights were always dark, and the sky spread over it like a black cloth, for there the moon never rose, and no star shone in the obscurity. At the creation of the world, the light at night had been sufficient. Three young fellows once went out of this country on a travelling expedition, and arrived in another kingdom, where, in the evening when the sun had disappeared behind the mountains, a shining globe was placed on an oak-tree, which shed a soft light far and wide. By means of this, everything could very well be seen and distinguished, even though it was not so brilliant as the sun. The travellers stopped and asked a countryman who was driving past with his cart, what kind of a light that was. “That is the moon,” answered he; “our mayor bought it for three thalers, and fastened it to the oak-tree. He has to pour oil into it daily, and to keep it clean, so that it may always burn clearly. He receives a thaler a week from us for doing it.”

When the countryman had driven away, one of them said, “We could make some use of this lamp, we have an oak-tree at home, which is just as big as this, and we could hang it on that. What a pleasure it would be not to have to feel about at night in the darkness!” “I’ll tell you what we’ll do,” said the second; “we will fetch a cart and horses and carry away the moon. The people here may buy themselves another.” “I’m a good climber,” said the third, “I will bring it down.” The fourth brought a cart and horses, and the third climbed the tree, bored a hole in the moon, passed a rope through it, and let it down. When the shining ball lay in the cart, they covered it over with a cloth, that no one might observe the theft. They conveyed it safely into their own country, and placed it on a high oak. Old and young rejoiced, when the new lamp let its light shine over the whole land, and bed-rooms and sitting-rooms were filled with it. The dwarfs came forth from their caves in the rocks, and the tiny elves in their little red coats danced in rings on the meadows.

The four took care that the moon was provided with oil, cleaned the wick, and received their weekly thaler, but they became old men, and when one of them grew ill, and saw that he was about to die, he appointed that one quarter of the moon, should, as his property, be laid in the grave with him. When he died, the mayor climbed up the tree, and cut off a quarter with the hedge-shears, and this was placed in his coffin. The light of the moon decreased, but still not visibly. When the second died, the second quarter was buried with him, and the light diminished. It grew weaker still after the death of the third, who likewise took his part of it away with him; and when the fourth was borne to his grave, the old state of darkness recommenced, and whenever the people went out at night without their lanterns they knocked their heads together.

When, however, the pieces of the moon had united themselves together again in the world below, where darkness had always prevailed, it came to pass that the dead became restless and awoke from their sleep. They were astonished when they were able to see again; the moonlight was quite sufficient for them, for their eyes had become so weak that they could not have borne the brilliance of the sun. They rose up and were merry, and fell into their former ways of living. Some of them went to the play and to dance, others hastened to the public-houses, where they asked for wine, got drunk, brawled, quarreled, and at last took up cudgels, and belabored each other. The noise became greater and greater, and at last reached even to heaven.

Saint Peter who guards the gate of heaven thought the lower world had broken out in revolt and gathered together the heavenly troops, which are to drive back the Evil One when he and his associates storm the abode of the blessed. As these, however, did not come, he got on his horse and rode through the gate of heaven, down into the world below. There he reduced the dead to subjection, bade them lie down in their graves again, took the moon away with him, and hung it up in heaven.

The Duration of Life

When God had created the world and was about to fix the length of each creature’s life, the ass came and asked, “Lord, how long shall I live?” “Thirty years,” replied God; “does that content thee?” “Ah, Lord,” answered the ass, “that is a long time. Think of my painful existence! To carry heavy burdens from morning to night, to drag sacks of corn to the mill, that others may eat bread, to be cheered and refreshed with nothing but blows and kicks. Relieve me of a portion of this long time.” Then God had pity on him and relieved him of eighteen years. The ass went away comforted, and the dog appeared. “How long wouldst thou like to live?” said God to him. “Thirty years are too many for the ass, but thou wilt be satisfied with that.” “Lord,” answered the dog, “is that thy will? Consider how I shall have to run, my feet will never hold out so long, and when I have once lost my voice for barking, and my teeth for biting, what will be left for me to do but run from one corner to another and growl?” God saw that he was right, and released him from twelve years of life. Then came the monkey. “Thou wilt certainly live thirty years willingly?” said the Lord to him. “Thou hast no need to work as the ass and the dog have to do, and wilt always enjoy thyself.” “Ah! Lord,” he answered, “it may seem as if that were the case, but it is quite different. When it rains porridge I have no spoon. I am always to play merry pranks, and make faces which force people to laugh, and if they give me an apple, and I bite into it, why it is sour! How often sadness hides itself behind mirth! I shall never be able to hold out for thirty years.” God was gracious and took off ten.

At last man appeared, joyous, healthy and vigorous, and begged God to appoint his time for him. “Thirty years shalt thou live,” said the Lord. “Is that enough for thee?” “What a short time,” cried man, “when I have built my house and my fire burns on my own hearth; when I have planted trees which blossom and bear fruit, and am just intending to enjoy my life, I am to die! O Lord, lengthen my time.” “I will add to it the ass’s eighteen years,” said God. “That is not enough,” replied the man. “Thou shalt also have the dog’s twelve years.” “Still too little!” “Well, then,” said God, “I will give thee the monkey’s ten years also, but more thou shalt not have.” The man went away, but was not satisfied.

So man lives seventy years. The first thirty are his human years, which are soon gone; then is he healthy, merry, works with pleasure, and is glad of his life. Then follow the ass’s eighteen years, when one burden after another is laid on him, he has to carry the corn which feeds others, and blows and kicks are the reward of his faithful services. Then come the dog’s twelve years, when he lies in the corner, and growls and has no longer any teeth to bite with, and when this time is over the monkey’s ten years form the end. Then man is weak-headed and foolish, does silly things, and becomes the jest of the children.

Death’s Messengers

In ancient times a giant was once travelling on a great highway, when suddenly an unknown man sprang up before him, and said, “Halt, not one step farther!” “What!” cried the giant, “a creature whom I can crush between my fingers, wants to block my way? Who art thou that thou darest to speak so boldly?” “I am Death,” answered the other. “No one resists me, and thou also must obey my commands.” But the giant refused, and began to struggle with Death. It was a long, violent battle, at last the giant got the upper hand, and struck Death down with his fist, so that he dropped by a stone. The giant went his way, and Death lay there conquered, and so weak that he could not get up again. “What will be done now,” said he, “if I stay lying here in a corner? No one will die in the world, and it will get so full of people that they won’t have room to stand beside each other.” In the meantime a young man came along the road, who was strong and healthy, singing a song, and glancing around on every side. When he saw the half-fainting one, he went compassionately to him, raised him up, poured a strengthening draught out of his flask for him, and waited till he came round. “Dost thou know,” said the stranger, whilst he was getting up, “who I am, and who it is whom thou hast helped on his legs again?” “No,” answered the youth, “I do not know thee.” “I am Death,” said he. “I spare no one, and can make no exception with thee, but that thou mayst see that I am grateful, I promise thee that I will not fall on thee unexpectedly, but will send my messengers to thee before I come and take thee away.” “Well,” said the youth, “it is something gained that I shall know when thou comest, and at any rate be safe from thee for so long.” Then he went on his way, and was light-hearted, and enjoyed himself, and lived without thought. But youth and health did not last long, soon came sicknesses and sorrows, which tormented him by day, and took away his rest by night. “Die, I shall not,” said he to himself, “for Death will send his messengers before that, but I do wish these wretched days of sickness were over.” As soon as he felt himself well again he began once more to live merrily. Then one day some one tapped him on the shoulder. He looked round, and Death stood behind him, and said, “Follow me, the hour of thy departure from this world has come.” “What,” replied the man, “wilt thou break thy word? Didst thou not promise me that thou wouldst send thy messengers to me before coming thyself? I have seen none!” “Silence!” answered Death. “Have I not sent one messenger to thee after another? Did not fever come and smite thee, and shake thee, and cast thee down? Has dizziness not bewildered thy head? Has not gout twitched thee in all thy limbs? Did not thine ears sing? Did not tooth-ache bite into thy cheeks? Was it not dark before thine eyes? And besides all that, has not my own brother Sleep reminded thee every night of me? Didst thou not lie by night as if thou wert already dead? The man could make no answer; he yielded to his fate, and went away with Death.

Master Pfriem (Master Cobbler’s Awl)

Master Pfriem was a short, thin, but lively man, who never rested a moment. His face, of which his turned-up nose was the only prominent feature, was marked with small-pox and pale as death, his hair was gray and shaggy, his eyes small, but they glanced perpetually about on all sides. He saw everything, criticised everything, knew everything best, and was always in the right. When he went into the streets, he moved his arms about as if he were rowing; and once he struck the pail of a girl, who was carrying water, so high in the air that he himself was wetted all over by it. “Stupid thing,” cried he to her, while he was shaking himself, “couldst thou not see that I was coming behind thee?” By trade he was a shoemaker, and when he worked he pulled his thread out with such force that he drove his fist into every one who did not keep far enough off. No apprentice stayed more than a month with him, for he had always some fault to find with the very best work. At one time it was that the stitches were not even, at another that one shoe was too long, or one heel higher than the other, or the leather not cut large enough. “Wait,” said he to his apprentice, “I will soon show thee how we make skins soft,” and he brought a strap and gave him a couple of strokes across the back. He called them all sluggards. He himself did not turn much work out of his hands, for he never sat still for a quarter of an hour. If his wife got up very early in the morning and lighted the fire, he jumped out of bed, and ran bare-footed into the kitchen, crying, “Wilt thou burn my house down for me? That is a fire one could roast an ox by! Does wood cost nothing?” If the servants were standing by their wash-tubs and laughing, and telling each other all they knew, he scolded them, and said, “There stand the geese cackling, and forgetting their work, to gossip! And why fresh soap? Disgraceful extravagance and shameful idleness into the bargain! They want to save their hands, and not rub the things properly!” And out he would run and knock a pail full of soap and water over, so that the whole kitchen was flooded. Someone was building a new house, so he hurried to the window to look on. “There, they are using that red sand-stone again that never dries!” cried he. “No one will ever be healthy in that house! and just look how badly the fellows are laying the stones! Besides, the mortar is good for nothing! It ought to have gravel in it, not sand. I shall live to see that house tumble down on the people who are in it.” He sat down, put a couple of stitches in, and then jumped up again, unfastened his leather-apron, and cried, “I will just go out, and appeal to those men’s consciences.” He stumbled on the carpenters. “What’s this?” cried he, “you are not working by the line! Do you expect the beams to be straight? — one wrong will put all wrong.” He snatched an axe out of a carpenter’s hand and wanted to show him how he ought to cut; but as a cart loaded with clay came by, he threw the axe away, and hastened to the peasant who was walking by the side of it: “You are not in your right mind,” said he, “who yokes young horses to a heavily-laden cart? The poor beasts will die on the spot.” The peasant did not give him an answer, and Pfriem in a rage ran back into his workshop. When he was setting himself to work again, the apprentice reached him a shoe. “Well, what’s that again?” screamed he, “Haven’t I told you you ought not to cut shoes so broad? Who would buy a shoe like this, which is hardly anything else but a sole? I insist on my orders being followed exactly.” “Master,” answered the apprentice, “you may easily be quite right about the shoe being a bad one, but it is the one which you yourself cut out, and yourself set to work at. When you jumped up a while since, you knocked it off the table, and I have only just picked it up. An angel from heaven, however, would never make you believe that.”

One night Master Pfriem dreamed he was dead, and on his way to heaven. When he got there, he knocked loudly at the door. “I wonder,” said he to himself, “that they have no knocker on the door, — one knocks one’s knuckles sore.” The apostle Peter opened the door, and wanted to see who demanded admission so noisily. “Ah, it’s you, Master Pfriem;” said he, “well, I’ll let you in, but I warn you that you must give up that habit of yours, and find fault with nothing you see in heaven, or you may fare ill.” “You might have spared your warning,” answered Pfriem. “I know already what is seemly, and here, God be thanked, everything is perfect, and there is nothing to blame as there is on earth.” So he went in, and walked up and down the wide expanses of heaven. He looked around him, to the left and to the right, but sometimes shook his head, or muttered something to himself. Then he saw two angels who were carrying away a beam. It was the beam which some one had had in his own eye whilst he was looking for the splinter in the eye of another. They did not, however, carry the beam lengthways, but obliquely. “Did any one ever see such a piece of stupidity?” thought Master Pfriem; but he said nothing, and seemed satisfied with it. “It comes to the same thing after all, whichever way they carry the beam, straight or crooked, if they only get along with it, and truly I do not see them knock against anything.” Soon after this he saw two angels who were drawing water out of a well into a bucket, but at the same time he observed that the bucket was full of holes, and that the water was running out of it on every side. They were watering the earth with rain. “Hang it,” he exclaimed; but happily recollected himself, and thought, “Perhaps it is only a pastime. If it is an amusement, then it seems they can do useless things of this kind even here in heaven, where people, as I have already noticed, do nothing but idle about.” He went farther and saw a cart which had stuck fast in a deep hole. “It’s no wonder,” said he to the man who stood by it; “who would load so unreasonably? what have you there?” “Good wishes,” replied the man, “I could not go along the right way with it, but still I have pushed it safely up here, and they won’t leave me sticking here.” In fact an angel did come and harnessed two horses to it. “That’s quite right,” thought Pfriem, “but two horses won’t get that cart out, it must at least have four to it.” Another angel came and brought two more horses; she did not, however, harness them in front of it, but behind. That was too much for Master Pfriem, “Clumsy creature,” he burst out with, “what are you doing there? Has any one ever since the world began seen a cart drawn in that way? But you, in your conceited arrogance, think that you know everything best." He was going to say more, but one of the inhabitants of heaven seized him by the throat and pushed him forth with irresistible strength. Beneath the gateway Master Pfriem turned his head round to take one more look at the cart, and saw that it was being raised into the air by four winged horses.

At this moment Master Pfriem awoke. "Things are certainly arranged in heaven otherwise than they are on earth," said he to himself, "and that excuses much; but who can see horses harnessed both behind and before with patience; to be sure they had wings, but who could know that? It is, besides, great folly to fix a pair of wings to a horse that has four legs to run with already! But I must get up, or else they will make nothing but mistakes for me in my house. It is a lucky thing for me though, that I am not really dead."

The Goose-Girl at the Well

There was once upon a time a very old woman, who lived with he flock of geese in a waste place among the mountains, and there had a little house. The waste was surrounded by a large forest, and every morning the old woman took her crutch and hobbled into it. There, however, the dame was quite active, more so than any one would have thought, considering her age, and collected grass for her geese, picked all the wild fruit she could reach, and carried everything home on her back. Any one would have thought that the heavy load would have weighed her to the ground, but she always brought it safely home. If any one met her, she greeted him quite courteously. “Good day, dear countryman, it is a fine day. Ah! you wonder that I should drag grass about, but every one must take his burthen on his back.” Nevertheless, people did not like to meet her if they could help it, and took by preference a round-about way, and when a father with his boys passed her, he whispered to them, “Beware of the old woman. She has claws beneath her gloves; she is a witch.” One morning, a handsome young man was going through the forest. The sun shone bright, the birds sang, a cool breeze crept through the leaves, and he was full of joy and gladness. He had as yet met no one, when he suddenly perceived the old witch kneeling on the ground cutting grass with a sickle. She had already thrust a whole load into her cloth, and near it stood two baskets, which were filled with wild apples and pears. “But, good little mother,” said he, “how canst thou carry all that away?” “I must carry it, dear sir,” answered she, “rich folk’s children have no need to do such things, but with the peasant folk the saying goes, don’t look behind you, you will only see how crooked your back is!”

“Will you help me?” she said, as he remained standing by her. “You have still a straight back and young legs, it would be a trifle to you. Besides, my house is not so very far from here, it stands there on the heath behind the hill. How soon you would bound up thither.” The young man took compassion on the old woman. “My father is certainly no peasant,” replied he, “but a rich count; nevertheless, that you may see that it is not only peasants who can carry things, I will take your bundle.” “If you will try it,” said she, “I shall be very glad. You will certainly have to walk for an hour, but what will that signify to you; only you must carry the apples and pears as well?” It now seemed to the young man just a little serious, when he heard of an hour’s walk, but the old woman would not let him off, packed the bundle on his back, and hung the two baskets on his arm. “See, it is quite light,” said she. “No, it is not light,” answered the count, and pulled a rueful face. “Verily, the bundle weighs as heavily as if it were full of cobble stones, and the apples and pears are as heavy as lead! I can scarcely breathe.” He had a mind to put everything down again, but the old woman would not allow it. “Just look,” said she mockingly, “the young gentleman will not carry what I, an old woman, have so often dragged along. You are ready with fine words, but when it comes to be earnest, you want to take to your heels. Why are you standing loitering there?” she continued. “Step out. No one will take the bundle off again.” As long as he walked on level ground, it was still bearable, but when they came to the hill and had to climb, and the stones rolled down under his feet as if they were alive, it was beyond his strength. The drops of perspiration stood on his forehead, and ran, hot and cold, down his back. “Dame,” said he, “I can go no farther. I want to rest a little.” “Not here,” answered the old woman, “when we have arrived at our journey’s end, you can rest; but now you must go forward. Who knows what good it may do you?” “Old woman, thou art becoming shameless!” said the count, and tried to throw off the bundle, but he laboured in vain; it stuck as fast to his back as if it grew there. He turned and twisted, but he could not get rid of it. The old woman laughed at this, and sprang about quite delighted on her crutch. “Don’t get angry, dear sir,” said she, “you are growing as red in the face as a turkey-cock! Carry your bundle patiently. I will give you a good present when we get home.”

What could he do? He was obliged to submit to his fate, and crawl along patiently behind the old woman. She seemed to grow more and more nimble, and his burden still heavier. All at once she made a spring, jumped on to the bundle and seated herself on the top of it; and however withered she might be, she was yet heavier than the stoutest country lass. The youth’s knees trembled, but when he did not go on, the old woman hit him about the legs with a switch and with stinging-nettles. Groaning continually, he climbed the mountain, and at length reached the old woman’s house, when he was just about to drop. When the geese perceived the old woman, they flapped their wings, stretched out their necks, ran to meet her, cackling all the while. Behind the flock walked, stick in hand, an old wench, strong and big, but ugly as night. “Good mother,” said she to the old woman, “has anything happened to you, you have stayed away so long?” “By no means, my dear daughter,” answered she, “I have met with nothing bad, but, on the contrary, with this kind gentleman, who has carried my burthen for me; only think, he even took me on his back when I was tired. The way, too, has not seemed long to us; we have been merry, and have been cracking jokes with each other all the time.” At last the old woman slid down, took the bundle off the young man’s back, and the baskets from his arm, looked at him quite kindly, and said, “Now seat yourself on the bench before the door, and rest. You have fairly earned your wages, and they shall not be wanting.” Then she said to the goose- girl, “Go into the house, my dear daughter, it is not becoming for thee to be alone with a young gentleman; one must not pour oil on to the fire, he might fall in love with thee.” The count knew not whether to laugh or to cry. “Such a sweetheart as that,” thought he, “could not touch my heart, even if she were thirty years younger.” In the meantime the old woman stroked and fondled her geese as if they were children, and then went into the house with her daughter. The youth lay down on the bench, under a wild apple-tree. The air was warm and mild; on all sides stretched a green meadow, which was set with cowslips, wild thyme, and a thousand other flowers; through the midst of it rippled a clear brook on which the sun sparkled, and the white geese went walking backwards and forwards, or paddled in the water. “It is quite delightful here,” said he, “but I am so tired that I cannot keep my eyes open; I will sleep a little. If only a gust of wind does not come and blow my legs off my body, for they are as rotten as tinder.”

When he had slept a little while, the old woman came and shook him till he awoke. “Sit up,” said she, “thou canst not stay here; I have certainly treated thee hardly, still it has not cost thee thy life. Of money and land thou hast no need, here is something else for thee.” Thereupon she thrust a little book into his hand, which was cut out of a single emerald. “Take great care of it,” said she, “it will bring thee good fortune.” The count sprang up, and as he felt that he was quite fresh, and had recovered his vigor, he thanked the old woman for her present, and set off without even once looking back at the beautiful daughter. When he was already some way off, he still heard in the distance the noisy cry of the geese.

For three days the count had to wander in the wilderness before he could find his way out. He then reached a large town, and as no one knew him, he was led into the royal palace, where the King and Queen were sitting on their throne. The count fell on one knee, drew the emerald book out of his pocket, and laid it at the Queen’s feet. She bade him rise and hand her the little book. Hardly, however, had she opened it, and looked therein, than she fell as if dead to the ground. The count was seized by the King’s servants, and was being led to prison, when the Queen opened her eyes, and ordered them to release him, and every one was to go out, as she wished to speak with him in private.

When the Queen was alone, she began to weep bitterly, and said, “Of what use to me are the splendours and honours with which I am surrounded; every morning I awake in pain and sorrow. I had three daughters, the youngest of whom was so beautiful that the whole world looked on her as a wonder. She was as white as snow, as rosy as apple-blossom, and her hair as radiant as sun-beams. When she cried, not tears fell from her eyes, but pearls and jewels only. When she was fifteen years old, the King summoned all three sisters to come before his throne. You should have seen how all the people gazed when the youngest entered, it was just as if the sun were rising! Then the King spoke, “My daughters, I know not when my last day may arrive; I will to-day decide what each shall receive at my death. You all love me, but the one of you who loves me best, shall fare the best.” Each of them said she loved him best. “Can you not express to me,” said the King, “how much you do love me, and thus I shall see what you mean?” The eldest spoke. “I love my father as dearly as the sweetest sugar.” The second, “I love my father as dearly as my prettiest dress.” But the youngest was silent. Then the father said, “And thou, my dearest child, how much dost thou love me?” “I do not know, and can compare my love with nothing.” But her father insisted that she should name something. So she said at last, “The best food does not please me without salt, therefore I love my father like salt.” When the King heard that, he fell into a passion, and said, “If thou lovest me like salt, thy love shall also be repaid thee with salt.” Then he divided the kingdom between the two elder, but caused a sack of salt to be bound on the back of the youngest, and two servants had to lead her forth into the wild forest. We all begged and prayed for her, said the Queen, “but the King’s anger was not to be appeased. How she cried when she had to leave us! The whole road was strewn with the pearls which flowed from her eyes. The King soon afterwards repented of his great severity, and had the whole forest searched for the poor child, but no one could find her. When I think that the wild beasts have devoured her, I know not how to contain myself for sorrow; many a time I console myself with the hope that she is still alive, and may have hidden herself in a cave, or has found shelter with compassionate people. But picture to yourself, when I opened your little emerald book, a pearl lay therein, of exactly the same kind as those which used to fall from my daughter’s eyes; and then you can also imagine how the sight of it stirred my heart. You must tell me how you came by that pearl.” The count told her that he had received it from the old woman in the forest, who had appeared very strange to him, and must be a witch, but he had neither seen nor hear anything of the Queen’s child. The King and the Queen resolved to seek out the old woman. They thought that there where the pearl had been, they would obtain news of their daughter.

The old woman was sitting in that lonely place at her spinning-wheel, spinning. It was already dusk, and a log which was burning on the hearth gave a scanty light. All at once there was a noise outside, the geese were coming home from the pasture, and uttering their hoarse cries. Soon afterwards the daughter also entered. But the old woman scarcely thanked her, and only shook her head a little. The daughter sat down beside her, took her spinning-wheel, and twisted the threads as nimbly as a young girl. Thus they both sat for two hours, and exchanged never a word. At last something rustled at the window, and two fiery eyes peered in. It was an old night-owl, which cried, “Uhu!” three times. The old woman looked up just a little, then she said, “Now, my little daughter, it is time for thee to go out and do thy work.” She rose and went out, and where did she go? Over the meadows ever onward into the valley. At last she came to a well, with three old oak-trees standing beside it; meanwhile the moon had risen large and round over the mountain, and it was so light that one could have found a needle. She removed a skin which covered her face, then bent down to the well, and began to wash herself. When she had finished, she dipped the skin also in the water, and then laid it on the meadow, so that it should bleach in the moonlight, and dry again. But how the maiden was changed! Such a change as that was never seen before! When the gray mask fell off, her golden hair broke forth like sunbeams, and spread about like a mantle over her whole form. Her eyes shone out as brightly as the stars in heaven, and her cheeks bloomed a soft red like apple-blossom.

But the fair maiden was sad. She sat down and wept bitterly. One tear after another forced itself out of her eyes, and rolled through her long hair to the ground. There she sat, and would have remained sitting a long time, if there had not been a rustling and cracking in the boughs of the neighbouring tree. She sprang up like a roe which has been overtaken by the shot of the hunter. Just then the moon was obscured by a dark cloud, and in an instant the maiden had put on the old skin and vanished, like a light blown out by the wind.

She ran back home, trembling like an aspen-leaf. The old woman was standing on the threshold, and the girl was about to relate what had befallen her, but the old woman laughed kindly, and said, "I already know all." She led her into the room and lighted a new log. She did not, however, sit down to her spinning again, but fetched a broom and began to sweep and scour, "All must be clean and sweet," she said to the girl. "But, mother," said the maiden, "why do you begin work at so late an hour? What do you expect?" "Dost thou know then what time it is?" asked the old woman. "Not yet midnight," answered the maiden, "but already past eleven o'clock." "Dost thou not remember," continued the old woman, "that it is three years to-day since thou camest to me? Thy time is up, we can no longer remain together." The girl was terrified, and said, "Alas! dear mother, will you cast me off? Where shall I go? I have no friends, and no home to which I can go. I have always done as you bade me, and you have always been satisfied with me; do not send me away." The old woman would not tell the maiden what lay before her. "My stay here is over," she said to her, "but when I depart, house and parlour must be clean: therefore do not hinder me in my work. Have no care for thyself, thou shalt find a roof to shelter thee, and the wages which I will give thee shall also content thee." "But tell me what is about to happen," the maiden continued to entreat. "I tell thee again, do not hinder me in my work. Do not say a word more, go to thy chamber, take the skin off thy face, and put on the silken gown which thou hadst on when thou camest to me, and then wait in thy chamber until I call thee."

But I must once more tell of the King and Queen, who had journeyed forth with the count in order to seek out the old woman in the wilderness. The count had strayed away from them in the wood by night, and had to walk onwards alone. Next day it seemed to him that he was on the right track. He still went forward, until darkness came on, then he climbed a tree, intending to pass the night there, for he feared that he might lose his way. When the moon illumined the surrounding country he perceived a figure coming down the mountain. She had no stick in her hand, but yet he could see that it was the goose-girl, whom he had seen before in the house of the old woman. "Oho," cried he, "there she comes, and if I once get hold of one of the witches, the other shall not escape me!" But how astonished he was, when she went to the well, took off the skin and washed herself, when her golden hair fell down all about her, and she was more beautiful than any one whom he had ever seen in the whole world. He hardly dared to breathe, but stretched his head as far forward through the leaves as he dared, and stared at her. Either he bent over too far, or whatever the cause might be, the bough suddenly cracked, and that very moment the maiden slipped into the skin, sprang away like a roe, and as the moon was suddenly covered, disappeared from his eyes. Hardly had she disappeared, before the count descended from the tree, and hastened after her with nimble steps. He had not been gone long before he saw, in the twilight, two figures coming over the meadow. It was the King and Queen, who had perceived from a distance the light shining in the old woman's little house, and were going to it. The count told them what wonderful things he had seen by the well, and they did not doubt that it had been their lost daughter. They walked onwards full of joy, and soon came to the little house. The geese were sitting all round it, and had thrust their heads under their wings and were sleeping, and not one of them moved. The King and Queen looked in at the window, the old woman was sitting there quite quietly spinning, nodding her head and never looking round. The room was perfectly clean, as if the little mist men, who carry no dust on their feet, lived there. Their daughter, however, they did not see. They gazed at all this for a long time, at last they took heart, and knocked softly at the window. The old woman appeared to have been expecting them; she rose, and called out quite kindly, "Come in, — I know you already." When they had entered the room, the old woman said, "You might have spared yourself the long walk, if you had not three years ago unjustly driven away your child, who is so good and lovable. No harm has come to her; for three years she has had to tend the geese; with them she has learnt no evil, but has preserved her purity of heart. You, however, have been sufficiently punished by the misery in which you have lived." Then she went to the chamber and called, "Come out, my little daughter." Thereupon the door opened, and the princess stepped out in her silken garments, with her golden hair and her shining eyes, and it was as if an angel from heaven had entered.

She went up to her father and mother, fell on their necks and kissed them; there was no help for it, they all had to weep for joy. The young count stood near them, and when she perceived him she became as red in the face as a moss-rose, she herself did not know why. The King said, "My dear child, I have given away my kingdom, what shall I give thee?" "She needs nothing," said the old woman. "I give her the tears that she has wept on your account; they are precious pearls, finer than those that are found in the sea, and worth more than your whole kingdom, and I give her my little house as payment for her services." When the old woman had said that, she disappeared from their sight. The walls rattled a little, and when the King and Queen looked round, the little house had changed into a splendid palace, a royal table had been spread, and the servants were running hither and thither.

The story goes still further, but my grandmother, who related it to me, had partly lost her memory, and had forgotten the rest. I shall always believe that the beautiful princess married the count, and that they remained together in the palace, and lived there in all happiness so long as God willed it. Whether the snow-white geese, which were kept near the little hut, were verily young maidens (no one need take offence,) whom the old woman had taken under her protection, and whether they now received their human form again, and stayed as handmaids to the young Queen, I do not exactly know, but I suspect it. This much is certain, that the old woman was no witch, as people thought, but a wise woman, who meant well. Very likely it was she who, at the princess's birth, gave her the gift of weeping pearls instead of tears. That does not happen now-a-days, or else the poor would soon become rich.

Eve’s Various Children

When Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, they were compelled to build a house for themselves on unfruitful ground, and eat their bread in the sweat of their brow. Adam dug up the land, and Eve span. Every year Eve brought a child into the world; but the children were unlike each other, some pretty, and some ugly. After a considerable time had gone by, God sent an angel to them, to announce that he was coming to inspect their household. Eve, delighted that the Lord should be so gracious, cleaned her house diligently, decked it with flowers, and strewed reeds on the floor. Then she brought in her children, but only the beautiful ones. She washed and bathed them, combed their hair, put clean raiment on them, and cautioned them to conduct themselves decorously and modestly in the presence of the Lord. They were to bow down before him civilly, hold out their hands, and to answer his questions modestly and sensibly. The ugly children were, however, not to let themselves be seen. One hid himself beneath the hay, another under the roof, a third in the straw, the fourth in the stove, the fifth in the cellar, the sixth under a tub, the seventh beneath the wine-cask, the eighth under an old fur cloak, the ninth and tenth beneath the cloth out of which she always made their clothes, and the eleventh and twelfth under the leather out of which she cut their shoes. She had scarcely got ready, before there was a knock at the house-door. Adam looked through a chink, and saw that it was the Lord. Adam opened the door respectfully, and the Heavenly Father entered. There, in a row, stood the pretty children, and bowed before him, held out their hands, and knelt down. The Lord, however, began to bless them, laid his hands on the first, and said, “Thou shalt be a powerful king;” and to the second, “Thou a prince,” to the third, “Thou a count,” to the fourth, “Thou a knight,” to the fifth, “Thou a nobleman,” to the sixth, “Thou a burgher,” to the seventh, “Thou a merchant,” to the eighth, “Thou a learned man.” He bestowed upon them also all his richest blessings. When Eve saw that the Lord was so mild and gracious, she thought, “I will bring hither my ill-favoured children also, it may be that he will bestow his blessing on them likewise.” So she ran and brought them out of the hay, the straw, the stove, and wherever else she had concealed them. Then came the whole coarse, dirty, shabby, sooty band. The Lord smiled, looked at them all, and said, “I will bless these also.” He laid his hands on the first, and said to him, “Thou shalt be a peasant,” to the second, “Thou a fisherman,” to the third, “Thou a smith,” to the fourth, “Thou a tanner,” to the fifth, “Thou a weaver,” to the sixth, “Thou a shoemaker,” to the seventh, “Thou a tailor,” to the eighth, “Thou a potter,” to the ninth, “Thou a waggoner,” to the tenth, “Thou a sailor,” to the eleventh, “Thou an errand-boy,” to the twelfth, “Thou a scullion all the days of thy life.”

When Eve had heard all this she said, “Lord, how unequally thou dividest thy gifts! After all they are all of them my children, whom I have brought into the world, thy favours should be given to all alike.” But God answered, “Eve, thou dost not understand. It is right and necessary that the entire world should be supplied from thy children; if they were all princes and lords, who would grow corn, thresh it, grind and bake it? Who would be blacksmiths, weavers, carpenters, masons, labourers, tailors and seamstresses? Each shall have his own place, so that one shall support the other, and all shall be fed like the limbs of one body.” Then Eve answered, “Ah, Lord, forgive me, I was too quick in speaking to thee. Have thy divine will with my children.”

The Nix of the Mill-Pond

There was once upon a time a miller who lived with his wife in great contentment. They had money and land, and their prosperity increased year by year more and more. But ill-luck comes like a thief in the night, as their wealth had increased so did it again decrease, year by year, and at last the miller could hardly call the mill in which he lived, his own. He was in great distress, and when he lay down after his day's work, found no rest, but tossed about in his bed, full of care. One morning he rose before daybreak and went out into the open air, thinking that perhaps there his heart might become lighter. As he was stepping over the mill- dam the first sunbeam was just breaking forth, and he heard a rippling sound in the pond. He turned round and perceived a beautiful woman, rising slowly out of the water. Her long hair, which she was holding off her shoulders with her soft hands, fell down on both sides, and covered her white body. He soon saw that she was the Nix of the Mill-pond, and in his fright did not know whether he should run away or stay where he was. But the nix made her sweet voice heard, called him by his name, and asked him why he was so sad? The miller was at first struck dumb, but when he heard her speak so kindly, he took heart, and told her how he had formerly lived in wealth and happiness, but that now he was so poor that he did not know what to do. “Be easy,” answered the nix, “I will make thee richer and happier than thou hast ever been before, only thou must promise to give me the young thing which has just been born in thy house.” “What else can that be,” thought the miller, “but a young puppy or kitten?” and he promised her what she desired. The nix descended into the water again, and he hurried back to his mill, consoled and in good spirits. He had not yet reached it, when the maid-servant came out of the house, and cried to him to rejoice, for his wife had given birth to a little boy. The miller stood as if struck by lightning; he saw very well that the cunning nix had been aware of it, and had cheated him. Hanging his head, he went up to his wife's bedside and when she said, “Why dost thou not rejoice over the fine boy?” he told her what had befallen him, and what kind of a promise he had given to the nix. “Of what use to me are riches and prosperity?” he added, “if I am to lose my child; but what can I do?” Even the relations, who had come thither to wish them joy, did not know what to say. In the meantime prosperity again returned to the miller's house. All that he undertook succeeded, it was as if presses and coffers filled themselves of their own accord, and as if money multiplied nightly in the cupboards. It was not long before his wealth was greater than it had ever been before. But he could not rejoice over it untroubled, for the bargain which he had made with the nix tormented his soul. Whenever he passed the mill-pond, he feared she might ascend and remind him of his debt. He never let the boy himself go near the water. “Beware,” he said to him, “if thou dost but touch the water, a hand will rise, seize thee, and draw thee down.” But as year after year went by and the nix did not show herself again, the miller began to feel at ease.

The boy grew up to be a youth and was apprenticed to a huntsman. When he had learnt everything, and had become an excellent huntsman, the lord of the village took him into his service. In the village lived a beautiful and true-hearted maiden, who pleased the huntsman, and when his master perceived that, he gave him a little house, the two were married, lived peacefully and happily, and loved each other with all their hearts.

One day the huntsman was chasing a roe; and when the animal turned aside from the forest into the open country, he pursued it and at last shot it. He did not notice that he was now in the neighbourhood of the dangerous mill-pond, and went, after he had disembowelled the stag, to the water, in order to wash his blood-stained hands. Scarcely, however, had he dipped them in than the nix ascended, smilingly wound her dripping arms around him, and drew him quickly down under the waves, which closed over him. When it was evening, and the huntsman did not return home, his wife became alarmed. She went out to seek him, and as he had often told her that he had to be on his guard against the snares of the nix, and dared not venture into the neighbourhood of the mill-pond, she already suspected what had happened. She hastened to the water, and when she found his hunting-pouch lying on the shore, she could no longer have any doubt of the misfortune. Lamenting her sorrow, and wringing her hands, she called on her beloved by name, but in vain. She hurried across to the other side of the pond, and called him anew; she reviled the nix with harsh words, but no answer followed. The surface of the water remained calm, only the crescent moon stared steadily back at her. The poor woman did not leave the pond. With hasty steps, she paced round and round it, without resting a moment, sometimes in silence, sometimes uttering a loud cry, sometimes softly sobbing. At last her strength came to an end, she sank down to the ground and fell into a heavy sleep. Presently a dream took possession of her. She was anxiously climbing upwards between great masses of rock; thorns and briars caught her feet, the rain beat in her face, and the wind tossed her long hair about. When she had reached the summit, quite a different sight presented itself to her; the sky was blue, the air soft, the ground sloped gently downwards, and on a green meadow, gay with flowers of every colour, stood a pretty cottage. She went up to it and opened the door; there sat an old woman with white hair, who beckoned to her kindly. At that very moment, the poor woman awoke, day had already dawned, and she at once resolved to act in accordance with her dream. She laboriously climbed the mountain; everything was exactly as she had seen it in the night. The old woman received her kindly, and pointed out a chair on which she might sit. “Thou must have met with a misfortune,” she said, “since thou hast sought out my lonely cottage.” With tears, the woman related what had befallen her. “Be comforted,” said the old woman, “I will help thee. Here is a golden comb for thee. Tarry till the full moon has risen, then go to the mill-pond, seat thyself on the shore, and comb thy long black hair with this comb. When thou hast done, lay it down on the bank, and thou wilt see what will happen.” The woman returned home, but the time till the full moon came, passed slowly. At last the shining disc appeared in the heavens, then she went out to the mill-pond, sat down and combed her long black hair with the golden comb, and when she had finished, she laid it down at the water's edge. It was not long before there was a movement in the depths, a wave rose, rolled to the shore, and bore the comb away with it. In not more than the time necessary for the comb to sink to the bottom, the surface of the water parted, and the head of the huntsman arose. He did not speak, but looked at his wife with sorrowful glances. At the same instant, a second wave came rushing up, and covered the man's head. All had vanished, the mill-pond lay peaceful as before, and nothing but the face of the full moon shone on it. Full of sorrow, the woman went back, but again the dream showed her the cottage of the old woman. Next morning she again set out and complained of her woes to the wise woman. The old woman gave her a golden flute, and said, "Tarry till the full moon comes again, then take this flute; play a beautiful air on it, and when thou hast finished, lay it on the sand; then thou wilt see what will happen." The wife did as the old woman told her. No sooner was the flute lying on the sand than there was a stirring in the depths, and a wave rushed up and bore the flute away with it. Immediately afterwards the water parted, and not only the head of the man, but half of his body also arose. He stretched out his arms longingly towards her, but a second wave came up, covered him, and drew him down again. "Alas, what does it profit me?" said the unhappy woman, "that I should see my beloved, only to lose him again!" Despair filled her heart anew, but the dream led her a third time to the house of the old woman. She set out, and the wise woman gave her a golden spinning-wheel, consoled her and said, "All is not yet fulfilled, tarry until the time of the full moon, then take the spinning-wheel, seat thyself on the shore, and spin the spool full, and when thou hast done that, place the spinning-wheel near the water, and thou wilt see what will happen." The woman obeyed all she said exactly; as soon as the full moon showed itself, she carried the golden spinning-wheel to the shore, and span industriously until the flax came to an end, and the spool was quite filled with the threads. No sooner was the wheel standing on the shore than there was a more violent movement than before in the depths of the pond, and a mighty wave rushed up, and bore the wheel away with it. Immediately the head and the whole body of the man rose into the air, in a water-spout. He quickly sprang to the shore, caught his wife by the hand and fled. But they had scarcely gone a very little distance, when the whole pond rose with a frightful roar, and streamed out over the open country. The fugitives already saw death before their eyes, when the woman in her terror implored the help of the old woman, and in an instant they were transformed, she into a toad, he into a frog. The flood which had overtaken them could not destroy them, but it tore them apart and carried them far away. When the water had dispersed and they both touched dry land again, they regained their human form, but neither knew where the other was; they found themselves among strange people, who did not know their native land. High mountains and deep valleys lay between them. In order to keep themselves alive, they were both obliged to tend sheep. For many long years they drove their flocks through field and forest and were full of sorrow and longing. When spring had once more broken forth on the earth, they both went out one day with their flocks, and as chance would have it, they drew near each other. They met in a valley, but did not recognize each other; yet they rejoiced that they were no longer so lonely. Henceforth they each day drove their flocks to the same place; they did not speak much, but they felt comforted. One evening when the full moon was shining in the sky, and the sheep were already at rest, the shepherd pulled the flute out of his pocket, and played on it a beautiful but sorrowful air. When he had finished he saw that the shepherdess was weeping bitterly. “Why art thou weeping?” he asked. “Alas,” answered she, “thus shone the full moon when I played this air on the flute for the last time, and the head of my beloved rose out of the water.” He looked at her, and it seemed as if a veil fell from his eyes, and he recognized his dear wife, and when she looked at him, and the moon shone in his face she knew him also. They embraced and kissed each other, and no one need ask if they were happy.

The Little Folks' Presents

A tailor and a goldsmith were travelling together, and one evening when the sun had sunk behind the mountains, they heard the sound of distant music, which became more and more distinct. It sounded strange, but so pleasant that they forgot all their weariness and stepped quickly onwards. The moon had already arisen when they reached a hill on which they saw a crowd of little men and women, who had taken each other's hands, and were whirling round in the dance with the greatest pleasure and delight.

They sang to it most charmingly, and that was the music which the travellers had heard. In the midst of them sat an old man who was rather taller than the rest. He wore a parti-coloured coat, and his iron-grey beard hung down over his breast. The two remained standing full of astonishment, and watched the dance. The old man made a sign that they should enter, and the little folks willingly opened their circle. The goldsmith, who had a hump, and like all hunchbacks was brave enough, stepped in; the tailor felt a little afraid at first, and held back, but when he saw how merrily all was going, he plucked up his courage, and followed. The circle closed again directly, and the little folks went on singing and dancing with the wildest leaps. The old man, however, took a large knife which hung to his girdle, whetted it, and when it was sufficiently sharpened, he looked round at the strangers. They were terrified, but they had not much time for reflection, for the old man seized the goldsmith and with the greatest speed, shaved the hair of his head clean off, and then the same thing happened to the tailor. But their fear left them when, after he had finished his work, the old man clapped them both on the shoulder in a friendly manner, as much as to say, they had behaved well to let all that be done to them willingly, and without any struggle. He pointed with his finger to a heap of coals which lay at one side, and signified to the travellers by his gestures that they were to fill their pockets with them. Both of them obeyed, although they did not know of what use the coals would be to them, and then they went on their way to seek a shelter for the night. When they had got into the valley, the clock of the neighbouring monastery struck twelve, and the song ceased. In a moment all had vanished, and the hill lay in solitude in the moonlight.

The two travellers found an inn, and covered themselves up on their straw-beds with their coats, but in their weariness forgot to take the coals out of them before doing so. A heavy weight on their limbs awakened them earlier than usual. They felt in the pockets, and could not believe their eyes when they saw that they were not filled with coals, but with pure gold; happily, too, the hair of their heads and beards was there again as thick as ever.

They had now become rich folks, but the goldsmith, who, in accordance with his greedy disposition, had filled his pockets better, was as rich again as the tailor. A greedy man, even if he has much, still wishes to have more, so the goldsmith proposed to the tailor that they should wait another day, and go out again in the evening in order to bring back still greater treasures from the old man on the hill. The tailor refused, and said, “I have enough and am content; now I shall be a master, and marry my dear object (for so he called his sweetheart), and I am a happy man.” But he stayed another day to please him. In the evening the goldsmith hung a couple of bags over his shoulders that he might be able to stow away a great deal, and took the road to the hill. He found, as on the night before, the little folks at their singing and dancing, and the old man again shaved him clean, and signed to him to take some coal away with him. He was not slow about sticking as much into his bags as would go, went back quite delighted, and covered himself over with his coat. “Even if the gold does weigh heavily,” said he, “I will gladly bear that,” and at last he fell asleep with the sweet anticipation of waking in the morning an enormously rich man.

When he opened his eyes, he got up in haste to examine his pockets, but how amazed he was when he drew nothing out of them but black coals, and that howsoever often he put his hands in them. “The gold I got the night before is still there for me,” thought he, and went and brought it out, but how shocked he was when he saw that it likewise had again turned into coal. He smote his forehead with his dusty black hand, and then he felt that his whole head was bald and smooth, as was also the place where his beard should have been. But his misfortunes were not yet over; he now remarked for the first time that in addition to the hump on his back, a second, just as large, had grown in front on his breast. Then he recognized the punishment of his greediness, and began to weep aloud. The good tailor, who was wakened by this, comforted the unhappy fellow as well as he could, and said, “Thou hast been my comrade in my travelling time; thou shalt stay with me and share in my wealth.” He kept his word, but the poor goldsmith was obliged to carry the two humps as long as he lived, and to cover his bald head with a cap.

The Giant and the Tailor

A certain tailor who was great at boasting but ill at doing, took it into his head to go abroad for a while, and look about the world. As soon as he could manage it, he left his workshop, and wandered on his way, over hill and dale, sometimes hither, sometimes thither, but ever on and on. Once when he was out he perceived in the blue distance a steep hill, and behind it a tower reaching to the clouds, which rose up out of a wild dark forest. “Thunder and lightning,” cried the tailor, “what is that?” and as he was strongly goaded by curiosity, he went boldly towards it. But what made the tailor open his eyes and mouth when he came near it, was to see that the tower had legs, and leapt in one bound over the steep hill, and was now standing as an all powerful giant before him. “What dost thou want here, thou tiny fly’s leg?” cried the giant, with a voice as if it were thundering on every side. The tailor whimpered, “I want just to look about and see if I can earn a bit of bread for myself, in this forest.” “If that is what thou art after,” said the giant, “thou mayst have a place with me.” “If it must be, why not? What wages shall I receive?” “Thou shalt hear what wages thou shalt have. Every year three hundred and sixty-five days, and when it is leap-year, one more into the bargain. Does that suit thee?” “All right,” replied the tailor, and thought, in his own mind, “a man must cut his coat according to his cloth; I will try to get away as fast as I can.” On this the giant said to him, “Go, little ragamuffin, and fetch me a jug of water.” “Had I not better bring the well itself at once, and the spring too?” asked the boaster, and went with the pitcher to the water. “What! the well and the spring too,” growled the giant in his beard, for he was rather clownish and stupid, and began to be afraid. “That knave is not a fool, he has a wizard in his body. Be on thy guard, old Hans, this is no serving-man for thee.” When the tailor had brought the water, the giant bade him go into the forest, and cut a couple of blocks of wood and bring them back. “Why not the whole forest, at once, with one stroke. The whole forest, young and old, with all that is there, both rough and smooth?” asked the little tailor, and went to cut the wood. “What! the whole forest, young and old, with all that is there, both rough and smooth, and the well and its spring too,” growled the credulous giant in his beard, and was still more terrified. “The knave can do much more than bake apples, and has a wizard in his body. Be on thy guard, old Hans, this is no serving-man for thee!” When the tailor had brought the wood, the giant commanded him to shoot two or three wild boars for supper. “Why not rather a thousand at one shot, and bring them all here?” inquired the ostentatious tailor. “What!” cried the timid giant in great terror; “Let well alone to-night, and lie down to rest.”

The giant was so terribly alarmed that he could not close an eye all night long for thinking what would be the best way to get rid of this accursed sorcerer of a servant. Time brings counsel. Next morning the giant and the tailor went to a marsh, round which stood a number of willow-trees. Then said the giant, “Hark thee, tailor, seat thyself on one of the willow-branches, I long of all things to see if thou art big enough to bend it down.” All at once the tailor was sitting on it, holding his breath, and making himself so heavy that the bough bent down. When, however, he was compelled to draw breath, it hurried him (for unfortunately he had not put his goose in his pocket) so high into the air that he never was seen again, and this to the great delight of the giant. If the tailor has not fallen down again, he must be hovering about in the air.

The Nail

A merchant had done good business at the fair; he had sold his wares, and lined his money-bags with gold and silver. Then he wanted to travel homewards, and be in his own house before nightfall. So he packed his trunk with the money on his horse, and rode away.

At noon he rested in a town, and when he wanted to go farther the stable-boy brought out his horse and said, “A nail is wanting, sir, in the shoe of its left hind foot.” “Let it be wanting,” answered the merchant; “the shoe will certainly stay on for the six miles I have still to go. I am in a hurry.”

In the afternoon, when he once more alighted and had his horse fed, the stable-boy went into the room to him and said, “Sir, a shoe is missing from your horse’s left hind foot. Shall I take him to the blacksmith?” “Let it still be wanting,” answered the man; “the horse can very well hold out for the couple of miles which remain. I am in haste.”

He rode forth, but before long the horse began to limp. It had not limped long before it began to stumble, and it had not stumbled long before it fell down and broke its leg. The merchant was forced to leave the horse where it was, and unbuckle the trunk, take it on his back, and go home on foot. And there he did not arrive until quite late at night. “And that unlucky nail,” said he to himself, “has caused all this disaster.”

Hasten slowly.

The Poor Boy in the Grave

There was once a poor shepherd-boy whose father and mother were dead, and he was placed by the authorities in the house of a rich man, who was to feed him and bring him up. The man and his wife, had however, bad hearts, and were greedy and anxious about their riches, and vexed whenever any one put a morsel of their bread in his mouth. The poor young fellow might do what he liked, he got little to eat, but only so many blows the more.

One day he had to watch a hen and her chickens, but she ran through a quick-set hedge with them, and a hawk darted down instantly, and carried her off through the air. The boy called, “Thief! thief! rascal!” with all the strength of his body. But what good did that do? The hawk did not bring its prey back again. The man heard the noise, and ran to the spot, and as soon as he saw that his hen was gone, he fell in a rage, and gave the boy such a beating that he could not stir for two days. Then he had to take care of the chickens without the hen, but now his difficulty was greater, for one ran here and the other there. He thought he was doing a very wise thing when he tied them all together with a string, because then the hawk would not be able to steal any of them away from him. But he was very much mistaken. After two days, worn out with running about and hunger, he fell asleep; the bird of prey came, and seized one of the chickens, and as the others were tied fast to it, it carried them all off together, perched itself on a tree, and devoured them. The farmer was just coming home, and when he saw the misfortune, he got angry and beat the boy so unmercifully that he was forced to lie in bed for several days.

When he was on his legs again, the farmer said to him, “Thou art too stupid for me, I cannot make a herdsman of thee, thou must go as errand-boy.” Then he sent him to the judge, to whom he was to carry a basketful of grapes, and he gave him a letter as well. On the way hunger and thirst tormented the unhappy boy so violently that he ate two of the bunches of grapes. He took the basket to the judge, but when the judge had read the letter, and counted the bunches he said, “Two clusters are wanting.” The boy confessed quite honestly that, driven by hunger and thirst, he had devoured the two which were wanting. The judge wrote a letter to the farmer, and asked for the same number of grapes again. These also the boy had to take to him with a letter. As he again was so extremely hungry and thirsty, he could not help it, and again ate two bunches. But first he took the letter out of the basket, put it under a stone and seated himself thereon in order that the letter might not see and betray him. The judge, however, again made him give an explanation about the missing bunches. “Ah,” said the boy, “how have you learnt that? The letter could not know about it, for I put it under a stone before I did it.” The judge could not help laughing at the boy’s simplicity, and sent the man a letter wherein he cautioned him to keep the poor boy better, and not let him want for meat and drink, and also that he was to teach him what was right and what was wrong.

"I will soon show thee the difference," said the hard man, "if thou wilt eat, thou must work, and if thou dost anything wrong, thou shalt be quite sufficiently taught by blows."

The next day he set him a hard task. He was to chop two bundles of straw for food for the horses, and then the man threatened: "In five hours," said he, "I shall be back again, and if the straw is not cut to chaff by that time, I will beat thee until thou canst not move a limb." The farmer went with his wife, the man-servant and the girl, to the yearly fair, and left nothing behind for the boy but a small bit of bread. The boy seated himself on the bench, and began to work with all his might. As he got warm over it he put his little coat off and threw it on the straw. In his terror lest he should not get done in time he kept constantly cutting, and in his haste, without noticing it, he chopped his little coat as well as the straw. He became aware of the misfortune too late; there was no repairing it. "Ah," cried he, "now all is over with me! The wicked man did not threaten me for nothing; if he comes back and sees what I have done, he will kill me. Rather than that I will take my own life."

The boy had once heard the farmer's wife say, "I have a pot with poison in it under my bed." She, however, had only said that to keep away greedy people, for there was honey in it. The boy crept under the bed, brought out the pot, and ate all that was in it. "I do not know," said he, "folks say death is bitter, but it tastes very sweet to me. It is no wonder that the farmer's wife has so often longed for death." He seated himself in a little chair, and was prepared to die. But instead of becoming weaker he felt himself strengthened by the nourishing food. "It cannot have been poison," thought he, "but the farmer once said there was a small bottle of poison for flies in the box in which he keeps his clothes; that, no doubt, will be the true poison, and bring death to me." It was, however, no poison for flies, but Hungarian wine. The boy got out the bottle, and emptied it. "This death tastes sweet too," said he, but shortly after when the wine began to mount into his brain and stupefy him, he thought his end was drawing near. "I feel that I must die," said he, "I will go away to the churchyard, and seek a grave." He staggered out, reached the churchyard, and laid himself in a newly dug grave. He lost his senses more and more. In the neighbourhood was an inn where a wedding was being kept; when he heard the music, he fancied he was already in Paradise, until at length he lost all consciousness. The poor boy never awoke again; the heat of the strong wine and the cold night-dew deprived him of life, and he remained in the grave in which he had laid himself.

When the farmer heard the news of the boy's death he was terrified, and afraid of being brought to justice indeed, his distress took such a powerful hold of him that he fell fainting to the ground. His wife, who was standing on the hearth with a pan of hot fat, ran to him to help him. But the flames darted against the pan, the whole house caught fire, in a few hours it lay in ashes, and the rest of the years they had to live they passed in poverty and misery, tormented by the pangs of conscience.

The True Sweethearts

There was once on a time a girl who was young and beautiful, but she had lost her mother when she was quite a child, and her step-mother did all she could to make the girl's life wretched. Whenever this woman gave her anything to do, she worked at it indefatigably, and did everything that lay in her power. Still she could not touch the heart of the wicked woman by that; she was never satisfied; it was never enough. The harder the girl worked, the more work was put upon her, and all that the woman thought of was how to weigh her down with still heavier burdens, and make her life still more miserable.

One day she said to her, "Here are twelve pounds of feathers which thou must pick, and if they are not done this evening, thou mayst expect a good beating. Dost thou imagine thou art to idle away the whole day?" The poor girl sat down to the work, but tears ran down her cheeks as she did so, for she saw plainly enough that it was quite impossible to finish the work in one day. Whenever she had a little heap of feathers lying before her, and she sighed or smote her hands together in her anguish, they flew away, and she had to pick them out again, and begin her work anew. Then she put her elbows on the table, laid her face in her two hands, and cried, "Is there no one, then, on God's earth to have pity on me?" Then she heard a low voice which said, "Be comforted, my child, I have come to help thee." The maiden looked up, and an old woman was by her side. She took the girl kindly by the hand, and said, "Only tell me what is troubling thee." As she spoke so kindly, the girl told her of her miserable life, and how one burden after another was laid upon her, and she never could get to the end of the work which was given to her. "If I have not done these feathers by this evening, my step-mother will beat me; she has threatened she will, and I know she keeps her word." Her tears began to flow again, but the good old woman said, "Do not be afraid, my child; rest a while, and in the meantime I will look to thy work." The girl lay down on her bed, and soon fell asleep. The old woman seated herself at the table with the feathers, and how they did fly off the quills, which she scarcely touched with her withered hands! The twelve pounds were soon finished, and when the girl awoke, great snow-white heaps were lying, piled up, and everything in the room was neatly cleared away, but the old woman had vanished. The maiden thanked God, and sat still till evening came, when the step-mother came in and marvelled to see the work completed. "Just look, you awkward creature," said she, "what can be done when people are industrious; and why couldst thou not set about something else? There thou sittest with thy hands crossed." When she went out she said, "The creature is worth more than her salt. I must give her some work that is still harder."

Next morning she called the girl, and said, "There is a spoon for thee; with that thou must empty out for me the great pond which is beside the garden, and if it is not done by night, thou knowest what will happen." The girl took the spoon, and saw that it was full of holes; but even if it had not been, she never could have emptied the pond with it. She set to work at once, knelt down by the water, into which her tears were falling, and began to empty it. But the good old woman appeared again, and when she learnt the cause of her grief, she said, "Be of good cheer, my child. Go into the thicket and lie down and sleep; I will soon do thy work." As soon as the old woman was alone, she barely touched the pond, and a vapour rose up on high from the water, and mingled itself with the clouds. Gradually the pond was emptied, and when the maiden awoke before sunset and came thither, she saw nothing but the fishes which were struggling in the mud. She went to her step-mother, and showed her that the work was done. "It ought to have been done long before this," said she, and grew white with anger, but she meditated something new.

On the third morning she said to the girl, "Thou must build me a castle on the plain there, and it must be ready by the evening." The maiden was dismayed, and said, "How can I complete such a great work?" "I will endure no opposition," screamed the step-mother. "If thou canst empty a pond with a spoon that is full of holes, thou canst build a castle too. I will take possession of it this very day, and if anything is wanting, even if it be the most trifling thing in the kitchen or cellar, thou knowest what lies before thee!" She drove the girl out, and when she entered the valley, the rocks were there, piled up one above the other, and all her strength would not have enabled her even to move the very smallest of them. She sat down and wept, and still she hoped the old woman would help her. The old woman was not long in coming; she comforted her and said, "Lie down there in the shade and sleep, and I will soon build the castle for thee. If it would be a pleasure to thee, thou canst live in it thyself." When the maiden had gone away, the old woman touched the gray rocks. They began to rise, and immediately moved together as if giants had built the walls; and on these the building arose, and it seemed as if countless hands were working invisibly, and placing one stone upon another. There was a dull heavy noise from the ground; pillars arose of their own accord on high, and placed themselves in order near each other. The tiles laid themselves in order on the roof, and when noon-day came, the great weather-cock was already turning itself on the summit of the tower, like a golden figure of the Virgin with fluttering garments. The inside of the castle was being finished while evening was drawing near. How the old woman managed it, I know not; but the walls of the rooms were hung with silk and velvet, embroidered chairs were there, and richly ornamented arm-chairs by marble tables; crystal chandeliers hung down from the ceilings, and mirrored themselves in the smooth pavement; green parrots were there in gilt cages, and so were strange birds which sang most beautifully, and there was on all sides as much magnificence as if a king were going to live there. The sun was just setting when the girl awoke, and the brightness of a thousand lights flashed in her face. She hurried to the castle, and entered by the open door. The steps were spread with red cloth, and the golden balustrade beset with flowering trees. When she saw the splendour of the apartment, she stood as if turned to stone. Who knows how long she might have stood there if she had not remembered the step-mother? “Alas!” she said to herself, “if she could but be satisfied at last, and would give up making my life a misery to me.” The girl went and told her that the castle was ready. “I will move into it at once,” said she, and rose from her seat. When they entered the castle, she was forced to hold her hand before her eyes, the brilliancy of everything was so dazzling. “Thou seest,” said she to the girl, “how easy it has been for thee to do this; I ought to have given thee something harder.” She went through all the rooms, and examined every corner to see if anything was wanting or defective; but she could discover nothing. “Now we will go down below,” said she, looking at the girl with malicious eyes. “The kitchen and the cellar still have to be examined, and if thou hast forgotten anything thou shalt not escape thy punishment.” But the fire was burning on the hearth, and the meat was cooking in the pans, the tongs and shovel were leaning against the wall, and the shining brazen utensils all arranged in sight. Nothing was wanting, not even a coal-box and water-pail. “Which is the way to the cellar?” she cried. “If that is not abundantly filled, it shall go ill with thee.” She herself raised up the trap-door and descended; but she had hardly made two steps before the heavy trap-door which was only laid back, fell down. The girl heard a scream, lifted up the door very quickly to go to her aid, but she had fallen down, and the girl found her lying lifeless at the bottom.

And now the magnificent castle belonged to the girl alone. She at first did not know how to reconcile herself to her good fortune. Beautiful dresses were hanging in the wardrobes, the chests were filled with gold or silver, or with pearls and jewels, and she never felt a desire that she was not able to gratify. And soon the fame of the beauty and riches of the maiden went over all the world. Wooers presented themselves daily, but none pleased her. At length the son of the King came and he knew how to touch her heart, and she betrothed herself to him. In the garden of the castle was a lime-tree, under which they were one day sitting together, when he said to her, “I will go home and obtain my father’s consent to our marriage. I entreat thee to wait for me here under this lime-tree, I shall be back with thee in a few hours.” The maiden kissed him on his left cheek, and said, “Keep true to me, and never let any one else kiss thee on this cheek. I will wait here under the lime-tree until thou returnest.”

The maid stayed beneath the lime-tree until sunset, but he did not return. She sat three days from morning till evening, waiting for him, but in vain. As he still was not there by the fourth day, she said, “Some accident has assuredly befallen him. I will go out and seek him, and will not come back until I have found him.” She packed up three of her most beautiful dresses, one embroidered with bright stars, the second with silver moons, the third with golden suns, tied up a handful of jewels in her handkerchief, and set out. She inquired everywhere for her betrothed, but no one had seen him; no one knew anything about him. Far and wide did she wander through the world, but she found him not. At last she hired herself to a farmer as a cow-herd, and buried her dresses and jewels beneath a stone.

And now she lived as a herdswoman, guarded her herd, and was very sad and full of longing for her beloved one; she had a little calf which she taught to know her, and fed it out of her own hand, and when she said,

"Little calf, little calf, kneel by my side, And do not forget thy shepherd-maid, As the prince forgot his betrothed bride, Who waited for him 'neath the lime-tree's shade."

the little calf knelt down, and she stroked it.

And when she had lived for a couple of years alone and full of grief, a report was spread over all the land that the King's daughter was about to celebrate her marriage. The road to the town passed through the village where the maiden was living, and it came to pass that once when the maiden was driving out her herd, her bridegroom travelled by. He was sitting proudly on his horse, and never looked round, but when she saw him she recognized her beloved, and it was just as if a sharp knife had pierced her heart. "Alas!" said she, "I believed him true to me, but he has forgotten me."

Next day he again came along the road. When he was near her she said to the little calf,

"Little calf, little calf, kneel by my side, And do not forget thy shepherd-maid, As the prince forgot his betrothed bride, Who waited for him 'neath the lime-tree's shade."

When he was aware of the voice, he looked down and reined in his horse. He looked into the herd's face, and then put his hands before his eyes as if he were trying to remember something, but he soon rode onwards and was out of sight. "Alas!" said she, "he no longer knows me," and her grief was ever greater.

Soon after this a great festival three days long was to be held at the King's court, and the whole country was invited to it.

"Now will I try my last chance," thought the maiden, and when evening came she went to the stone under which she had buried her treasures. She took out the dress with the golden suns, put it on, and adorned herself with the jewels. She let down her hair, which she had concealed under a handkerchief, and it fell down in long curls about her, and thus she went into the town, and in the darkness was observed by no one. When she entered the brightly-lighted hall, every one started back in amazement, but no one knew who she was. The King's son went to meet her, but he did not recognize her. He led her out to dance, and was so enchanted with her beauty, that he thought no more of the other bride. When the feast was over, she vanished in the crowd, and hastened before daybreak to the village, where she once more put on her herd's dress.

Next evening she took out the dress with the silver moons, and put a half-moon made of precious stones in her hair. When she appeared at the festival, all eyes were turned upon her, but the King's son hastened to meet her, and filled with love for her, danced with her alone, and no longer so much as glanced at anyone else. Before she went away she was forced to promise him to come again to the festival on the last evening.

When she appeared for the third time, she wore the star-dress which sparkled at every step she took, and her hair-ribbon and girdle were starred with jewels. The prince had already been waiting for her for a long time, and forced his way up to her. “Do but tell who thou art,” said he, “I feel just as if I had already known thee a long time.” “Dost thou not know what I did when thou leftest me?” Then she stepped up to him, and kissed him on his left cheek, and in a moment it was as if scales fell from his eyes, and he recognized the true bride. “Come,” said he to her, “here I stay no longer,” gave her his hand, and led her down to the carriage. The horses hurried away to the magic castle as if the wind had been harnessed to the carriage. The illuminated windows already shone in the distance. When they drove past the lime-tree, countless glow-worms were swarming about it. It shook its branches, and sent forth their fragrance. On the steps flowers were blooming, and the room echoed with the song of strange birds, but in the hall the entire court was assembled, and the priest was waiting to marry the bridegroom to the true bride.

The Hare and the Hedgehog

This story, my dear young folks, seems to be false, but it really is true, for my grandfather, from whom I have it, used always, when relating it, to say complacently, “It must be true, my son, or else no one could tell it to you.” The story is as follows. One Sunday morning about harvest time, just as the buckwheat was in bloom, the sun was shining brightly in heaven, the east wind was blowing warmly over the stubble-fields, the larks were singing in the air, the bees buzzing among the buckwheat, the people were all going in their Sunday clothes to church, and all creatures were happy, and the hedgehog was happy too.

The hedgehog, however, was standing by his door with his arms akimbo, enjoying the morning breezes, and slowly trilling a little song to himself, which was neither better nor worse than the songs which hedgehogs are in the habit of singing on a blessed Sunday morning. Whilst he was thus singing half aloud to himself, it suddenly occurred to him that, while his wife was washing and drying the children, he might very well take a walk into the field, and see how his turnips were going on. The turnips were, in fact, close beside his house, and he and his family were accustomed to eat them, for which reason he looked upon them as his own. No sooner said than done. The hedgehog shut the house-door behind him, and took the path to the field. He had not gone very far from home, and was just turning round the sloe-bush which stands there outside the field, to go up into the turnip-field, when he observed the hare who had gone out on business of the same kind, namely, to visit his cabbages. When the hedgehog caught sight of the hare, he bade him a friendly good morning. But the hare, who was in his own way a distinguished gentleman, and frightfully haughty, did not return the hedgehog’s greeting, but said to him, assuming at the same time a very contemptuous manner, “How do you happen to be running about here in the field so early in the morning?” “I am taking a walk,” said the hedgehog. “A walk!” said the hare, with a smile. “It seems to me that you might use your legs for a better purpose.” This answer made the hedgehog furiously angry, for he can bear anything but an attack on his legs, just because they are crooked by nature. So now the hedgehog said to the hare, “You seem to imagine that you can do more with your legs than I with mine.” “That is just what I do think,” said the hare. “That can be put to the test,” said the hedgehog. “I wager that if we run a race, I will outstrip you.” “That is ridiculous! You with your short legs!” said the hare, “but for my part I am willing, if you have such a monstrous fancy for it. What shall we wager?” “A golden louis-d’or and a bottle of brandy,” said the hedgehog. “Done,” said the hare. “Shake hands on it, and then we may as well come off at once.” “Nay,” said the hedgehog, “there is no such great hurry! I am still fasting, I will go home first, and have a little breakfast. In half-an-hour I will be back again at this place.”

Hereupon the hedgehog departed, for the hare was quite satisfied with this. On his way the hedgehog thought to himself, “The hare relies on his long legs, but I will contrive to get the better of him. He may be a great man, but he is a very silly fellow, and he shall pay for what he has said.” So when the hedgehog reached home, he said to his wife, “Wife, dress thyself quickly, thou must go out to the field with me.” “What is going on, then?” said his wife. “I have made a wager with the hare, for a gold louis-d’or and a bottle of brandy. I am to run a race with him, and thou must be present.” “Good heavens, husband,” the wife now cried, “art thou not right in thy mind, hast thou completely lost thy wits? What can make thee want to run a race with the hare?” “Hold thy tongue, woman,” said the hedgehog, “that is my affair. Don’t begin to discuss things which are matters for men. Be off, dress thyself, and come with me.” What could the hedgehog’s wife do? She was forced to obey him, whether she liked it or not.

So when they had set out on their way together, the hedgehog said to his wife, “Now pay attention to what I am going to say. Look you, I will make the long field our race-course. The hare shall run in one furrow, and I in another, and we will begin to run from the top. Now all that thou hast to do is to place thyself here below in the furrow, and when the hare arrives at the end of the furrow, on the other side of thee, thou must cry out to him, ‘I am here already!’”

Then they reached the field, and the hedgehog showed his wife her place, and then walked up the field. When he reached the top, the hare was already there. “Shall we start?” said the hare. “Certainly,” said the hedgehog. “Then both at once.” So saying, each placed himself in his own furrow. The hare counted, “Once, twice, thrice, and away!” and went off like a whirlwind down the field. The hedgehog, however, only ran about three paces, and then he stooped down in the furrow, and stayed quietly where he was. When the hare therefore arrived in full career at the lower end of the field, the hedgehog’s wife met him with the cry, “I am here already!” The hare was shocked and wondered not a little, he thought no other than that it was the hedgehog himself who was calling to him, for the hedgehog’s wife looked just like her husband. The hare, however, thought to himself, “That has not been done fairly,” and cried, “It must be run again, let us have it again.” And once more he went off like the wind in a storm, so that he seemed to fly. But the hedgehog’s wife stayed quietly in her place. So when the hare reached the top of the field, the hedgehog himself cried out to him, “I am here already.” The hare, however, quite beside himself with anger, cried, “It must be run again, we must have it again.” “All right,” answered the hedgehog, “for my part we’ll run as often as you choose.” So the hare ran seventy-three times more, and the hedgehog always held out against him, and every time the hare reached either the top or the bottom, either the hedgehog or his wife said, “I am here already.”

At the seventy-fourth time, however, the hare could no longer reach the end. In the middle of the field he fell to the ground, blood streamed out of his mouth, and he lay dead on the spot. But the hedgehog took the louis-d’or which he had won and the bottle of brandy, called his wife out of the furrow, and both went home together in great delight, and if they are not dead, they are living there still.

This is how it happened that the hedgehog made the hare run races with him on the Buxtehuder heath till he died, and since that time no hare has ever had any fancy for running races with a Buxtehuder hedgehog.

The moral of this story, however, is, firstly, that no one, however great he may be, should permit himself to jest at any one beneath him, even if he be only a hedgehog. And, secondly, it teaches, that when a man marries, he should take a wife in his own position, who looks just as he himself looks. So whosoever is a hedgehog let him see to it that his wife is a hedgehog also, and so forth.

The Spindle, The Shuttle, and the Needle

There was once a girl whose father and mother died while she was still a little child. All alone, in a small house at the end of the village, dwelt her godmother, who supported herself by spinning, weaving, and sewing. The old woman took the forlorn child to live with her, kept her to her work, and educated her in all that is good. When the girl was fifteen years old, the old woman became ill, called the child to her bedside, and said, "Dear daughter, I feel my end drawing near. I leave thee the little house, which will protect thee from wind and weather, and my spindle, shuttle, and needle, with which thou canst earn thy bread." Then she laid her hands on the girl's head, blessed her, and said, "Only preserve the love of God in thy heart, and all will go well with thee." Thereupon she closed her eyes, and when she was laid in the earth, the maiden followed the coffin, weeping bitterly, and paid her the last mark of respect. And now the maiden lived quite alone in the little house, and was industrious, and span, wove, and sewed, and the blessing of the good old woman was on all that she did. It seemed as if the flax in the room increased of its own accord, and whenever she wove a piece of cloth or carpet, or had made a shirt, she at once found a buyer who paid her amply for it, so that she was in want of nothing, and even had something to share with others.

About this time, the son of the King was travelling about the country looking for a bride. He was not to choose a poor one, and did not want to have a rich one. So he said, "She shall be my wife who is the poorest, and at the same time the richest." When he came to the village where the maiden dwelt, he inquired, as he did wherever he went, who was the richest and also the poorest girl in the place? They first named the richest; the poorest, they said, was the girl who lived in the small house quite at the end of the village. The rich girl was sitting in all her splendour before the door of her house, and when the prince approached her, she got up, went to meet him, and made him a low curtsey. He looked at her, said nothing, and rode on. When he came to the house of the poor girl, she was not standing at the door, but sitting in her little room. He stopped his horse, and saw through the window, on which the bright sun was shining, the girl sitting at her spinning-wheel, busily spinning. She looked up, and when she saw that the prince was looking in, she blushed all over her face, let her eyes fall, and went on spinning. I do not know whether, just at that moment, the thread was quite even; but she went on spinning until the King's son had ridden away again. Then she went to the window, opened it, and said, "It is so warm in this room!" but she still looked after him as long as she could distinguish the white feathers in his hat. Then she sat down to work again in her own room and went on with her spinning, and a saying which the old woman had often repeated when she was sitting at her work, came into her mind, and she sang these words to herself, —

“Spindle, my spindle, haste, haste thee away,
And here to my house bring the wooer, I pray.”

And what do you think happened? The spindle sprang out of her hand in an instant, and out of the door, and when, in her astonishment, she got up and looked after it, she saw that it was dancing out merrily into the open country, and drawing a shining golden thread after it. Before long, it had entirely vanished from her sight. As she had now no spindle, the girl took the weaver’s shuttle in her hand, sat down to her loom, and began to weave.

The spindle, however, danced continually onwards, and just as the thread came to an end, reached the prince. “What do I see?” he cried; “the spindle certainly wants to show me the way!” turned his horse about, and rode back with the golden thread. The girl was, however, sitting at her work singing,

“Shuttle, my shuttle, weave well this day,
And guide the wooer to me, I pray.”

Immediately the shuttle sprang out of her hand and out by the door. Before the threshold, however, it began to weave a carpet which was more beautiful than the eyes of man had ever yet beheld. Lilies and roses blossomed on both sides of it, and on a golden ground in the centre green branches ascended, under which bounded hares and rabbits, stags and deer stretched their heads in between them, brightly-coloured birds were sitting in the branches above; they lacked nothing but the gift of song. The shuttle leapt hither and thither, and everything seemed to grow of its own accord.

As the shuttle had run away, the girl sat down to sew. She held the needle in her hand and sang,

“Needle, my needle, sharp-pointed and fine,
Prepare for a wooer this house of mine.”

Then the needle leapt out of her fingers, and flew everywhere about the room as quick as lightning. It was just as if invisible spirits were working; they covered tables and benches with green cloth in an instant, and the chairs with velvet, and hung the windows with silken curtains. Hardly had the needle put in the last stitch than the maiden saw through the window the white feathers of the prince, whom the spindle had brought thither by the golden thread. He alighted, stepped over the carpet into the house, and when he entered the room, there stood the maiden in her poor garments, but she shone out from within them like a rose surrounded by leaves. “Thou art the poorest and also the richest,” said he to her. “Come with me, thou shalt be my bride.” She did not speak, but she gave him her hand. Then he gave her a kiss, led her forth, lifted her on to his horse, and took her to the royal castle, where the wedding was solemnized with great rejoicings. The spindle, shuttle, and needle were preserved in the treasure-chamber, and held in great honour.

The Peasant and the Devil

There was once on a time a far-sighted, crafty peasant whose tricks were much talked about. The best story is, however, how he once got hold of the Devil, and made a fool of him. The peasant had one day been working in his field, and as twilight had set in, was making ready for the journey home, when he saw a heap of burning coals in the middle of his field, and when, full of astonishment, he went up to it, a little black devil was sitting on the live coals. “Thou dost indeed sit upon a treasure!” said the peasant. “Yes, in truth,” replied the Devil, “on a treasure which contains more gold and silver than thou hast ever seen in thy life!” “The treasure lies in my field and belongs to me,” said the peasant. “It is thine,” answered the Devil, “if thou wilt for two years give me the half of everything thy field produces. Money I have enough of, but I have a desire for the fruits of the earth.” The peasant agreed to the bargain. “In order, however, that no dispute may arise about the division,” said he, “everything that is above ground shall belong to thee, and what is under the earth to me.” The Devil was quite satisfied with that, but the cunning peasant had sown turnips.

Now when the time for harvest came, the Devil appeared and wanted to take away his crop; but he found nothing but the yellow withered leaves, while the peasant, full of delight, was digging up his turnips. “Thou hast had the best of it for once,” said the Devil, “but the next time that won’t do. What grows above ground shall be thine, and what is under it, mine.” “I am willing,” replied the peasant; but when the time came to sow, he did not again sow turnips, but wheat. The grain became ripe, and the peasant went into the field and cut the full stalks down to the ground. When the Devil came, he found nothing but the stubble, and went away in a fury down into a cleft in the rocks. “That is the way to cheat the Devil,” said the peasant, and went and fetched away the treasure.

The Crumbs on the Table

A countryman one day said to his little puppies, “Come into the parlour and enjoy yourselves, and pick up the bread-crumbs on the table; your mistress has gone out to pay some visits.” Then the little dogs said, “No, no, we will not go. If the mistress gets to know it, she will beat us.” The countryman said, “She will know nothing about it. Do come; after all, she never gives you anything good.” Then the little dogs again said, “Nay, nay, we must let it alone; we must not go.” But the countryman let them have no peace until at last they went, and got on the table, and ate up the bread-crumbs with all their might. But at that very moment the mistress came, and seized the stick in great haste, and beat them and treated them very hardly. And when they were outside the house, the little dogs said to the countryman, “Dost, dost, dost, dost, dost thou see?” Then the countryman laughed and said, “Didn’t, didn’t, didn’t, you expect it?” So they just had to run away.

The Sea-Hare

There was once upon a time a princess, who, high under the battlements in her castle, had an apartment with twelve windows, which looked out in every possible direction, and when she climbed up to it and looked around her, she could inspect her whole kingdom. When she looked out of the first, her sight was more keen than that of any other human being; from the second she could see still better, from the third more distinctly still, and so it went on, until the twelfth, from which she saw everything above the earth and under the earth, and nothing at all could be kept secret from her. Moreover, as she was haughty, and would be subject to no one, but wished to keep the dominion for herself alone, she caused it to be proclaimed that no one should ever be her husband who could not conceal himself from her so effectually, that it should be quite impossible for her to find him. He who tried this, however, and was discovered by her, was to have his head struck off, and stuck on a post. Ninety-seven posts with the heads of dead men were already standing before the castle, and no one had come forward for a long time. The princess was delighted, and thought to herself, “Now I shall be free as long as I live.” Then three brothers appeared before her, and announced to her that they were desirous of trying their luck. The eldest believed he would be quite safe if he crept into a lime-pit, but she saw him from the first window, made him come out, and had his head cut off. The second crept into the cellar of the palace, but she perceived him also from the first window, and his fate was sealed. His head was placed on the nine and ninetieth post. Then the youngest came to her and entreated her to give him a day for consideration, and also to be so gracious as to overlook it if she should happen to discover him twice, but if he failed the third time, he would look on his life as over. As he was so handsome, and begged so earnestly, she said, “Yes, I will grant thee that, but thou wilt not succeed.”

Next day he meditated for a long time how he should hide himself, but all in vain. Then he seized his gun and went out hunting. He saw a raven, took a good aim at him, and was just going to fire, when the bird cried, “Don’t shoot; I will make it worth thy while not.” He put his gun down, went on, and came to a lake where he surprised a large fish which had come up from the depths below to the surface of the water. When he had aimed at it, the fish cried, “Don’t shoot, and I will make it worth thy while.” He allowed it to dive down again, went onwards, and met a fox which was lame. He fired and missed it, and the fox cried, “You had much better come here and draw the thorn out of my foot for me.” He did this; but then he wanted to kill the fox and skin it, the fox said, “Stop, and I will make it worth thy while.” The youth let him go, and then as it was evening, returned home.

Next day he was to hide himself; but howsoever much he puzzled his brains over it, he did not know where. He went into the forest to the raven and said, “I let thee live on, so now tell me where I am to hide myself, so that the King’s daughter shall not see me.” The raven hung his head and thought it over for a longtime. At length he croaked, “I have it.” He fetched an egg out of his nest, cut it into two parts, and shut the youth inside it; then made it whole again, and seated himself on it. When the King’s daughter went to the first window she could not discover him, nor could she from the others, and she began to be uneasy, but from the eleventh she saw him. She ordered the raven to be shot, and the egg to be brought and broken, and the youth was forced to come out. She said, “For once thou art excused, but if thou dost not do better than this, thou art lost!”

Next day he went to the lake, called the fish to him and said, “I suffered thee to live, now tell me where to hide myself so that the King’s daughter may not see me.” The fish thought for a while, and at last cried, “I have it! I will shut thee up in my stomach.” He swallowed him, and went down to the bottom of the lake. The King’s daughter looked through her windows, and even from the eleventh did not see him, and was alarmed; but at length from the twelfth she saw him. She ordered the fish to be caught and killed, and then the youth appeared. Every one can imagine what a state of mind he was in. She said, “Twice thou art forgiven, but be sure that thy head will be set on the hundredth post.”

On the last day, he went with a heavy heart into the country, and met the fox. “Thou knowest how to find all kinds of hiding-places,” said he; “I let thee live, now advise me where I shall hide myself so that the King’s daughter shall not discover me.” “That’s a hard task,” answered the fox, looking very thoughtful. At length he cried, “I have it!” and went with him to a spring, dipped himself in it, and came out as a stall-keeper in the market, and dealer in animals. The youth had to dip himself in the water also, and was changed into a small sea-hare. The merchant went into the town, and showed the pretty little animal, and many persons gathered together to see it. At length the King’s daughter came likewise, and as she liked it very much, she bought it, and gave the merchant a good deal of money for it. Before he gave it over to her, he said to it, “When the King’s daughter goes to the window, creep quickly under the braids of he hair.” And now the time arrived when she was to search for him. She went to one window after another in turn, from the first to the eleventh, and did not see him. When she did not see him from the twelfth either, she was full of anxiety and anger, and shut it down with such violence that the glass in every window shivered into a thousand pieces, and the whole castle shook.

She went back and felt the sea-hare beneath the braids of her hair. Then she seized it, and threw it on the ground exclaiming, “Away with thee, get out of my sight!” It ran to the merchant, and both of them hurried to the spring, wherein they plunged, and received back their true forms. The youth thanked the fox, and said, “The raven and the fish are idiots compared with thee; thou knowest the right tune to play, there is no denying that!”

The youth went straight to the palace. The princess was already expecting him, and accommodated herself to her destiny. The wedding was solemnized, and now he was king, and lord of all the kingdom. He never told her where he had concealed himself for the third time, and who had helped him, so she believed that he had done everything by his own skill, and she had a great respect for him, for she thought to herself, “He is able to do more than I.”

The Master-Thief

One day an old man and his wife were sitting in front of a miserable house resting a while from their work. Suddenly a splendid carriage with four black horses came driving up, and a richly-dressed man descended from it. The peasant stood up, went to the great man, and asked what he wanted, and in what way he could be useful to him? The stranger stretched out his hand to the old man, and said, "I want nothing but to enjoy for once a country dish; cook me some potatoes, in the way you always have them, and then I will sit down at your table and eat them with pleasure." The peasant smiled and said, "You are a count or a prince, or perhaps even a duke; noble gentlemen often have such fancies, but you shall have your wish." The wife went into the kitchen, and began to wash and rub the potatoes, and to make them into balls, as they are eaten by the country-folks. Whilst she was busy with this work, the peasant said to the stranger, "Come into my garden with me for a while, I have still something to do there." He had dug some holes in the garden, and now wanted to plant some trees in them. "Have you no children," asked the stranger, "who could help you with your work?" "No," answered the peasant, "I had a son, it is true, but it is long since he went out into the world. He was a ne'er-do-well; sharp, and knowing, but he would learn nothing and was full of bad tricks, at last he ran away from me, and since then I have heard nothing of him."

The old man took a young tree, put it in a hole, drove in a post beside it, and when he had shovelled in some earth and had trampled it firmly down, he tied the stem of the tree above, below, and in the middle, fast to the post by a rope of straw. "But tell me," said the stranger, "why you don't tie that crooked knotted tree, which is lying in the corner there, bent down almost to the ground, to a post also that it may grow straight, as well as these?" The old man smiled and said, "Sir, you speak according to your knowledge, it is easy to see that you are not familiar with gardening. That tree there is old, and mis-shapen, no one can make it straight now. Trees must be trained while they are young." "That is how it was with your son," said the stranger, "if you had trained him while he was still young, he would not have run away; now he too must have grown hard and mis-shapen." "Truly it is a long time since he went away," replied the old man, "he must have changed." "Would you know him again if he were to come to you?" asked the stranger. "Hardly by his face," replied the peasant, "but he has a mark about him, a birth-mark on his shoulder, that looks like a bean." When he had said that the stranger pulled off his coat, bared his shoulder, and showed the peasant the bean. "Good God!" cried the old man, "Thou art really my son!" and love for his child stirred in his heart. "But," he added, "how canst thou be my son, thou hast become a great lord and livest in wealth and luxury? How hast thou contrived to do that?" "Ah, father," answered the son, "the young tree was bound to no post and has grown crooked, now it is too old, it will never be straight again. How have I got all that? I have become a thief, but do not be alarmed, I am a master-thief. For me there are neither locks nor bolts, whatsoever I desire is mine. Do not imagine that I steal like a common thief, I only take some of the superfluity of the rich. Poor people are safe, I would rather give to them than take anything from them. It is the same with anything which I can have without trouble, cunning and dexterity I never touch it." "Alas, my son," said the father, "it still does not please me, a thief is still a thief, I tell thee it will end badly." He took him to his mother, and when she heard that was her son, she wept for joy, but when he told her that he had become a master-thief, two streams flowed down over her face. At length she said, "Even if he has become a thief, he is still my son, and my eyes have beheld him once more." They sat down to table, and once again he ate with his parents the wretched food which he had not eaten for so long. The father said, "If our Lord, the count up there in the castle, learns who thou art, and what trade thou followest, he will not take thee in his arms and cradle thee in them as he did when he held thee at the font, but will cause thee to swing from a halter." "Be easy, father, he will do me no harm, for I understand my trade. I will go to him myself this very day." When evening drew near, the master-thief seated himself in his carriage, and drove to the castle. The count received him civilly, for he took him for a distinguished man. When, however, the stranger made himself known, the count turned pale and was quite silent for some time. At length he said, "Thou art my godson, and on that account mercy shall take the place of justice, and I will deal leniently with thee. Since thou pridest thyself on being a master-thief, I will put thy art to the proof, but if thou dost not stand the test, thou must marry the rope-maker's daughter, and the croaking of the raven must be thy music on the occasion." "Lord count," answered the master-thief, "Think of three things, as difficult as you like, and if I do not perform your tasks, do with me what you will." The count reflected for some minutes, and then said, "Well, then, in the first place, thou shalt steal the horse I keep for my own riding, out of the stable; in the next, thou shalt steal the sheet from beneath the bodies of my wife and myself when we are asleep, without our observing it, and the wedding-ring of my wife as well; thirdly and lastly, thou shalt steal away out of the church, the parson and clerk. Mark what I am saying, for thy life depends on it."

The master-thief went to the nearest town; there he bought the clothes of an old peasant woman, and put them on. Then he stained his face brown, and painted wrinkles on it as well, so that no one could have recognized him. Then he filled a small cask with old Hungary wine in which was mixed a powerful sleeping-drink. He put the cask in a basket, which he took on his back, and walked with slow and tottering steps to the count's castle. It was already dark when he arrived. He sat down on a stone in the court-yard and began to cough, like an asthmatic old woman, and to rub his hands as if he were cold. In front of the door of the stable some soldiers were lying round a fire; one of them observed the woman, and called out to her, "Come nearer, old mother, and warm thyself beside us. After all, thou hast no bed for the night, and must take one where thou canst find it." The old woman tottered up to them, begged them to lift the basket from her back, and sat down beside them at the fire. “What hast thou got in thy little cask, old lady?” asked one. “A good mouthful of wine,” she answered. “I live by trade, for money and fair words I am quite ready to let you have a glass.” “Let us have it here, then,” said the soldier, and when he had tasted one glass he said, “When wine is good, I like another glass,” and had another poured out for himself, and the rest followed his example. “Hallo, comrades,” cried one of them to those who were in the stable, “here is an old goody who has wine that is as old as herself; take a draught, it will warm your stomachs far better than our fire.” The old woman carried her cask into the stable. One of the soldiers had seated himself on the saddled riding-horse, another held its bridle in his hand, a third had laid hold of its tail. She poured out as much as they wanted until the spring ran dry. It was not long before the bridle fell from the hand of the one, and he fell down and began to snore, the other left hold of the tail, lay down and snored still louder. The one who was sitting in the saddle, did remain sitting, but bent his head almost down to the horse’s neck, and slept and blew with his mouth like the bellows of a forge. The soldiers outside had already been asleep for a long time, and were lying on the ground motionless, as if dead. When the master-thief saw that he had succeeded, he gave the first a rope in his hand instead of the bridle, and the other who had been holding the tail, a wisp of straw, but what was he to do with the one who was sitting on the horse’s back? He did not want to throw him down, for he might have awakened and have uttered a cry. He had a good idea, he unbuckled the girths of the saddle, tied a couple of ropes which were hanging to a ring on the wall fast to the saddle, and drew the sleeping rider up into the air on it, then he twisted the rope round the posts, and made it fast. He soon unloosed the horse from the chain, but if he had ridden over the stony pavement of the yard they would have heard the noise in the castle. So he wrapped the horse’s hoofs in old rags, led him carefully out, leapt upon him, and galloped off.

When day broke, the master galloped to the castle on the stolen horse. The count had just got up, and was looking out of the window. “Good morning, Sir Count,” he cried to him, “here is the horse, which I have got safely out of the stable! Just look, how beautifully your soldiers are lying there sleeping; and if you will but go into the stable, you will see how comfortable your watchers have made it for themselves.” The count could not help laughing, then he said, “For once thou hast succeeded, but things won’t go so well the second time, and I warn thee that if thou comest before me as a thief, I will handle thee as I would a thief.” When the countess went to bed that night, she closed her hand with the wedding-ring tightly together, and the count said, “All the doors are locked and bolted, I will keep awake and wait for the thief, but if he gets in by the window, I will shoot him.” The master-thief, however, went in the dark to the gallows, cut a poor sinner who was hanging there down from the halter, and carried him on his back to the castle. Then he set a ladder up to the bedroom, put the dead body on his shoulders, and began to climb up. When he had got so high that the head of the dead man showed at the window, the count, who was watching in his bed, fired a pistol at him, and immediately the master let the poor sinner fall down, and hid himself in one corner. The night was sufficiently lighted by the moon, for the master to see distinctly how the count got out of the window on to the ladder, came down, carried the dead body into the garden, and began to dig a hole in which to lay it. “Now,” thought the thief, “the favourable moment has come,” stole nimbly out of his corner, and climbed up the ladder straight into the countess’s bedroom. “Dear wife,” he began in the count’s voice, “the thief is dead, but, after all, he is my godson, and has been more of a scape-grace than a villain. I will not put him to open shame; besides, I am sorry for the parents. I will bury him myself before daybreak, in the garden that the thing may not be known, so give me the sheet, I will wrap up the body in it, and bury him as a dog burries things by scratching.” The countess gave him the sheet. “I tell you what,” continued the thief, “I have a fit of magnanimity on me, give me the ring too, — the unhappy man risked his life for it, so he may take it with him into his grave.” She would not gainsay the count, and although she did it unwillingly she drew the ring from her finger, and gave it to him. The thief made off with both these things, and reached home safely before the count in the garden had finished his work of burying.

What a long face the count did pull when the master came next morning, and brought him the sheet and the ring. “Art thou a wizard?” said he, “Who has fetched thee out of the grave in which I myself laid thee, and brought thee to life again?” “You did not bury me,” said the thief, “but the poor sinner on the gallows,” and he told him exactly how everything had happened, and the count was forced to own to him that he was a clever, crafty thief. “But thou hast not reached the end yet,” he added, “thou hast still to perform the third task, and if thou dost not succeed in that, all is of no use.” The master smiled and returned no answer. When night had fallen he went with a long sack on his back, a bundle under his arms, and a lantern in his hand to the village-church. In the sack he had some crabs, and in the bundle short wax-candles. He sat down in the churchyard, took out a crab, and stuck a wax-candle on his back. Then he lighted the little light, put the crab on the ground, and let it creep about. He took a second out of the sack, and treated it in the same way, and so on until the last was out of the sack. Hereupon he put on a long black garment that looked like a monk’s cowl, and stuck a gray beard on his chin. When at last he was quite unrecognizable, he took the sack in which the crabs had been, went into the church, and ascended the pulpit. The clock in the tower was just striking twelve; when the last stroke had sounded, he cried with a loud and piercing voice, “Hearken, sinful men, the end of all things has come! The last day is at hand! Hearken! Hearken! Whosoever wishes to go to heaven with me must creep into the sack. I am Peter, who opens and shuts the gate of heaven. Behold how the dead outside there in the churchyard, are wandering about collecting their bones. Come, come, and creep into the sack; the world is about to be destroyed!” The cry echoed through the whole village. The parson and clerk who lived nearest to the church, heard it first, and when they saw the lights which were moving about the churchyard, they observed that something unusual was going on, and went into the church. They listened to the sermon for a while, and then the clerk nudged the parson and said, “It would not be amiss if we were to use the opportunity together, and before the dawning of the last day, find an easy way of getting to heaven.” “To tell the truth,” answered the parson, “that is what I myself have been thinking, so if you are inclined, we will set out on our way.” “Yes,” answered the clerk, “but you, the pastor, have the precedence, I will follow.” So the parson went first, and ascended the pulpit where the master opened his sack. The parson crept in first, and then the clerk. The master immediately tied up the sack tightly, seized it by the middle, and dragged it down the pulpit-steps, and whenever the heads of the two fools bumped against the steps, he cried, “We are going over the mountains.” Then he drew them through the village in the same way, and when they were passing through puddles, he cried, “Now we are going through wet clouds.” And when at last he was dragging them up the steps of the castle, he cried, “Now we are on the steps of heaven, and will soon be in the outer court.” When he had got to the top, he pushed the sack into the pigeon-house, and when the pigeons fluttered about, he said, “Hark how glad the angels are, and how they are flapping their wings!” Then he bolted the door upon them, and went away.

Next morning he went to the count, and told him that he had performed the third task also, and had carried the parson and clerk out of the church. “Where hast thou left them?” asked the lord. “They are lying upstairs in a sack in the pigeon-house, and imagine that they are in heaven.” The count went up himself, and convinced himself that the master had told the truth. When he had delivered the parson and clerk from their captivity, he said, “Thou art an arch-thief, and hast won thy wager. For once thou escapest with a whole skin, but see that thou leavest my land, for if ever thou settest foot on it again, thou may’st count on thy elevation to the gallows.” The arch-thief took leave of his parents, once more went forth into the wide world, and no one has ever heard of him since.

The Drummer

A young drummer went out quite alone one evening into the country, and came to a lake on the shore of which he perceived three pieces of white linen lying. “What fine linen,” said he, and put one piece in his pocket. He returned home, thought no more of what he had found, and went to bed. Just as he was going to sleep, it seemed to him as if some one was saying his name. He listened, and was aware of a soft voice which cried to him, “Drummer, drummer, wake up!” As it was a dark night he could see no one, but it appeared to him that a figure was hovering about his bed. “What do you want?” he asked. “Give me back my dress,” answered the voice, “that you took away from me last evening by the lake.” “You shall have it back again,” said the drummer, “if you will tell me who you are.” “Ah,” replied the voice, “I am the daughter of a mighty King; but I have fallen into the power of a witch, and am shut up on the glass-mountain. I have to bathe in the lake every day with my two sisters, but I cannot fly back again without my dress. My sisters have gone away, but I have been forced to stay behind. I entreat you to give me my dress back.” “Be easy, poor child,” said the drummer. “I will willingly give it back to you.” He took it out of his pocket, and reached it to her in the dark. She snatched it in haste, and wanted to go away with it. “Stop a moment, perhaps I can help you.” “You can only help me by ascending the glass-mountain, and freeing me from the power of the witch. But you cannot come to the glass-mountain, and indeed if you were quite close to it you could not ascend it.” “When I want to do a thing I always can do it,” said the drummer; “I am sorry for you, and have no fear of anything. But I do not know the way which leads to the glass-mountain.” “The road goes through the great forest, in which the man-eaters live,” she answered, “and more than that, I dare not tell you.” And then he heard her wings quiver, as she flew away.

By daybreak the drummer arose, buckled on his drum, and went without fear straight into the forest. After he had walked for a while without seeing any giants, he thought to himself, “I must waken up the sluggards,” and he hung his drum before him, and beat such a reveille that the birds flew out of the trees with loud cries. It was not long before a giant who had been lying sleeping among the grass, rose up, and was as tall as a fir-tree. “Wretch!” cried he; “what art thou drumming here for, and wakening me out of my best sleep?” “I am drumming,” he replied, “because I want to show the way to many thousands who are following me.” “What do they want in my forest?” demanded the giant. “They want to put an end to thee, and cleanse the forest of such a monster as thou art!” “Oho!” said the giant, “I will trample you all to death like so many ants.” “Dost thou think thou canst do anything against us?” said the drummer; “if thou stoopest to take hold of one, he will jump away and hide himself; but when thou art lying down and sleeping, they will come forth from every thicket, and creep up to thee. Every one of them has a hammer of steel in his belt, and with that they will beat in thy skull.” The giant grew angry and thought, “If I meddle with the crafty folk, it might turn out badly for me. I can strangle wolves and bears, but I cannot protect myself from these earth-worms.” “Listen, little fellow,” said he; “go back again, and I will promise you that for the future I will leave you and your comrades in peace, and if there is anything else you wish for, tell me, for I am quite willing to do something to please you.” “Thou hast long legs,” said the drummer, “and canst run quicker than I; carry me to the glass-mountain, and I will give my followers a signal to go back, and they shall leave thee in peace this time.” “Come here, worm,” said the giant; “seat thyself on my shoulder, I will carry thee where thou wishest to be.” The giant lifted him up, and the drummer began to beat his drum up aloft to his heart’s delight. The giant thought, “That is the signal for the other people to turn back.”

After a while, a second giant was standing in the road, who took the drummer from the first, and stuck him in his button-hole. The drummer laid hold of the button, which was as large as a dish, held on by it, and looked merrily around. Then they came to a third giant, who took him out of the button-hole, and set him on the rim of his hat. Then the drummer walked backwards and forwards up above, and looked over the trees, and when he perceived a mountain in the blue distance, he thought, “That must be the glass-mountain,” and so it was. The giant only made two steps more, and they reached the foot of the mountain, where the giant put him down. The drummer demanded to be put on the summit of the glass-mountain, but the giant shook his head, growled something in his beard, and went back into the forest.

And now the poor drummer was standing before the mountain, which was as high as if three mountains were piled on each other, and at the same time as smooth as a looking-glass, and did not know how to get up it. He began to climb, but that was useless, for he always slipped back again. “If one was a bird now,” thought he; but what was the good of wishing, no wings grew for him.

Whilst he was standing thus, not knowing what to do, he saw, not far from him, two men who were struggling fiercely together. He went up to them and saw that they were disputing about a saddle which was lying on the ground before them, and which both of them wanted to have. “What fools you are,” said he, “to quarrel about a saddle, when you have not a horse for it!” “The saddle is worth fighting about,” answered one of the men; “whosoever sits on it, and wishes himself in any place, even if it should be the very end of the earth, gets there the instant he has uttered the wish. The saddle belongs to us in common. It is my turn to ride on it, but that other man will not let me do it.” “I will soon decide the quarrel,” said the drummer, and he went to a short distance and stuck a white rod in the ground. Then he came back and said, “Now run to the goal, and whoever gets there first, shall ride first.” Both put themselves into a trot; but hardly had they gone a couple of steps before the drummer swung himself on the saddle, wished himself on the glass-mountain, and before any one could turn round, he was there. On the top of the mountain was a plain; there stood an old stone house, and in front of the house lay a great fish-pond, but behind it was a dark forest. He saw neither men nor animals, everything was quiet; only the wind rustled amongst the trees, and the clouds moved by quite close above his head. He went to the door and knocked. When he had knocked for the third time, an old woman with a brown face and red eyes opened the door. She had spectacles on her long nose, and looked sharply at him; then she asked what he wanted. “Entrance, food, and a bed for the night,” replied the drummer. “That thou shalt have,” said the old woman, “if thou wilt perform three services in return.” “Why not?” he answered, “I am not afraid of any kind of work, however hard it may be.” The old woman let him go in, and gave him some food and a good bed at night. The next morning when he had had his sleep out, she took a thimble from her wrinkled finger, reached it to the drummer, and said, “Go to work now, and empty out the pond with this thimble; but thou must have it done before night, and must have sought out all the fishes which are in the water and laid them side by side, according to their kind and size.” “That is strange work,” said the drummer, but he went to the pond, and began to empty it. He baled the whole morning; but what can any one do to a great lake with a thimble, even if he were to bale for a thousand years?

When it was noon, he thought, “It is all useless, and whether I work or not it will come to the same thing.” So he gave it up and sat down. Then came a maiden out of the house who set a little basket with food before him, and said, “What ails thee, that thou sittest so sadly here?” He looked at her, and saw that she was wondrously beautiful. “Ah,” said he, “I cannot finish the first piece of work, how will it be with the others? I came forth to seek a king’s daughter who is said to dwell here, but I have not found her, and I will go farther.” “Stay here,” said the maiden, “I will help thee out of thy difficulty. Thou art tired, lay thy head in my lap, and sleep. When thou awakest again, thy work will be done.” The drummer did not need to be told that twice. As soon as his eyes were shut, she turned a wishing-ring and said, “Rise, water. Fishes, come out.” Instantly the water rose on high like a white mist, and moved away with the other clouds, and the fishes sprang on the shore and laid themselves side by side each according to his size and kind. When the drummer awoke, he saw with amazement that all was done. But the maiden said, “One of the fish is not lying with those of its own kind, but quite alone; when the old woman comes to-night and sees that all she demanded has been done, she will ask thee, ‘What is this fish lying alone for?’ Then throw the fish in her face, and say, ‘This one shall be for thee, old witch.’” In the evening the witch came, and when she had put this question, he threw the fish in her face. She behaved as if she did not remark it, and said nothing, but looked at him with malicious eyes. Next morning she said, “Yesterday it was too easy for thee, I must give thee harder work. To-day thou must hew down the whole of the forest, split the wood into logs, and pile them up, and everything must be finished by the evening.” She gave him an axe, a mallet, and two wedges. But the axe was made of lead, and the mallet and wedges were of tin. When he began to cut, the edge of the axe turned back, and the mallet and wedges were beaten out of shape. He did not know how to manage, but at mid-day the maiden came once more with his dinner and comforted him. “Lay thy head on my lap,” said she, “and sleep; when thou awakest, thy work will be done.” She turned her wishing-ring, and in an instant the whole forest fell down with a crash, the wood split, and arranged itself in heaps, and it seemed just as if unseen giants were finishing the work. When he awoke, the maiden said, “Dost thou see that the wood is piled up and arranged, one bough alone remains; but when the old woman comes this evening and asks thee about that bough, give her a blow with it, and say, ‘That is for thee, thou witch.’”

The old woman came, “There thou seest how easy the work was!” said she; “but for whom hast thou left that bough which is lying there still?”

“For thee, thou witch,” he replied, and gave her a blow with it. But she pretended not to feel it, laughed scornfully, and said, “Early to-morrow morning thou shalt arrange all the wood in one heap, set fire to it, and burn it.” He rose at break of day, and began to pick up the wood, but how can a single man get a whole forest together? The work made no progress. The maiden, however, did not desert him in his need. She brought him his food at noon, and when he had eaten, he laid his head on her lap, and went to sleep. When he awoke, the entire pile of wood was burning in one enormous flame, which stretched its tongues out into the sky. “Listen to me,” said the maiden, “when the witch comes, she will give thee all kinds of orders; do whatever she asks thee without fear, and then she will not be able to get the better of thee, but if thou art afraid, the fire will lay hold of thee, and consume thee. At last when thou hast done everything, seize her with both thy hands, and throw her into the midst of the fire.” The maiden departed, and the old woman came sneaking up to him. “Oh, I am cold,” said she, “but that is a fire that burns; it warms my old bones for me, and does me good! But there is a log lying there which won’t burn, bring it out for me. When thou hast done that, thou art free, and mayst go where thou likest, come; go in with a good will.”

The drummer did not reflect long; he sprang into the midst of the flames, but they did not hurt him, and could not even singe a hair of his head. He carried the log out, and laid it down. Hardly, however, had the wood touched the earth than it was transformed, and the beautiful maiden who had helped him in his need stood before him, and by the silken and shining golden garments which she wore, he knew right well that she was the King’s daughter. But the old woman laughed venomously, and said, “Thou thinkest thou hast her safe, but thou hast not got her yet!” Just as she was about to fall on the maiden and take her away, the youth seized the old woman with both his hands, raised her up on high, and threw her into the jaws of the fire, which closed over her as if it were delighted that an old witch was to be burnt.

Then the King’s daughter looked at the drummer, and when she saw that he was a handsome youth and remembered how he had risked his life to deliver her, she gave him her hand, and said, “Thou hast ventured everything for my sake, but I also will do everything for thine. Promise to be true to me, and thou shalt be my husband. We shall not want for riches, we shall have enough with what the witch has gathered together here.” She led him into the house, where there were chests and coffers crammed with the old woman’s treasures. The maiden left the gold and silver where it was, and took only the precious stones. She would not stay any longer on the glass-mountain, so the drummer said to her, “Seat thyself by me on my saddle, and then we will fly down like birds.” “I do not like the old saddle,” said she, “I need only turn my wishing-ring and we shall be at home.” “Very well, then,” answered the drummer, “then wish us in front of the town-gate.” In the twinkling of an eye they were there, but the drummer said, “I will just go to my parents and tell them the news, wait for me outside here, I shall soon be back.” “Ah,” said the King’s daughter, “I beg thee to be careful. On thy arrival do not kiss thy parents on the right cheek, or else thou wilt forget everything, and I shall stay behind here outside, alone and deserted.” “How can I forget thee?” said he, and promised her to come back very soon, and gave his hand upon it. When he went into his father’s house, he had changed so much that no one knew who he was, for the three days which he had passed on the glass-mountain had been three years. Then he made himself known, and his parents fell on his neck with joy, and his heart was so moved that he forgot what the maiden had said, and kissed them on both cheeks. But when he had given them the kiss on the right cheek, every thought of the King’s daughter vanished from him. He emptied out his pockets, and laid handfuls of the largest jewels on the table. The parents had not the least idea what to do with the riches. Then the father built a magnificent castle all surrounded by gardens, woods, and meadows as if a prince were going to live in it, and when it was ready, the mother said, “I have found a maiden for thee, and the wedding shall be in three days. The son was content to do as his parents desired.”

The poor King’s daughter had stood for a long time without the town waiting for the return of the young man. When evening came, she said, “He must certainly have kissed his parents on the right cheek, and has forgotten me.” Her heart was full of sorrow, she wished herself into a solitary little hut in a forest, and would not return to her father’s court. Every evening she went into the town and passed the young man’s house; he often saw her, but he no longer knew her. At length she heard the people saying, “The wedding will take place to-morrow.” Then she said, “I will try if I can win his heart back.”

On the first day of the wedding ceremonies, she turned her wishing-ring, and said, “A dress as bright as the sun.” Instantly the dress lay before her, and it was as bright as if it had been woven of real sunbeams. When all the guests were assembled, she entered the hall. Every one was amazed at the beautiful dress, and the bride most of all, and as pretty dresses were the things she had most delight in, she went to the stranger and asked if she would sell it to her. “Not for money,” she answered, “but if I may pass the first night outside the door of the room where your betrothed sleeps, I will give it up to you.” The bride could not overcome her desire and consented, but she mixed a sleeping-draught with the wine her betrothed took at night, which made him fall into a deep sleep, When all had become quiet, the King’s daughter crouched down by the door of the bedroom, opened it just a little, and cried,

“Drummer, drummer, I pray thee hear!
Hast thou forgotten thou heldest me dear?
That on the glass-mountain we sat hour by hour?
That I rescued thy life from the witch’s power?
Didst thou not plight thy troth to me?
Drummer, drummer, hearken to me!”

But it was all in vain, the drummer did not awake, and when morning dawned, the King’s daughter was forced to go back again as she came. On the second evening she turned her wishing-ring and said, “A dress as silvery as the moon.” When she appeared at the feast in the dress which was as soft as moonbeams, it again excited the desire of the bride, and the King’s daughter gave it to her for permission to pass the second night also, outside the door of the bedroom. Then in the stillness of the night, she cried,

“Drummer, drummer, I pray thee hear!
Hast thou forgotten thy heldest me dear?
That on the glass-mountain we sat hour by hour?
That I rescued thy life from the witch’s power?
Didst thou not plight thy troth to me?
Drummer, drummer, hearken to me!”

But the drummer, who was stupefied with the sleeping-draught, could not be aroused. Sadly next morning she went back to her hut in the forest. But the people in the house had heard the lamentation of the stranger-maiden, and told the bridegroom about it. They told him also that it was impossible that he could hear anything of it, because the maiden he was going to marry had poured a sleeping-draught into his wine.

On the third evening, the King’s daughter turned her wishing-ring, and said, “A dress glittering like the stars.” When she showed herself therein at the feast, the bride was quite beside herself with the splendour of the dress, which far surpassed the others, and she said, “I must, and will have it.” The maiden gave it as she had given the others for permission to spend the night outside the bridegroom’s door. The bridegroom, however, did not drink the wine which was handed to him before he went to bed, but poured it behind the bed, and when everything was quiet, he heard a sweet voice which called to him,

“Drummer, drummer, I pray thee hear!
Hast thou forgotten thou held me dear?
That on the glass-mountain we sat hour by hour?

That I rescued thy life from the witch’s power?
Didst thou not plight thy troth to me?
Drummer, drummer, hearken to me!”

Suddenly, his memory returned to him. “Ah,” cried he, “how can I have acted so unfaithfully; but the kiss which in the joy of my heart I gave my parents, on the right cheek, that is to blame for it all, that is what stupefied me!” He sprang up, took the King’s daughter by the hand, and led her to his parents’ bed. “This is my true bride,” said he; “if I marry the other, I shall do a great wrong.” The parents, when they heard how everything had happened, gave their consent. Then the lights in the hall were lighted again, drums and trumpets were brought, friends and relations were invited to come, and the real wedding was solemnized with great rejoicing. The first bride received the beautiful dresses as a compensation, and declared herself satisfied.

The Ear of Corn

In former times, when God himself still walked the earth, the fruitfulness of the soil was much greater than it is now; then the ears of corn did not bear fifty or sixty, but four or five hundred-fold. Then the corn grew from the bottom to the very top of the stalk, and according to the length of the stalk was the length of the ear. Men however are so made, that when they are too well off they no longer value the blessings which come from God, but grow indifferent and careless. One day a woman was passing by a corn-field when her little child, who was running beside her, fell into a puddle, and dirtied her frock. On this the mother tore up a handful of the beautiful ears of corn, and cleaned the frock with them.

When the Lord, who just then came by, saw that, he was angry, and said, “Henceforth shall the stalks of corn bear no more ears; men are no longer worthy of heavenly gifts.” The by-standers who heard this, were terrified, and fell on their knees and prayed that he would still leave something on the stalks, even if the people were undeserving of it, for the sake of the innocent birds which would otherwise have to starve. The Lord, who foresaw their suffering, had pity on them, and granted the request. So the ears were left as they now grow.

The Grave-Mound

A rich farmer was one day standing in his yard inspecting his fields and gardens. The corn was growing up vigorously and the fruit-trees were heavily laden with fruit. The grain of the year before still lay in such immense heaps on the floors that the rafters could hardly bear it. Then he went into the stable, where were well-fed oxen, fat cows, and horses bright as looking-glass. At length he went back into his sitting-room, and cast a glance at the iron chest in which his money lay.

Whilst he was thus standing surveying his riches, all at once there was a loud knock close by him. The knock was not at the door of his room, but at the door of his heart. It opened, and he heard a voice which said to him, "Hast thou done good to thy family with it? Hast thou considered the necessities of the poor? Hast thou shared thy bread with the hungry? Hast thou been contented with what thou hast, or didst thou always desire to have more?" The heart was not slow in answering, "I have been hard and pitiless, and have never shown any kindness to my own family. If a beggar came, I turned away my eyes from him. I have not troubled myself about God, but have thought only of increasing my wealth. If everything which the sky covers had been mine own, I should still not have had enough."

When he was aware of this answer he was greatly alarmed, his knees began to tremble, and he was forced to sit down.

Then there was another knock, but the knock was at the door of his room. It was his neighbour, a poor man who had a number of children whom he could no longer satisfy with food. "I know," thought the poor man, "that my neighbour is rich, but he is as hard as he is rich. I don't believe he will help me, but my children are crying for bread, so I will venture it." He said to the rich man, "You do not readily give away anything that is yours, but I stand here like one who feels the water rising above his head. My children are starving, lend me four measures* of corn." The rich man looked at him long, and then the first sunbeam of mercy began to melt away a drop of the ice of greediness. "I will not lend thee four measures," he answered, "but I will make thee a present of eight, but thou must fulfil one condition." "What am I to do?" said the poor man. "When I am dead, thou shalt watch for three nights by my grave." The peasant was disturbed in his mind at this request, but in the need in which he was, he would have consented to anything; he accepted, therefore, and carried the corn home with him.

It seemed as if the rich man had foreseen what was about to happen, for when three days were gone by, he suddenly dropped down dead. No one knew exactly how it came to pass, but no one grieved for him. When he was buried, the poor man remembered his promise; he would willingly have been released from it, but he thought, "After all, he acted kindly by me. I have fed my hungry children with his corn, and even if that were not the case, where I have once given my promise I must keep it." At nightfall he went into the churchyard, and seated himself on the grave-mound.

Everything was quiet, only the moon appeared above the grave, and frequently an owl flew past and uttered her melancholy cry. When the sun rose, the poor man betook himself in safety to his home, and in the same manner the second night passed quietly by. On the evening of the third day he felt a strange uneasiness, it seemed to him that something was about to happen. When he went out he saw, by the churchyard-wall, a man whom he had never seen before. He was no longer young, had scars on his face, and his eyes looked sharply and eagerly around. He was entirely covered with an old cloak, and nothing was visible but his great riding-boots. “What are you looking for here?” the peasant asked. “Are you not afraid of the lonely churchyard?”

“I am looking for nothing,” he answered, “and I am afraid of nothing! I am like the youngster who went forth to learn how to shiver, and had his labour for his pains, but got the King’s daughter to wife and great wealth with her, only I have remained poor. I am nothing but a paid-off soldier, and I mean to pass the night here, because I have no other shelter.” “If you are without fear,” said the peasant, “stay with me, and help me to watch that grave there.”

“To keep watch is a soldier’s business,” he replied, “whatever we fall in with here, whether it be good or bad, we will share it between us.” The peasant agreed to this, and they seated themselves on the grave together.

All was quiet until midnight, when suddenly a shrill whistling was heard in the air, and the two watchers perceived the Evil One standing bodily before them. “Be off, you ragamuffins!” cried he to them, “the man who lies in that grave belongs to me; I want to take him, and if you don’t go away I will wring your necks!” “Sir with the red feather,” said the soldier, “you are not my captain, I have no need to obey you, and I have not yet learned how to fear. Go away, we shall stay sitting here.”

The Devil thought to himself, “Money is the best thing with which to get hold of these two vagabonds.” So he began to play a softer tune, and asked quite kindly, if they would not accept a bag of money, and go home with it? “That is worth listening to,” answered the soldier, “but one bag of gold won’t serve us, if you will give as much as will go into one of my boots, we will quit the field for you and go away.”

“I have not so much as that about me,” said the Devil, “but I will fetch it. In the neighbouring town lives a money-changer who is a good friend of mine, and will readily advance it to me.” When the Devil had vanished the soldier took his left boot off, and said, “We will soon pull the charcoal-burner’s nose for him, just give me your knife, comrade.” He cut the sole off the boot, and put it in the high grass near the grave on the edge of a hole that was half over-grown. “That will do,” said he; “now the chimney-sweep may come.”

They both sat down and waited, and it was not long before the Devil returned with a small bag of gold in his hand. “Just pour it in,” said the soldier, raising up the boot a little, “but that won’t be enough.”

The Black One shook out all that was in the bag; the gold fell through, and the boot remained empty. “Stupid Devil,” cried the soldier, “it won’t do! Didn’t I say so at once? Go back again, and bring more.” The Devil shook his head, went, and in an hour’s time came with a much larger bag under his arm. “Now pour it in,” cried the soldier, “but I doubt the boot won’t be full.” The gold clinked as it fell, but the boot remained empty. The Devil looked in himself with his burning eyes, and convinced himself of the truth. “You have shamefully big calves to your legs!” cried he, and made a wry face. “Did you think,” replied the soldier, “that I had a cloven foot like you? Since when have you been so stingy? See that you get more gold together, or our bargain will come to nothing!” The Wicked One went off again. This time he stayed away longer, and when at length he appeared he was panting under the weight of a sack which lay on his shoulders. He emptied it into the boot, which was just as far from being filled as before. He became furious, and was just going to tear the boot out of the soldier’s hands, but at that moment the first ray of the rising sun broke forth from the sky, and the Evil Spirit fled away with loud shrieks. The poor soul was saved.

The peasant wished to divide the gold, but the soldier said, “Give what falls to my lot to the poor, I will come with thee to thy cottage, and together we will live in rest and peace on what remains, as long as God is pleased to permit.”

Old Rinkrank

There was once on a time a King who had a daughter, and he caused a glass mountain to be made, and said that whosoever could cross to the other side of it without falling should have his daughter to wife. Then there was one who loved the King's daughter, and he asked the King if he might have her. "Yes," said the King; "if you can cross the mountain without falling, you shall have her." And the princess said she would go over it with him, and would hold him if he were about to fall. So they set out together to go over it, and when they were half way up the princess slipped and fell, and the glass-mountain opened and shut her up inside it, and her betrothed could not see where she had gone, for the mountain closed immediately. Then he wept and lamented much, and the King was miserable too, and had the mountain broken open where she had been lost, and though the would be able to get her out again, but they could not find the place into which she had fallen. Meanwhile the King's daughter had fallen quite deep down into the earth into a great cave. An old fellow with a very long gray beard came to meet her, and told her that if she would be his servant and do everything he bade her, she might live, if not he would kill her. So she did all he bade her. In the mornings he took his ladder out of his pocket, and set it up against the mountain and climbed to the top by its help, and then he drew up the ladder after him. The princess had to cook his dinner, make his bed, and do all his work, and when he came home again he always brought with him a heap of gold and silver. When she had lived with him for many years, and had grown quite old, he called her Mother Mansrot, and she had to call him Old Rinkrank. Then once when he was out, and she had made his bed and washed his dishes, she shut the doors and windows all fast, and there was one little window through which the light shone in, and this she left open. When Old Rinkrank came home, he knocked at his door, and cried, "Mother Mansrot, open the door for me." "No," said she, "Old Rinkrank, I will not open the door for thee." Then he said,

"Here stand I, poor Rinkrank, On my seventeen long shanks, On my weary, worn-out foot, Wash my dishes, Mother Mansrot."

"I have washed thy dishes already," said she. Then again he said,

"Here stand I, poor Rinkrank, On my seventeen long shanks, On my weary, worn-out foot, Make me my bed, Mother Mansrot."

"I have made thy bed already," said she. Then again he said,

"Here stand I, poor Rinkrank, On my seventeen long shanks, On my weary, worn-out foot, Open the door, Mother Mansrot."

Then he ran all round his house, and saw that the little window was open, and thought, "I will look in and see what she can be about, and why she will not open the door for me." He tried to peep in, but could not get his head through because of his long beard. So he first put his beard through the open window, but just as he had got it through, Mother Mansrot came by and pulled the window down with a cord which she had tied to it, and his beard was shut fast in it. Then he began to cry most piteously, for it hurt him very much, and to entreat her to release him again. But she said not until he gave her the ladder with which he ascended the mountain. Then, whether he would or not, he had to tell her where the ladder was. And she fastened a very long ribbon to the window, and then she set up the ladder, and ascended the mountain, and when she was at the top of it she opened the window. She went to her father, and told him all that had happened to her. The King rejoiced greatly, and her betrothed was still there, and they went and dug up the mountain, and found Old Rinkrank inside it with all his gold and silver. Then the King had Old Rinkrank put to death, and took all his gold and silver. The princess married her betrothed, and lived right happily in great magnificence and joy.

The Crystal Ball

There was once an enchantress, who had three sons who loved each other as brothers, but the old woman did not trust them, and thought they wanted to steal her power from her. So she changed the eldest into an eagle, which was forced to dwell in the rocky mountains, and was often seen sweeping in great circles in the sky. The second, she changed into a whale, which lived in the deep sea, and all that was seen of it was that it sometimes spouted up a great jet of water in the air. Each of them only bore his human form for only two hours daily. The third son, who was afraid she might change him into a raging wild beast a bear perhaps, or a wolf, went secretly away. He had heard that a King's daughter who was bewitched, was imprisoned in the Castle of the Golden Sun, and was waiting for deliverance. Those, however, who tried to free her risked their lives; three-and-twenty youths had already died a miserable death, and now only one other might make the attempt, after which no more must come. And as his heart was without fear, he caught at the idea of seeking out the Castle of the Golden Sun. He had already travelled about for a long time without being able to find it, when he came by chance into a great forest, and did not know the way out of it. All at once he saw in the distance two giants, who made a sign to him with their hands, and when he came to them they said, "We are quarrelling about a cap, and which of us it is to belong to, and as we are equally strong, neither of us can get the better of the other. The small men are cleverer than we are, so we will leave the decision to thee." "How can you dispute about an old cap?" said the youth. "Thou dost not know what properties it has! It is a wishing-cap; whosoever puts it on, can wish himself away wherever he likes, and in an instant he will be there." "Give me the cap," said the youth, "I will go a short distance off, and when I call you, you must run a race, and the cap shall belong to the one who gets first to me." He put it on and went away, and thought of the King's daughter, forgot the giants, and walked continually onward. At length he sighed from the very bottom of his heart, and cried, "Ah, if I were but at the Castle of the Golden Sun," and hardly had the words passed his lips than he was standing on a high mountain before the gate of the castle.

He entered and went through all the rooms, until in the last he found the King's daughter. But how shocked he was when he saw her. She had an ashen-gray face full of wrinkles, blear eyes, and red hair. "Are you the King's daughter, whose beauty the whole world praises?" cried he. "Ah," she answered, "this is not my form; human eyes can only see me in this state of ugliness, but that thou mayst know what I am like, look in the mirror it does not let itself be misled it will show thee my image as it is in truth." She gave him the mirror in his hand, and he saw therein the likeness of the most beautiful maiden on earth, and saw, too, how the tears were rolling down her cheeks with grief. Then said he, "How canst thou be set free? I fear no danger." She said, "He who gets the crystal ball, and holds it before the enchanter, will destroy his power with it, and I shall resume my true shape. Ah," she added, "so many have already gone to meet death for this, and thou art so young; I grieve that thou shouldst encounter such great danger." "Nothing can keep me from doing it," said he, "but tell me what I must do." "Thou shalt know everything," said the King's daughter; "when thou descendest the mountain on which the castle stands, a wild bull will stand below by a spring, and thou must fight with it, and if thou hast the luck to kill it, a fiery bird will spring out of it, which bears in its body a burning egg, and in the egg the crystal ball lies like a yolk. The bird will not, however, let the egg fall until forced to do so, and if it falls on the ground, it will flame up and burn everything that is near, and melt even ice itself, and with it the crystal ball, and then all thy trouble will have been in vain."

The youth went down to the spring, where the bull snorted and bellowed at him. After a long struggle he plunged his sword in the animal's body, and it fell down. Instantly a fiery bird arose from it, and was about to fly away, but the young man's brother, the eagle, who was passing between the clouds, swooped down, hunted it away to the sea, and struck it with his beak until, in its extremity, it let the egg fall. The egg did not, however, fall into the sea, but on a fisherman's hut which stood on the shore and the hut began at once to smoke and was about to break out in flames. Then arose in the sea waves as high as a house, they streamed over the hut, and subdued the fire. The other brother, the whale, had come swimming to them, and had driven the water up on high. When the fire was extinguished, the youth sought for the egg and happily found it; it was not yet melted, but the shell was broken by being so suddenly cooled with the water, and he could take out the crystal ball unhurt.

When the youth went to the enchanter and held it before him, the latter said, "My power is destroyed, and from this time forth thou art the King of the Castle of the Golden Sun. With this canst thou likewise give back to thy brothers their human form." Then the youth hastened to the King's daughter, and when he entered the room, she was standing there in the full splendour of her beauty, and joyfully they exchanged rings with each other.

Maid Maleen

There was once a King who had a son who asked in marriage the daughter of a mighty King; she was called Maid Maleen, and was very beautiful. As her father wished to give her to another, the prince was rejected; but as they both loved each other with all their hearts, they would not give each other up, and Maid Maleen said to her father, “I can and will take no other for my husband.” Then the King flew into a passion, and ordered a dark tower to be built, into which no ray of sunlight or moonlight should enter. When it was finished, he said, “Therein shalt thou be imprisoned for seven years, and then I will come and see if thy perverse spirit is broken.” Meat and drink for the seven years were carried into the tower, and then she and her waiting-woman were led into it and walled up, and thus cut off from the sky and from the earth. There they sat in the darkness, and knew not when day or night began. The King’s son often went round and round the tower, and called their names, but no sound from without pierced through the thick walls. What else could they do but lament and complain? Meanwhile the time passed, and by the diminution of the food and drink they knew that the seven years were coming to an end. They thought the moment of their deliverance was come; but no stroke of the hammer was heard, no stone fell out of the wall, and it seemed to Maid Maleen that her father had forgotten her. As they only had food for a short time longer, and saw a miserable death awaiting them, Maid Maleen said, “We must try our last chance, and see if we can break through the wall.” She took the bread-knife, and picked and bored at the mortar of a stone, and when she was tired, the waiting-maid took her turn. With great labour they succeeded in getting out one stone, and then a second, and a third, and when three days were over the first ray of light fell on their darkness, and at last the opening was so large that they could look out. The sky was blue, and a fresh breeze played on their faces; but how melancholy everything looked all around! Her father’s castle lay in ruins, the town and the villages were, so far as could be seen, destroyed by fire, the fields far and wide laid to waste, and no human being was visible. When the opening in the wall was large enough for them to slip through, the waiting-maid sprang down first, and then Maid Maleen followed. But where were they to go? The enemy had ravaged the whole kingdom, driven away the King, and slain all the inhabitants. They wandered forth to seek another country, but nowhere did they find a shelter, or a human being to give them a mouthful of bread, and their need was so great that they were forced to appease their hunger with nettles. When, after long journeying, they came into another country, they tried to get work everywhere; but wherever they knocked they were turned away, and no one would have pity on them. At last they arrived in a large city and went to the royal palace. There also they were ordered to go away, but at last the cook said that they might stay in the kitchen and be scullions.

The son of the King in whose kingdom they were, was, however, the very man who had been betrothed to Maid Maleen. His father had chosen another bride for him, whose face was as ugly as her heart was wicked. The wedding was fixed, and the maiden had already arrived; but because of her great ugliness, however, she shut herself in her room, and allowed no one to see her, and Maid Maleen had to take her her meals from the kitchen. When the day came for the bride and the bridegroom to go to church, she was ashamed of her ugliness, and afraid that if she showed herself in the streets, she would be mocked and laughed at by the people. Then said she to Maid Maleen, "A great piece of luck has befallen thee. I have sprained my foot, and cannot well walk through the streets; thou shalt put on my wedding-clothes and take my place; a greater honour than that thou canst not have!" Maid Maleen, however, refused it, and said, "I wish for no honour which is not suitable for me." It was in vain, too, that the bride offered her gold. At last she said angrily, "If thou dost not obey me, it shall cost thee thy life. I have but to speak the word, and thy head will lie at thy feet." Then she was forced to obey, and put on the bride's magnificent clothes and all her jewels. When she entered the royal hall, every one was amazed at her great beauty, and the King said to his son, "This is the bride whom I have chosen for thee, and whom thou must lead to church." The bridegroom was astonished, and thought, "She is like my Maid Maleen, and I should believe that it was she herself, but she has long been shut up in the tower, or dead." He took her by the hand and led her to church. On the way was a nettle-plant, and she said,

"Oh, nettle-plant, Little nettle-plant, What dost thou here alone? I have known the time When I ate thee unboiled, When I ate thee unroasted."

"What art thou saying?" asked the King's son. "Nothing," she replied, "I was only thinking of Maid Maleen." He was surprised that she knew about her, but kept silence. When they came to the foot-plank into the churchyard, she said,

"Foot-bridge, do not break, I am not the true bride."

"What art thou saying there?" asked the King's son. "Nothing," she replied, "I was only thinking of Maid Maleen." "Dost thou know Maid Maleen?" "No," she answered, "how should I know her; I have only heard of her." When they came to the church-door, she said once more,

"Church-door, break not, I am not the true bride."

"What art thou saying there?" asked he. "Ah," she answered, "I was only thinking of Maid Maleen." Then he took out a precious chain, put it round her neck, and fastened the clasp. Thereupon they entered the church, and the priest joined their hands together before the altar, and married them. He led her home, but she did not speak a single word the whole way. When they got back to the royal palace, she hurried into the bride's chamber, put off the magnificent clothes and the jewels, dressed herself in her gray gown, and kept nothing but the jewel on her neck, which she had received from the bridegroom.

When the night came, and the bride was to be led into the prince's apartment, she let her veil fall over her face, that he might not observe the deception. As soon as every one had gone away, he said to her, “What didst thou say to the nettle-plant which was growing by the wayside?”

“To which nettle-plant?” asked she; “I don’t talk to nettle-plants.” “If thou didst not do it, then thou art not the true bride,” said he. So she bethought herself, and said,

“I must go out unto my maid, Who keeps my thoughts for me.”

She went out and sought Maid Maleen. “Girl, what hast thou been saying to the nettle?” “I said nothing but,

“Oh, nettle-plant, Little nettle-plant, What dost thou here alone? I have known the time When I ate thee unboiled, When I ate thee unroasted.”

The bride ran back into the chamber, and said, “I know now what I said to the nettle,” and she repeated the words which she had just heard. “But what didst thou say to the foot-bridge when we went over it?” asked the King’s son. “To the foot-bridge?” she answered. “I don’t talk to foot-bridges.” “Then thou art not the true bride.”

She again said,

“I must go out unto my maid, Who keeps my thoughts for me,”

And ran out and found Maid Maleen, “Girl, what didst thou say to the foot-bridge?”

“I said nothing but,

“Foot-bridge, do not break, I am not the true bride.”

“That costs thee thy life!” cried the bride, but she hurried into the room, and said, “I know now what I said to the foot-bridge,” and she repeated the words. “But what didst thou say to the church-door?” “To the church-door?” she replied; “I don’t talk to church-doors.” “Then thou art not the true bride.”

She went out and found Maid Maleen, and said, “Girl, what didst thou say to the church-door?”

“I said nothing but,

“Church-door, break not, I am not the true bride.”

“That will break thy neck for thee!” cried the bride, and flew into a terrible passion, but she hastened back into the room, and said, “I know now what I said to the church-door,” and she repeated the words. “But where hast thou the jewel which I gave thee at the church-door?” “What jewel?” she answered; “thou didst not give me any jewel.” “I myself put it round thy neck, and I myself fastened it; if thou dost not know that, thou art not the true bride.” He drew the veil from her face, and when he saw her immeasurable ugliness, he sprang back terrified, and said, “How comest thou here? Who art thou?” “I am thy betrothed bride, but because I feared lest the people should mock me when they saw me out of doors, I commanded the scullery-maid to dress herself in my clothes, and to go to church instead of me.” “Where is the girl?” said he; “I want to see her, go and bring her here.” She went out and told the servants that the scullery-maid was an impostor, and that they must take her out into the court-yard and strike off her head. The servants laid hold of Maid Maleen and wanted to drag her out, but she screamed so loudly for help, that the King’s son heard her voice, hurried out of his chamber and ordered them to set the maiden free instantly. Lights were brought, and then he saw on her neck the gold chain which he had given her at the church-door. “Thou art the true bride,” said he, “who went with me to the church; come with me now to my room.” When they were both alone, he said, “On the way to church thou didst name Maid Maleen, who was my betrothed bride; if I could believe it possible, I should think she was standing before me thou art like her in every respect.” She answered, “I am Maid Maleen, who for thy sake was imprisoned seven years in the darkness, who suffered hunger and thirst, and has lived so long in want and poverty. To-day, however, the sun is shining on me once more. I was married to thee in the church, and I am thy lawful wife.” Then they kissed each other, and were happy all the days of their lives. The false bride was rewarded for what she had done by having her head cut off.

The tower in which Maid Maleen had been imprisoned remained standing for a long time, and when the children passed by it they sang,

“Kling, klang, gloria. Who sits within this tower? A King’s daughter, she sits within, A sight of her I cannot win, The wall it will not break, The stone cannot be pierced. Little Hans, with your coat so gay, Follow me, follow me, fast as you may.”

The Boots of Buffalo-Leather

A soldier who is afraid of nothing, troubles himself about nothing. One of this kind had received his discharge, and as he had learnt no trade and could earn nothing, he travelled about and begged alms of kind people. He had an old waterproof on his back, and a pair of riding-boots of buffalo-leather which were still left to him. One day he was walking he knew not where, straight out into the open country, and at length came to a forest. He did not know where he was, but saw sitting on the trunk of a tree, which had been cut down, a man who was well dressed and wore a green shooting-coat. The soldier shook hands with him, sat down on the grass by his side, and stretched out his legs. “I see thou hast good boots on, which are well blacked,” said he to the huntsman; “but if thou hadst to travel about as I have, they would not last long. Look at mine, they are of buffalo-leather, and have been worn for a long time, but in them I can go through thick and thin.” After a while the soldier got up and said, “I can stay no longer, hunger drives me onwards; but, Brother Bright-boots, where does this road lead to?” “I don’t know that myself,” answered the huntsman, “I have lost my way in the forest.” “Then thou art in the same plight as I,” said the soldier; “birds of a feather flock together, let us remain together, and seek our way.” The huntsman smiled a little, and they walked on further and further, until night fell. “We do not get out of the forest,” said the soldier, “but there in the distance I see a light shining, which will help us to something to eat.” They found a stone house, knocked at the door, and an old woman opened it. “We are looking for quarters for the night,” said the soldier, “and some lining for our stomachs, for mine is as empty as an old knapsack.” “You cannot stay here,” answered the old woman; “this is a robber’s house, and you would do wisely to get away before they come home, or you will be lost.” “It won’t be so bad as that,” answered the soldier, “I have not had a mouthful for two days, and whether I am murdered here or die of hunger in the forest is all the same to me. I shall go in.” The huntsman would not follow, but the soldier drew him in with him by the sleeve. “Come, my dear brother, we shall not come to an end so quickly as that!” The old woman had pity on them and said, “Creep in here behind the stove, and if they leave anything, I will give it to you on the sly when they are asleep.” Scarcely were they in the corner before twelve robbers came bursting in, seated themselves at the table which was already laid, and vehemently demanded some food. The old woman brought in some great dishes of roast meat, and the robbers enjoyed that thoroughly. When the smell of the food ascended the nostrils of the soldier, he said to the huntsman, “I cannot hold out any longer, I shall seat myself at the table, and eat with them.” “Thou wilt bring us to destruction,” said the huntsman, and held him back by the arm. But the soldier began to cough loudly. When the robbers heard that, they threw away their knives and forks, leapt up, and discovered the two who were behind the stove. “Aha, gentlemen, are you in the corner?” cried they, “What are you doing here?

Have you been sent as spies? Wait a while, and you shall learn how to fly on a dry bough." "But do be civil," said the soldier, "I am hungry, give me something to eat, and then you can do what you like with me." The robbers were astonished, and the captain said, "I see that thou hast no fear; well, thou shalt have some food, but after that thou must die." "We shall see," said the soldier, and seated himself at the table, and began to cut away valiantly at the roast meat. "Brother Brightboots, come and eat," cried he to the huntsman; "thou must be as hungry as I am, and cannot have better roast meat at home," but the huntsman would not eat. The robbers looked at the soldier in astonishment, and said, "The rascal uses no ceremony." After a while he said, "I have had enough food, now get me something good to drink." The captain was in the mood to humour him in this also, and called to the old woman, "Bring a bottle out of the cellar, and mind it be of the best." The soldier drew the cork out with a loud noise, and then went with the bottle to the huntsman and said, "Pay attention, brother, and thou shalt see something that will surprise thee; I am now going to drink the health of the whole clan." Then he brandished the bottle over the heads of the robbers, and cried, "Long life to you all, but with your mouths open and your right hands lifted up," and then he drank a hearty draught. Scarcely were the words said than they all sat motionless as if made of stone, and their mouths were open and their right hands stretched up in the air. The huntsman said to the soldier, "I see that thou art acquainted with tricks of another kind, but now come and let us go home." "Oho, my dear brother, but that would be marching away far too soon; we have conquered the enemy, and must first take the booty. Those men there are sitting fast, and are opening their mouths with astonishment, but they will not be allowed to move until I permit them. Come, eat and drink." The old woman had to bring another bottle of the best wine, and the soldier would not stir until he had eaten enough to last for three days. At last when day came, he said, "Now it is time to strike our tents, and that our march may be a short one, the old woman shall show us the nearest way to the town." When they had arrived there, he went to his old comrades, and said, "Out in the forest I have found a nest full of gallows' birds, come with me and we will take it." The soldier led them, and said to the huntsman, "Thou must go back again with me to see how they shake when we seize them by the feet." He placed the men round about the robbers, and then he took the bottle, drank a mouthful, brandished it above them, and cried, "Live again." Instantly they all regained the power of movement, but were thrown down and bound hand and foot with cords. Then the soldier ordered them to be thrown into a cart as if they had been so many sacks, and said, "Now drive them straight to prison." The huntsman, however, took one of the men aside and gave him another commission besides. "Brother Bright-boots," said the soldier, "we have safely routed the enemy and been well fed, now we will quietly walk behind them as if we were stragglers!" When they approached the town, the soldier saw a crowd of people pouring through the gate of the town who were raising loud cries of joy, and waving green boughs in the air. Then he saw that the entire body-guard was coming up. “What can this mean?” said he to the huntsman. “Dost thou not know?” he replied, “that the King has for a long time been absent from his kingdom, and that to-day he is returning, and every one is going to meet him.” “But where is the King?” said the soldier, “I do not see him.” “Here he is,” answered the huntsman, “I am the King, and have announced my arrival.” Then he opened his hunting-coat, and his royal garments were visible. The soldier was alarmed, and fell on his knees and begged him to forgive him for having in his ignorance treated him as an equal, and spoken to him by such a name. But the King shook hands with him, and said, “Thou art a brave soldier, and hast saved my life. Thou shalt never again be in want, I will take care of thee. And if ever thou wouldst like to eat a piece of roast meat, as good as that in the robber’s house, come to the royal kitchen. But if thou wouldst drink a health, thou must first ask my permission.”

The Golden Key

In the winter time, when deep snow lay on the ground, a poor boy was forced to go out on a sledge to fetch wood. When he had gathered it together, and packed it, he wished, as he was so frozen with cold, not to go home at once, but to light a fire and warm himself a little. So he scraped away the snow, and as he was thus clearing the ground, he found a tiny, gold key. Hereupon he thought that where the key was, the lock must be also, and dug in the ground and found an iron chest. “If the key does but fit it!” thought he; “no doubt there are precious things in that little box.” He searched, but no keyhole was there. At last he discovered one, but so small that it was hardly visible. He tried it, and the key fitted it exactly. Then he turned it once round, and now we must wait until he has quite unlocked it and opened the lid, and then we shall learn what wonderful things were lying in that box.

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Children’s Legends

Legend 1 St. Joseph in the Forest

There was once on a time a mother who had three daughters, the eldest of whom was rude and wicked, the second much better, although she had her faults, but the youngest was a pious, good child. The mother was, however, so strange, that it was just the eldest daughter whom she most loved, and she could not bear the youngest. On this account, she often sent the poor girl out into the great forest in order to get rid of her, for she thought she would lose herself and never come back again. But the guardian-angel which every good child has, did not forsake her, but always brought her into the right path again. Once, however, the guardian-angel behaved as if he were not there, and the child could not find her way out of the forest again. She walked on constantly until evening came, and then she saw a tiny light burning in the distance, ran up to it at once, and came to a little hut. She knocked, the door opened, and she came to a second door, where she knocked again. An old man, who had a snow-white beard and looked venerable, opened it for her; and he was no other than St. Joseph. He said quite kindly, “Come, dear child, seat thyself on my little chair by the fire, and warm thyself; I will fetch thee clear water if thou art thirsty; but here in the forest, I have nothing for thee to eat but a couple of little roots, which thou must first scrape and boil.”

St. Joseph gave her the roots. The girl scraped them clean, then she brought a piece of pancake and the bread that her mother had given her to take with her; mixed all together in a pan, and cooked herself a thick soup. When it was ready, St. Joseph said, “I am so hungry; give me some of thy food.” The child was quite willing, and gave him more than she kept for herself, but God’s blessing was with her, so that she was satisfied. When they had eaten, St. Joseph said, “Now we will go to bed; I have, however, only one bed, lay thyself in it. I will lie on the ground on the straw.” “No,” answered she, “stay in your own bed, the straw is soft enough for me.” St. Joseph, however, took the child in his arms, and carried her into the little bed, and there she said her prayers, and fell asleep. Next morning when she awoke, she wanted to say good morning to St. Joseph, but she did not see him. Then she got up and looked for him, but could not find him anywhere; at last she perceived, behind the door, a bag with money so heavy that she could just carry it, and on it was written that it was for the child who had slept there that night. On this she took the bag, bounded away with it, and got safely to her mother, and as she gave her mother all the money, she could not help being satisfied with her.

The next day, the second child also took a fancy to go into the forest. Her mother gave her a much larger piece of pancake and bread. It happened with her just as with the first child. In the evening she came to St. Joseph’s little hut, who gave her roots for a thick soup. When it was ready, he likewise said to her, “I am so hungry, give me some of thy food.” Then the child said, “You may have your share.” Afterwards, when St. Joseph offered her his bed and wanted to lie on the straw, she replied, “No, lie down in the bed, there is plenty of room for both of us.” St. Joseph took her in his arms and put her in the bed, and laid himself on the straw.

In the morning when the child awoke and looked for St. Joseph, he had vanished, but behind the door she found a little sack of money that was about as long as a hand, and on it was written that it was for the child who had slept there last night. So she took the little bag and ran home with it, and took it to her mother, but she secretly kept two pieces for herself.

The eldest daughter had by this time grown curious, and the next morning also insisted on going out into the forest. Her mother gave her pancakes with her — as many as she wanted, and bread and cheese as well. In the evening she found St. Joseph in his little hut, just as the two others had found him. When the soup was ready and St. Joseph said, “I am so hungry, give me some of thy food,” the girl answered, “Wait until I am satisfied; then if there is anything left thou shalt have it.” She ate, however, nearly the whole of it, and St. Joseph had to scrape the dish. Afterwards, the good old man offered her his bed, and wanted to lie on the straw. She took it without making any opposition, laid herself down in the little bed, and left the hard straw to the white-haired man. Next morning when she awoke, St. Joseph was not to be found, but she did not trouble herself about that. She looked behind the door for a money-bag. She fancied something was lying on the ground, but as she could not very well distinguish what it was, she stooped down, and examined it closely, but it remained hanging to her nose, and when she got up again, she saw, to her horror, that it was a second nose, which was hanging fast to her own. Then she began to scream and howl, but that did no good; she was forced to see it always on her nose, for it stretched out so far. Then she ran out and screamed without stopping till she met St. Joseph, at whose feet she fell and begged until, out of pity, he took the nose off her again, and even gave her two farthings. When she got home, her mother was standing before the door, and asked, “What hast thou had given to thee?” Then she lied and said, “A great bag of money, but I have lost it on the way.” “Lost it!” cried the mother, “oh, but we will soon find it again,” and took her by the hand, and wanted to seek it with her. At first she began to cry, and did not wish to go, but at last she went. On the way, however, so many lizards and snakes broke loose on both of them, that they did not know how to save themselves. At last they stung the wicked child to death, and they stung the mother in the foot, because she had not brought her up better.

Legend 2 The Twelve Apostles

Three hundred years before the birth of the Lord Christ, there lived a mother who had twelve sons, but was so poor and needy that she no longer knew how she was to keep them alive at all. She prayed to God daily that he would grant that all her sons might be on the earth with the Redeemer who was promised. When her necessity became still greater she sent one of them after the other out into the world to seek bread for her. The eldest was called Peter, and he went out and had already walked a long way, a whole day's journey, when he came into a great forest. He sought for a way out, but could find none, and went farther and farther astray, and at the same time felt such great hunger that he could scarcely stand. At length he became so weak that he was forced to lie down, and he believed death to be at hand. Suddenly there stood beside him a small boy who shone with brightness, and was as beautiful and kind as an angel. The child smote his little hands together, until Peter was forced to look up and saw him. Then the child said, "Why art thou sitting there in such trouble?" "Alas!" answered Peter, "I am going about the world seeking bread, that I may yet see the dear Saviour who is promised, that is my greatest desire." The child said, "Come with me, and thy wish shall be fulfilled." He took poor Peter by the hand, and led him between some cliffs to a great cavern. When they entered it, everything was shining with gold, silver, and crystal, and in the midst of it twelve cradles were standing side by side. Then said the little angel, "Lie down in the first, and sleep a while, I will rock thee." Peter did so, and the angel sang to him and rocked him until he was al seep. And when he was asleep, the second brother came also, guided thither by his guardian angel, and he was rocked to sleep like the first, and thus came the others, one after the other, until all twelve lay there sleeping in the golden cradles. They slept, however, three hundred years, until the night when the Saviour of the world was born. Then they awoke, and were with him on earth, and were called the twelve apostles.

Legend 3 The Rose

There was once a poor woman who had two children. The youngest had to go every day into the forest to fetch wood. Once when she had gone a long way to seek it, a little child, who was quite strong, came and helped her industriously to pick up the wood and carry it home, and then before a moment had passed the strange child disappeared. The child told her mother this, but at first she would not believe it. At length she brought a rose home, and told her mother that the beautiful child had given her this rose, and had told her that when it was in full bloom, he would return. The mother put the rose in water. One morning her child could not get out of bed, the mother went to the bed and found her dead, but she lay looking very happy. On the same morning, the rose was in full bloom.

Legend 4 Poverty and Humility Lead to Heaven

There was once a King’s son who went out into the world, and he was full of thought and sad. He looked at the sky, which was so beautifully pure and blue, then he sighed, and said, “How well must all be with one up there in heaven!” Then he saw a poor gray-haired man who was coming along the road towards him, and he spoke to him, and asked, “How can I get to heaven?” The man answered, “By poverty and humility. Put on my ragged clothes, wander about the world for seven years, and get to know what misery is, take no money, but if thou art hungry ask compassionate hearts for a bit of bread; in this way thou wilt reach heaven.”

Then the King’s son took off his magnificent coat, and wore in its place the beggar’s garment, went out into the wide world, and suffered great misery. He took nothing but a little food, said nothing, but prayed to the Lord to take him into his heaven. When the seven years were over, he returned to his father’s palace, but no one recognized him. He said to the servants, “Go and tell my parents that I have come back again.” But the servants did not believe it, and laughed and left him standing there. Then said he, “Go and tell it to my brothers that they may come down, for I should so like to see them again.” The servants would not do that either, but at last one of them went, and told it to the King’s children, but these did not believe it, and did not trouble themselves about it. Then he wrote a letter to his mother, and described to her all his misery, but he did not say that he was her son. So, out of pity, the Queen had a place under the stairs assigned to him, and food taken to him daily by two servants. But one of them was ill-natured and said, “Why should the beggar have the good food?” and kept it for himself, or gave it to the dogs, and took the weak, wasted-away beggar nothing but water; the other, however, was honest, and took the beggar what was sent to him. It was little, but he could live on it for a while, and all the time he was quite patient, but he grew continually weaker. As, however, his illness increased, he desired to receive the last sacrament. When the host was being elevated down below, all the bells in the town and neighbourhood began to ring. After mass the priest went to the poor man under the stairs, and there he lay dead. In one hand he had a rose, in the other a lily, and beside him was a paper in which was written his history.

When he was buried, a rose grew on one side of his grave, and a lily on the other.

Legend 5 God’s Food

There were once upon a time two sisters, one of whom had no children and was rich, and the other had five and was a widow, and so poor that she no longer had food enough to satisfy herself and her children. In her need, therefore, she went to her sister, and said, “My children and I are suffering the greatest hunger; thou art rich, give me a mouthful of bread.” The very rich sister was as hard as a stone, and said, “I myself have nothing in the house,” and drove away the poor creature with harsh words. After some time the husband of the rich sister came home, and was just going to cut himself a piece of bread, but when he made the first cut into the loaf, out flowed red blood. When the woman saw that she was terrified and told him what had occurred. He hurried away to help the widow and her children, but when he entered her room, he found her praying. She had her two youngest children in her arms, and the three eldest were lying dead. He offered her food, but she answered, “For earthly food have we no longer any desire. God has already satisfied the hunger of three of us, and he will hearken to our supplications likewise.” Scarcely had she uttered these words than the two little ones drew their last breath, whereupon her heart broke, and she sank down dead.

Legend 6 The Three Green Twigs

There was once on a time a hermit who lived in a forest at the foot of a mountain, and passed his time in prayer and good works, and every evening he carried, to the glory of God, two pails of water up the mountain. Many a beast drank of it, and many a plant was refreshed by it, for on the heights above, a strong wind blew continually, which dried the air and the ground, and the wild birds which dread mankind wheel about there, and with their sharp eyes search for a drink. And because the hermit was so pious, an angel of God, visible to his eyes, went up with him, counted his steps, and when the work was completed, brought him his food, even as the prophet of old was by God's command fed by the raven. When the hermit in his piety had already reached a great age, it happened that he once saw from afar a poor sinner being taken to the gallows. He said carelessly to himself, "There, that one is getting his deserts!" In the evening, when he was carrying the water up the mountain, the angel who usually accompanied him did not appear, and also brought him no food. Then he was terrified, and searched his heart, and tried to think how he could have sinned, as God was so angry, but he did not discover it. Then he neither ate nor drank, threw himself down on the ground, and prayed day and night. And as he was one day thus bitterly weeping in the forest, he heard a little bird singing beautifully and delightfully, and then he was still more troubled and said, "How joyously thou singest, the Lord is not angry with thee. Ah, if thou couldst but tell me how I can have offended him, that I might do penance, and then my heart also would be glad again." Then the bird began to speak and said, "Thou hast done injustice, in that thou hast condemned a poor sinner who was being led to the gallows, and for that the Lord is angry with thee. He alone sits in judgement. However, if thou wilt do penance and repent thy sins, he will forgive thee." Then the angel stood beside him with a dry branch in his hand and said, "Thou shalt carry this dry branch until three green twigs sprout out of it, but at night when thou wilt sleep, thou shalt lay it under thy head. Thou shalt beg thy bread from door to door, and not tarry more than one night in the same house. That is the penance which the Lord lays on thee."

Then the hermit took the piece of wood, and went back into the world, which he had not seen for so long. He ate and drank nothing but what was given him at the doors; many petitions were, however, not listened to, and many doors remained shut to him, so that he often did not get a crumb of bread.

Once when he had gone from door to door from morning till night, and no one had given him anything, and no one would shelter him for the night, he went forth into a forest, and at last found a cave which someone had made, and an old woman was sitting in it. Then said he, "Good woman, keep me with you in your house for this night;" but she said, "No, I dare not, even if I wished, I have three sons who are wicked and wild, if they come home from their robbing expedition, and find you, they would kill us both.” The hermit said, “Let me stay, they will do no injury either to you or to me.” and the woman was compassionate, and let herself be persuaded. Then the man lay down beneath the stairs, and put the bit of wood under his head. When the old woman saw him do that, she asked the reason of it, on which he told her that he carried the bit of wood about with him for a penance, and used it at night for a pillow, and that he had offended the Lord, because, when he had seen a poor sinner on the way to the gallows, he had said he was getting his deserts. Then the woman began to weep and cried, “If the Lord thus punishes one single word, how will it fare with my sons when they appear before him in judgment?”

At midnight the robbers came home and blustered and stormed. They made a fire, and when it had lighted up the cave and they saw a man lying under the stairs, they fell in a rage and cried to their mother, “Who is the man? Have we not forbidden any one whatsoever to be taken in?” Then said the mother, “Let him alone, it is a poor sinner who is expiating his crime.” The robbers asked, “What has he done?” “Old man,” cried they, “tell us thy sins.” The old man raised himself and told them how he, by one single word, had so sinned that God was angry with him, and how he was now expiating this crime. The robbers were so powerfully touched in their hearts by this story, that they were shocked with their life up to this time, reflected, and began with hearty repentance to do penance for it. The hermit, after he had converted the three sinners, lay down to sleep again under the stairs. In the morning, however, they found him dead, and out of the dry wood on which his head lay, three green twigs had grown up on high. Thus the Lord had once more received him into his favour.

Legend 7 Our Lady’s Little Glass

Once upon a time a waggoner’s cart which was heavily laden with wine had stuck so fast that in spite of all that he could do, he could not get it to move again. Then it chanced that Our Lady just happened to come by that way, and when she perceived the poor man’s distress, she said to him, “I am tired and thirsty, give me a glass of wine, and I will set thy cart free for thee.” “Willingly,” answered the waggoner, “but I have no glass in which I can give thee the wine.” Then Our Lady plucked a little white flower with red stripes, called field bindweed, which looks very like a glass, and gave it to the waggoner. He filled it with wine, and then Our Lady drank it, and in the self-same instant the cart was set free, and the waggoner could drive onwards. The little flower is still always called Our Lady’s Little Glass.

Legend 8 The Aged Mother

In a large town there was an old woman who sat in the evening alone in her room thinking how she had lost first her husband, then both her children, then one by one all her relations, and at length, that very day, her last friend, and now she was quite alone and desolate. She was very sad at heart, and heaviest of all her losses to her was that of her sons; and in her pain she blamed God for it. She was still sitting lost in thought, when all at once she heard the bells ringing for early prayer. She was surprised that she had thus in her sorrow watched through the whole night, and lighted her lantern and went to church. It was already lighted up when she arrived, but not as it usually was with wax candles, but with a dim light. It was also crowded already with people, and all the seats were filled; and when the old woman got to her usual place it also was not empty, but the whole bench was entirely full. And when she looked at the people, they were none other than her dead relations who were sitting there in their old-fashioned garments, but with pale faces. They neither spoke nor sang; but a soft humming and whispering was heard all over the church. Then an aunt of hers stood up, stepped forward, and said to the poor old woman, “Look there beside the altar, and thou wilt see thy sons.” The old woman looked there, and saw her two children, one hanging on the gallows, the other bound to the wheel. Then said the aunt, “Behold, so would it have been with them if they had lived, and if the good God had not taken them to himself when they were innocent children.” The old woman went trembling home, and on her knees thanked God for having dealt with her more kindly than she had been able to understand, and on the third day she lay down and died.

Legend 9 The Heavenly Wedding

A poor peasant-boy one day heard the priest say in church that whosoever desired to enter into the kingdom of heaven must always go straight onward. So he set out, and walked continually straight onwards over hill and valley without ever turning aside. At length his way led him into a great town, and into the midst of a church, where just at that time God’s service was being performed. Now when he beheld all the magnificence of this, he thought he had reached heaven, sat down, and rejoiced with his whole heart. When the service was over, and the clerk bade him go out, he replied, “No, I will not go out again, I am glad to be in heaven at last.” So the clerk went to the priest, and told him that there was a child in the church who would not go out again, because he believed he was in heaven. The priest said, “If he believes that, we will leave him inside.” So he went to him, and asked if he had any inclination to work. “Yes,” the little fellow replied, “I am accustomed to work, but I will not go out of heaven again.” So he stayed in the church, and when he saw how the people came and knelt and prayed to Our Lady with the blessed child Jesus which was carved in wood, he thought “that is the good God,” and said, “Dear God, how thin you are! The people must certainly let you starve; but every day I will give you half my dinner.” From this time forth, he every day took half his dinner to the image, and the image began to enjoy the food. When a few weeks had gone by, people remarked that the image was growing larger and stout and strong, and wondered much. The priest also could not understand it, but stayed in the church, and followed the little boy about, and then he saw how he shared his food with the Virgin Mary, and how she accepted it.

After some time the boy became ill, and for eight days could not leave his bed; but as soon as he could get up again, the first thing he did was to take his food to Our Lady. The priest followed him, and heard him say, “Dear God, do not take it amiss that I have not brought you anything for such a long time, for I have been ill and could not get up.” Then the image answered him and said, “I have seen thy good-will, and that is enough for me. Next Sunday thou shalt go with me to the wedding.” The boy rejoiced at this, and repeated it to the priest, who begged him to go and ask the image if he, too, might be permitted to go. “No,” answered the image, “thou alone.” The priest wished to prepare him first, and give him the holy communion and the child was willing, and next Sunday, when the host came to him, he fell down and died, and was at the eternal wedding.

Legend 10 The Hazel-Branch

One afternoon the Christ-child had laid himself in his cradle-bed and had fallen asleep. Then his mother came to him, looked at him full of gladness, and said, “Hast thou laid thyself down to sleep, my child? Sleep sweetly, and in the meantime I will go into the wood, and fetch thee a handful of strawberries, for I know that thou wilt be pleased with them when thou awakest.” In the wood outside, she found a spot with the most beautiful strawberries; but as she was stooping down to gather one, an adder sprang up out of the grass. She was alarmed, left the strawberries where they were, and hastened away. The adder darted after her; but Our Lady, as you can readily understand, knew what it was best to do. She hid herself behind a hazel-bush, and stood there until the adder had crept away again. Then she gathered the strawberries, and as she set out on her way home she said, “As the hazel-bush has been my protection this time, it shall in future protect others also.” Therefore, from the most remote times, a green hazel-branch has been the safest protection against adders, snakes, and everything else which creeps on the earth.

LUCY CRANE TRANSLATION, 1886

Translated by Lucy Crane and Illustrated by Walter Crane

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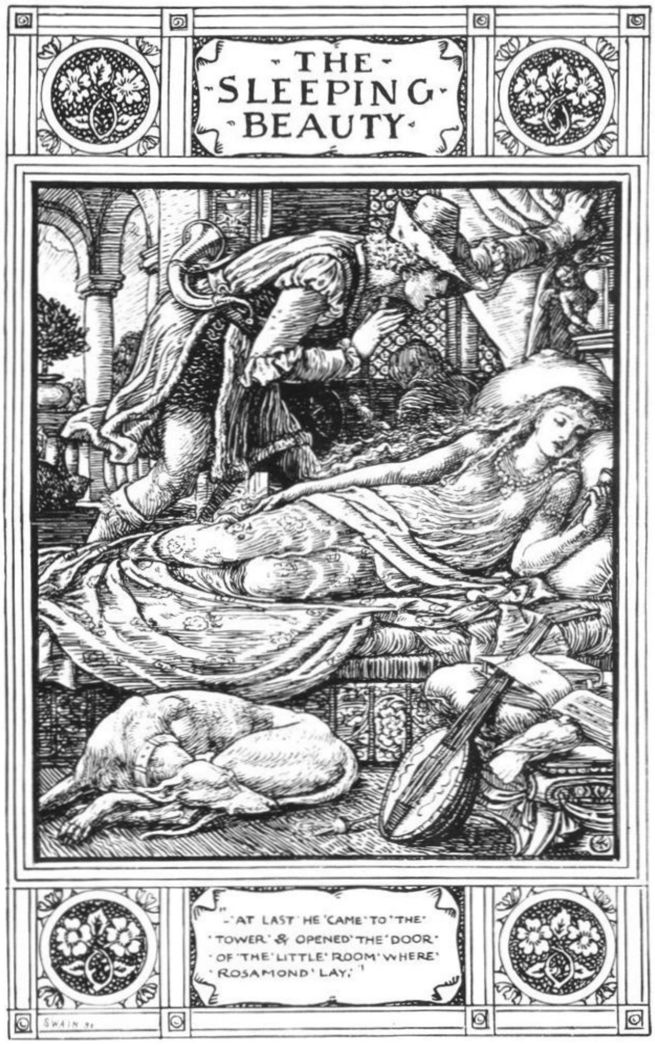
THE GALLANT TAILOR
ASCHENPUTTEL
THE MOUSE, THE BIRD, AND THE SAUSAGE
MOTHER HULDA
LITTLE RED CAP
THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS
PRUDENT HANS
CLEVER ELSE
THE TABLE, THE ASS, AND THE STICK.
TOM THUMB
HOW MRS FOX MARRIED AGAIN
THE ELVES
THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM
MR KORBES
TOM THUMB'S TRAVELS

THE ALMOND TREE
OLD SULTAN
THE SIX SWANS
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY
KING THRUSHBEARD
SNOW-WHITE
THE KNAPSACK, THE HAT, AND THE HORN
RUMPELSTILTSKIN
ROLAND
THE GOLDEN BIRD
THE DOG AND THE SPARROW
FRED AND KATE
THE LITTLE FARMER
THE QUEEN BEE
THE GOLDEN GOOSE


THE SLEEPING BEAUTY
"—AT LAST HE CAME TO THE TOWER & OPENED THE DOOR OF THE LITTLE ROOM WHERE ROSAMOND LAY."
SWAIN 91

The original frontispiece

THE RABBIT’S BRIDE

THERE was once a woman who lived with her daughter in a beautiful cabbage-garden; and there came a rabbit and ate up all the cabbages. At last said the woman to her daughter,

“Go into the garden, and drive out the rabbit.”

“Shoo! shoo!” said the maiden; “don’t eat up all our cabbages, little rabbit!”

“Come, maiden,” said the rabbit, “sit on my tail and go with me to my rabbit-hutch.” But the maiden would not.

Another day, back came the rabbit, and ate away at the cabbages, until the woman said to her daughter,

“Go into the garden, and drive away the rabbit.”

“Shoo! shoo!” said the maiden; “don’t eat up all our cabbages, little rabbit!”

“Come, maiden,” said the rabbit, “sit on my tail and go with me to my rabbit-hutch.” But the maiden would not.

Again, a third time back came the rabbit, and ate away at the cabbages, until the woman said to her daughter,

“Go into the garden, and drive away the rabbit.”

“Shoo! shoo!” said the maiden; “don’t eat up all our cabbages, little rabbit!”

“Come, maiden,” said the rabbit, “sit on my tail and go with me to my rabbit-hutch.”

And then the girl seated herself on the rabbit’s tail, and the rabbit took her to his hutch.

“Now,” said he, “set to work and cook some bran and cabbage; I am going to bid the wedding guests.” And soon they were all collected. Would you like to know who they were? Well, I can only tell you what was told to me; all the hares came, and the crow who was to be the parson to marry them, and the fox for the clerk, and the altar was under the rainbow. But the maiden was sad, because she was so lonely.

“Get up! get up!” said the rabbit, “the wedding folk are all merry.”

But the bride wept and said nothing, and the rabbit went away, but very soon came back again.

“Get up! get up!” said he, “the wedding folk are waiting.” But the bride said nothing, and the rabbit went away. Then she made a figure of straw, and dressed it in her own clothes, and gave it a red mouth, and set it to watch the kettle of bran, and then she went home to her mother. Back again came the rabbit, saying, “Get up! get up!” and he went up and hit the straw figure on the head, so that it tumbled down.

And the rabbit thought that he had killed his bride, and he went away and was very sad.

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SIX SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

THERE was once a man who was a Jack-of-all-trades; he had served in the war, and had been brave and bold, but at the end of it he was sent about his business, with three farthings and his discharge.

"I am not going to stand this," said he; "wait till I find the right man to help me, and the king shall give me all the treasures of his kingdom before he has done with me."

Then, full of wrath, he went into the forest, and he saw one standing there by six trees which he had rooted up as if they had been stalks of corn. And he said to him,

"Will you be my man, and come along with me?"

"All right," answered he; "I must just take this bit of wood home to my father and mother." And taking one of the trees, he bound it round the other five, and putting the faggot on his shoulder, he carried it off; then soon coming back, he went along with his leader, who said,

"Two such as we can stand against the whole world."

And when they had gone on a little while, they came to a huntsman who was kneeling on one knee and taking careful aim with his rifle.

"Huntsman," said the leader, "what are you aiming at?"

"Two miles from here," answered he, "there sits a fly on the bough of an oak-tree, I mean to put a bullet into its left eye."

"Oh, come along with me," said the leader; "three of us together can stand against the world."

The huntsman was quite willing to go with him, and so they went on till they came to seven windmills, whose sails were going round briskly, and yet there was no wind blowing from any quarter, and not a leaf stirred.

"Well," said the leader, "I cannot think what ails the windmills, turning without wind;" and he went on with his followers about two miles farther, and then they came to a man sitting up in a tree, holding one nostril and blowing with the other.

"Now then," said the leader, "what are you doing up there?"

"Two miles from here," answered he, "there are seven windmills; I am blowing, and they are going round."

"Oh, go with me," cried the leader, "four of us together can stand against the world."

So the blower got down and went with them, and after a time they came to a man standing on one leg, and the other had been taken off and was lying near him.

"You seem to have got a handy way of resting yourself," said the leader to the man.

"I am a runner," answered he, "and in order to keep myself from going too fast I have taken off a leg, for when I run with both, I go faster than a bird can fly."

"Oh, go with me," cried the leader, "five of us together may well stand against the world."

So he went with them all together, and it was not long before they met a man with a little hat on, and he wore it just over one ear.

"Manners! manners!" said the leader; "with your hat like that, you look like a jack-fool."

"I dare not put it straight," answered the other; "if I did, there would be such a terrible frost that the very birds would be frozen and fall dead from the sky to the ground."

"Oh, come with me," said the leader; "we six together may well stand against the whole world."

So the six went on until they came to a town where the king had caused it to be made known that whoever would run a race with his daughter and win it might become her husband, but that whoever lost must lose his head into the bargain. And the leader came forward and said one of his men should run for him.

"Then," said the king, "his life too must be put in pledge, and if he fails, his head and yours too must fall."

When this was quite settled and agreed upon, the leader called the runner, and strapped his second leg on to him.

"Now, look out," said he, "and take care that we win."

It had been agreed that the one who should bring water first from a far distant brook should be accounted winner. Now the king's daughter and the runner each took a pitcher, and they started both at the same time; but in one moment, when the king's daughter had gone but a very little way, the runner was out of sight, for his running was as if the wind rushed by. In a short time he reached the brook, filled his pitcher full of water, and turned back again. About half-way home, however, he was overcome with weariness, and setting down his pitcher, he lay down on the ground to sleep. But in order to awaken soon again by not lying too soft he had taken a horse's skull which lay near and placed it under his head for a pillow. In the meanwhile the king's daughter, who really was a good runner, good enough to beat an ordinary man, had reached the brook, and filled her pitcher, and was hastening with it back again, when she saw the runner lying asleep.

"The day is mine," said she with much joy, and she emptied his pitcher and hastened on. And now all had been lost but for the huntsman who was standing on the castle wall, and with his keen eyes saw all that happened.

"We must not be outdone by the king's daughter," said he, and he loaded his rifle and took so good an aim that he shot the horse's skull from under the runner's head without doing him any harm. And the runner awoke and jumped up, and saw his pitcher standing empty and the king's daughter far on her way home. But, not losing courage, he ran swiftly to the brook, filled it again with water, and for all that, he got home ten minutes before the king's daughter.

"Look you," said he; "this is the first time I have really stretched my legs; before it was not worth the name of running."

The king was vexed, and his daughter yet more so, that she should be beaten by a discharged common soldier; and they took counsel together how they might rid themselves of him and of his companions at the same time.

"I have a plan," said the king; "do not fear but that we shall be quit of them for ever." Then he went out to the men and bade them to feast and be merry and eat and drink; and he led them into a room, which had a floor of iron, and the doors were iron, the windows had iron frames and bolts; in the room was a table set out with costly food.

"Now, go in there and make yourselves comfortable," said the king.

And when they had gone in, he had the door locked and bolted. Then he called the cook, and told him to make a big fire underneath the room, so that the iron floor of it should be red hot. And the cook did so, and the six men began to feel the room growing very warm, by reason, as they thought at first, of the good dinner; but as the heat grew greater and greater, and they found the doors and windows fastened, they began to think it was an evil plan of the king's to suffocate them.

"He shall not succeed, however," said the man with the little hat; "I will bring on a frost that shall make the fire feel ashamed of itself, and creep out of the way."

So he set his hat straight on his head, and immediately there came such a frost that all the heat passed away and the food froze in the dishes. After an hour or two had passed, and the king thought they must have all perished in the heat, he caused the door to be opened, and went himself to see how they fared. And when the door flew back, there they were all six quite safe and sound, and they said they were quite ready to come out, so that they might warm themselves, for the great cold of that room had caused the food to freeze in the dishes. Full of wrath, the king went to the cook and scolded him, and asked why he had not done as he was ordered.

"It is hot enough there: you may see for yourself," answered the cook. And the king looked and saw an immense fire burning underneath the room of iron, and he began to think that the six men were not to be got rid of in that way. And he thought of a new plan by which it might be managed, so he sent for the leader and said to him,

"If you will give up your right to my daughter, and take gold instead, you may have as much as you like."

"Certainly, my lord king," answered the man; "let me have as much gold as my servant can carry, and I give up all claim to your daughter." And the king agreed that he should come again in a fortnight to fetch the gold. The man then called together all the tailors in the kingdom, and set them to work to make a sack, and it took them a fortnight. And when it was ready, the strong man who had been found rooting up trees took it on his shoulder, and went to the king.

"Who is this immense fellow carrying on his shoulder a bundle of stuff as big as a house?" cried the king, terrified to think how much gold he would carry off. And a ton of gold was dragged in by sixteen strong men, but he put it all into the sack with one hand, saying, "Why don't you bring some more? this hardly covers the bottom!" So the king bade them fetch by degrees the whole of his treasure, and even then the sack was not half full.

"Bring more!" cried the man; "these few scraps go no way at all!" Then at last seven thousand waggons laden with gold collected through the whole kingdom were driven up; and he threw them in his sack, oxen and all.

"I will not look too closely," said he, "but take what I can get, so long as the sack is full." And when all was put in there was still plenty of room.

"I must make an end of this," he said; "if it is not full, it is so much the easier to tie up." And he hoisted it on his back, and went off with his comrades.

When the king saw all the wealth of his realm carried off by a single man he was full of wrath, and he bade his cavalry mount, and follow after the six men, and take the sack away from the strong man.

Two regiments were soon up to them, and called them to consider themselves prisoners, and to deliver up the sack, or be cut in pieces.

"Prisoners, say you?" said the man who could blow, "suppose you first have a little dance together in the air," and holding one nostril, and blowing through the other, he sent the regiments flying head over heels, over the hills and far away. But a sergeant who had nine wounds and was a brave fellow, begged not to be put to so much shame. And the blower let him down easily, so that he came to no harm, and he bade him go to the king and tell him that whatever regiments he liked to send more should be blown away just the same. And the king, when he got the message, said,

"Let the fellows be; they have some right on their side." So the six comrades carried home their treasure, divided it among them, and lived contented till they died.

CLEVER GRETHEL

THERE was once a cook called Grethel, who wore shoes with red heels, and when she went out in them she gave herself great airs, and thought herself very fine indeed. When she came home again, she would take a drink of wine to refresh herself, and as that gave her an appetite, she would take some of the best of whatever she was cooking, until she had had enough;— "for," said she, "a cook must know how things taste."

Now it happened that one day her master said to her, —

"Grethel, I expect a guest this evening; you must make ready a pair of fowls."

"Certainly, sir, I will," answered Grethel. So she killed the fowls, cleaned them, and plucked them, and put them on the spit, and then, as evening drew near, placed them before the fire to roast. And they began to be brown, and were nearly done, but the guest had not come.

"If he does not make haste," cried Grethel to her master, "I must take them away from the fire; it's a pity and a shame not to eat them now, just when they are done to a turn." And the master said he would run himself and fetch the guest. As soon as he had turned his back, Grethel took the fowls from before the fire.

"Standing so long before the fire," said she, "makes one hot and thirsty, — and who knows when they will come! in the meanwhile I will go to the cellar and have a drink." So down she ran, took up a mug, and saying, "Here's to me!" took a good draught. "One good drink deserves another," she said "and it should not be cut short;" so she took another hearty draught. Then she went and put the fowls down to the fire again, and, basting them with butter, she turned the spit briskly round. And now they began to smell so good that Grethel saying, "I must find out whether they really are all right," licked her fingers, and then cried, "Well, I never! the fowls are good; it's a sin and a shame that no one is here to eat them!"

So she ran to the window to see if her master and his guest were coming, but as she could see nobody she went back to her fowls. "Why, one of the wings is burning!" she cried presently, "I had better eat it and get it out of the way." So she cut it off and ate it up, and it tasted good, and then she thought,

"I had better cut off the other too, in case the master should miss anything." And when both wings had been disposed of she went and looked for the master, but still he did not come.

"Who knows," said she, "whether they are coming or not? they may have put up at an inn." And after a pause she said again, "Come, I may as well make myself happy, and first I will make sure of a good drink and then of a good meal, and when all is done I shall be easy; the gifts of the gods are not to be despised." So first she ran down into the cellar and had a famous drink, and ate up one of the fowls with great relish. And when that was done, and still the master did not come, Grethel eyed the other fowl, saying, "What one is the other must be, the two belong to each other, it is only fair that they should be both treated alike; perhaps, when I have had another drink, I shall be able to manage it.” So she took another hearty drink, and then the second fowl went the way of the first.

Just as she was in the middle of it the master came back. “Make haste, Grethel,” cried he, “the guest is coming directly!” “Very well, master,” she answered, “it will soon be ready.” The master went to see that the table was properly laid, and, taking the great carving knife with which he meant to carve the fowls, he sharpened it upon the step. Presently came the guest, knocking very genteelly and softly at the front door. Grethel ran and looked to see who it was, and when she caught sight of the guest she put her finger on her lip saying, “Hush! make the best haste you can out of this, for if my master catches you, it will be bad for you; he asked you to come to supper, but he really means to cut off your ears! Just listen how he is sharpening his knife!”

The guest, hearing the noise of the sharpening, made off as fast as he could go. And Grethel ran screaming to her master. “A pretty guest you have asked to the house!” cried she.

“How so, Grethel? what do you mean?” asked he.

“What indeed!” said she; “why, he has gone and run away with my pair of fowls that I had just dished up.”

“That’s pretty sort of conduct!” said the master, feeling very sorry about the fowls; “he might at least have left me one, that I might have had something to eat.” And he called out to him to stop, but the guest made as if he did not hear him; then he ran after him, the knife still in his hand, crying out, “Only one! only one!” meaning that the guest should let him have one of the fowls and not take both, but the guest thought he meant to have only one of his ears, and he ran so much the faster that he might get home with both of them safe.

THE DEATH OF THE HEN

ONCE on a time the cock and the hen went to the nut mountain, and they agreed beforehand that whichever of them should find a nut was to divide it with the other. Now the hen found a great big nut, but said nothing about it, and was going to eat it all alone, but the kernel was such a fat one that she could not swallow it down, and it stuck in her throat, so that she was afraid she should choke.

"Cock!" cried she, "run as fast as you can and fetch me some water, or I shall choke!"

So the cock ran as fast as he could to the brook, and said, "Brook, give me some water, the hen is up yonder choking with a big nut stuck in her throat." But the brook answered, "First run to the bride and ask her for some red silk."

So the cock ran to the bride and said,

"Bride, give me some red silk; the brook wants me to give him some red silk; I want him to give me some water, for the hen lies yonder choking with a big nut stuck in her throat."

But the bride answered,

"First go and fetch me my garland that hangs on a willow." And the cock ran to the willow and pulled the garland from the bough and brought it to the bride, and the bride gave him red silk, and he brought it to the brook, and the brook gave him water. So then the cock brought the water to the hen, but alas, it was too late; the hen had choked in the meanwhile, and lay there dead. And the cock was so grieved that he cried aloud, and all the beasts came and lamented for the hen; and six mice built a little waggon, on which to carry the poor hen to her grave, and when it was ready they harnessed themselves to it, and the cock drove. On the way they met the fox.

"Halloa, cock," cried he, "where are you off to?"

"To bury my hen," answered the cock.

"Can I come too?" said the fox.

"Yes, if you follow behind," said the cock.

So the fox followed behind and he was soon joined by the wolf, the bear, the stag, the lion, and all the beasts in the wood. And the procession went on till they came to a brook.

"How shall we get over?" said the cock. Now in the brook there was a straw, and he said,

"I will lay myself across, so that you may pass over on me." But when the six mice had got upon this bridge, the straw slipped and fell into the water and they all tumbled in and were drowned. So they were as badly off as ever, when a coal came up and said he would lay himself across and they might pass over him; but no sooner had he touched the water than he hissed, went out, and was dead. A stone seeing this was touched with pity, and, wishing to help the cock, he laid himself across the stream. And the cock drew the waggon with the dead hen in it safely to the other side, and then began to draw the others who followed behind across too, but it was too much for him, the waggon turned over, and all tumbled into the water one on the top of another, and were drowned.

So the cock was left all alone with the dead hen, and he digged a grave and laid her in it, and he raised a mound above her, and sat himself down and lamented so sore that at last he died. And so they were all dead together.

HANS IN LUCK

HANS had served his master seven years, and at the end of the seventh year he said,

"Master, my time is up; I want to go home and see my mother, so give me my wages."

"You have served me truly and faithfully," said the master; "as the service is, so must the wages be," and he gave him a lump of gold as big as his head. Hans pulled his handkerchief out of his pocket and tied up the lump of gold in it, hoisted it on his shoulder, and set off on his way home. And as he was trudging along, there came in sight a man riding on a spirited horse, and looking very gay and lively. "Oh!" cried Hans aloud, "how splendid riding must be! sitting as much at one's ease as in an arm-chair, stumbling over no stones, saving one's shoes, and getting on one hardly knows how!"

The horseman heard Hans say this, and called out to him,

"Well Hans, what are you doing on foot?"

"I can't help myself," said Hans, "I have this great lump to carry; to be sure, it is gold, but then I can't hold my head straight for it, and it hurts my shoulder."

"I'll tell you what," said the horseman, "we will change; I will give you my horse, and you shall give me your lump of gold."

"With all my heart," said Hans; "but I warn you, you will find it heavy." And the horseman got down, took the gold, and, helping Hans up, he gave the reins into his hand.

"When you want to go fast," said he, "you must click your tongue and cry 'Gee-up!'"

And Hans, as he sat upon his horse, was glad at heart, and rode off with merry cheer. After a while he thought he should like to go quicker, so he began to click with his tongue and to cry "Gee-up!" And the horse began to trot, and Hans was thrown before he knew what was going to happen, and there he lay in the ditch by the side of the road. The horse would have got away but that he was caught by a peasant who was passing that way and driving a cow before him. And Hans pulled himself together and got upon his feet, feeling very vexed. "Poor work, riding," said he, "especially on a jade like this, who starts off and throws you before you know where you are, going near to break your neck; never shall I try that game again; now, your cow is something worth having, one can jog on comfortably after her and have her milk, butter, and cheese every day, into the bargain. What would I not give to have such a cow!"

"Well now," said the peasant, "since it will be doing you such a favour, I don't mind exchanging my cow for your horse."

Hans agreed most joyfully, and the peasant, swinging himself into the saddle, was soon out of sight.

And Hans went along driving his cow quietly before him, and thinking all the while of the fine bargain he had made.

"With only a piece of bread I shall have everything I can possibly want, for I shall always be able to have butter and cheese to it, and if I am thirsty I have nothing to do but to milk my cow; and what more is there for heart to wish!"

And when he came to an inn he made a halt, and in the joy of his heart ate up all the food he had brought with him, dinner and supper and all, and bought half a glass of beer with his last two farthings. Then on he went again driving his cow, until he should come to the village where his mother lived. It was now near the middle of the day, and the sun grew hotter and hotter, and Hans found himself on a heath which it would be an hour's journey to cross. And he began to feel very hot, and so thirsty that his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Never mind," said Hans; "I can find a remedy. I will milk my cow at once." And tying her to a dry tree, and taking off his leather cap to serve for a pail, he began to milk, but not a drop came. And as he set to work rather awkwardly, the impatient beast gave him such a kick on the head with his hind foot that he fell to the ground, and for some time could not think where he was; when luckily there came by a butcher who was wheeling along a young pig in a wheelbarrow.

"Here's a fine piece of work!" cried he, helping poor Hans on his legs again. Then Hans related to him all that had happened; and the butcher handed him his pocket-flask, saying,

"Here, take a drink, and be a man again; of course the cow would give no milk; she is old and only fit to draw burdens, or to be slaughtered."

"Well, to be sure," said Hans, scratching his head. "Who would have thought it? of course it is a very handy way of getting meat when a man has a beast of his own to kill; but for my part I do not care much about cow beef, it is rather tasteless. Now, if I had but a young pig, that is much better meat, and then the sausages!"

"Look here, Hans," said the butcher, "just for love of you I will exchange, and will give you my pig instead of your cow."

"Heaven reward such kindness!" cried Hans, and handing over the cow, received in exchange the pig, who was turned out of his wheelbarrow and was to be led by a string.

So on went Hans, thinking how everything turned out according to his wishes, and how, if trouble overtook him, all was sure to be set right directly. After a while he fell in with a peasant, who was carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They bid each other good-day, and Hans began to tell about his luck, and how he had made so many good exchanges. And the peasant told how he was taking the goose to a christening feast.

"Just feel how heavy it is," said he, taking it up by the wings; "it has been fattening for the last eight weeks; and when it is roasted, won't the fat run down!"

"Yes, indeed," said Hans, weighing it in his hand, "very fine to be sure; but my pig is not to be despised."

Upon which the peasant glanced cautiously on all sides, and shook his head.

"I am afraid," said he, "that there is something not quite right about your pig. In the village I have just left one had actually been stolen from the bailiff's yard. I fear, I fear you have it in your hand; they have sent after the thief, and it would be a bad look-out for you if it was found upon you; the least that could happen would be to be thrown into a dark hole."

Poor Hans grew pale with fright. "For heaven's sake," said he, "help me out of this scrape, I am a stranger in these parts; take my pig and give me your goose."

"It will be running some risk," answered the man, "but I will do it sooner than that you should come to grief." And so, taking the cord in his hand, he drove the pig quickly along a by-path, and lucky Hans went on his way home with the goose under his arm. "The more I think of it," said he to himself, "the better the bargain seems; first I get the roast goose; then the fat; that will last a whole year for bread and dripping; and lastly the beautiful white feathers which I can stuff my pillow with; how comfortably I shall sleep upon it, and how pleased my mother will be!"

And when he reached the last village, he saw a knife-grinder with his barrow; and his wheel went whirring round, and he sang,

"My scissors I grind, and my wheel I turn;
And all good fellows my trade should learn,
For all that I meet with just serves my turn."

And Hans stood and looked at him; and at last he spoke to him and said,

"You seem very well off, and merry with your grinding."

"Yes," answered the knife-grinder, "my handiwork pays very well. I call a man a good grinder who, every time he puts his hand in his pocket finds money there. But where did you buy that fine goose?"

"I did not buy it, but I exchanged it for my pig," said Hans.

"And the pig?"

"That I exchanged for a cow."

"And the cow?"

"That I exchanged for a horse."

"And the horse?"

"I gave for the horse a lump of gold as big as my head."

"And the gold?"

"Oh, that was my wage for seven years' service."

"You seem to have fended for yourself very well," said the knife-grinder. "Now, if you could but manage to have money in your pocket every time you put your hand in, your fortune is made."

"How shall I manage that?" said Hans.

"You must be a knife-grinder like me," said the man. "All you want is a grindstone, the rest comes of itself: I have one here; to be sure it is a little damaged, but I don't mind letting you have it in exchange for your goose;

what say you?”

“How can you ask?” answered Hans. “I shall be the luckiest fellow in the world, for if I find money whenever I put my hand in my pocket, there is nothing more left to want.”

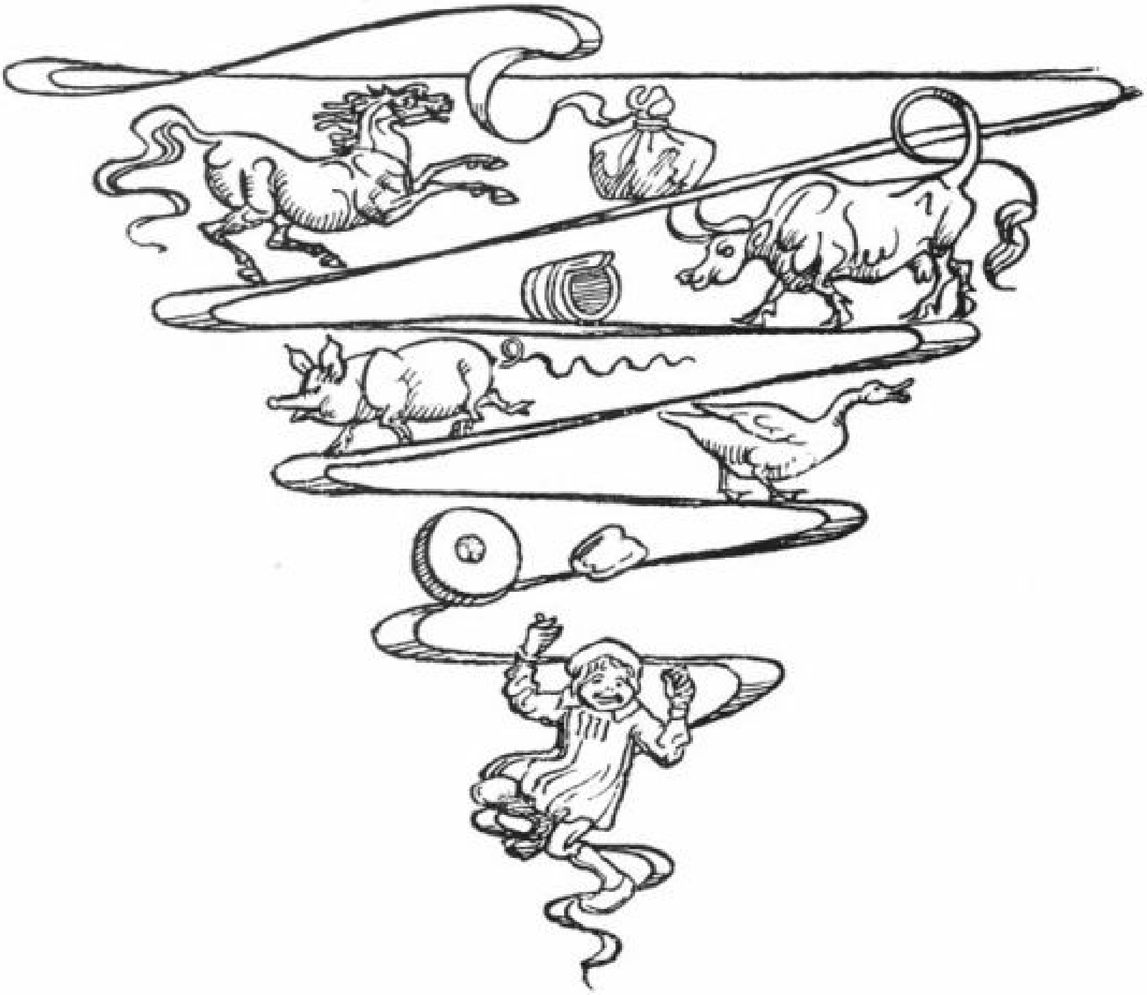
And so he handed over the goose to the pedlar and received the grindstone in exchange.

“Now,” said the knife-grinder, taking up a heavy common stone that lay near him, “here is another proper sort of stone that will stand a good deal of wear and that you can hammer out your old nails upon. Take it with you, and carry it carefully.”

Hans lifted up the stone and carried it off with a contented mind. “I must have been born under a lucky star!” cried he, while his eyes sparkled for joy. “I have only to wish for a thing and it is mine.”

After a while he began to feel rather tired, as indeed he had been on his legs since daybreak; he also began to feel rather hungry, as in the fulness of his joy at getting the cow, he had eaten up all he had. At last he could scarcely go on at all, and had to make a halt every moment, for the stones weighed him down most unmercifully, and he could not help wishing that he did not feel obliged to drag them along. And on he went at a snail’s pace until he came to a well; then he thought he would rest and take a drink of the fresh water. And he placed the stones carefully by his side at the edge of the well; then he sat down, and as he stooped to drink, he happened to give the stones a little push, and they both fell into the water with a splash. And then Hans, having watched them disappear, jumped for joy, and thanked his stars that he had been so lucky as to get rid of the stones that had weighed upon him so long without any effort of his own.

“I really think,” cried he, “I am the luckiest man under the sun.” So on he went, void of care, until he reached his mother’s house.



THE GOOSE GIRL.

THERE lived once an old Queen, whose husband had been dead many years. She had a beautiful daughter who was promised in marriage to a King's son living a great way off. When the time appointed for the wedding drew near, and the old Queen had to send her daughter into the foreign land, she got together many costly things, furniture and cups and jewels and adornments, both of gold and silver, everything proper for the dowry of a royal Princess, for she loved her daughter dearly. She gave her also a waiting gentlewoman to attend her and to give her into the bridegroom's hands; and they were each to have a horse for the journey, and the Princess's horse was named Falada, and he could speak. When the time for parting came, the old Queen took her daughter to her chamber, and with a little knife she cut her own finger so that it bled; and she held beneath it a white napkin, and on it fell three drops of blood; and she gave it to her daughter, bidding her take care of it, for it would be needful to her on the way. Then they took leave of each other; and the Princess put the napkin in her bosom, got on her horse, and set out to go to the bridegroom. After she had ridden an hour, she began to feel very thirsty, and she said to the waiting-woman,

"Get down, and fill my cup that you are carrying with water from the brook; I have great desire to drink."

"Get down yourself," said the waiting-woman, "and if you are thirsty stoop down and drink; I will not be your slave."

And as her thirst was so great, the Princess had to get down and to stoop and drink of the water of the brook, and could not have her gold cup to serve her. "Oh dear!" said the poor Princess. And the three drops of blood heard her, and said,

"If your mother knew of this, it would break her heart."

But the Princess answered nothing, and quietly mounted her horse again. So they rode on some miles farther; the day was warm, the sun shone hot, and the Princess grew thirsty once more. And when they came to a water-course she called again to the waiting-woman and said,

"Get down, and give me to drink out of my golden cup." For she had forgotten all that had gone before. But the waiting-woman spoke still more scornfully and said,

"If you want a drink, you may get it yourself; I am not going to be your slave."

So, as her thirst was so great, the Princess had to get off her horse and to stoop towards the running water to drink, and as she stooped, she wept and said, "Oh dear!" And the three drops of blood heard her and answered,

"If your mother knew of this, it would break her heart!"

And as she drank and stooped over, the napkin on which were the three drops of blood fell out of her bosom and floated down the stream, and in her distress she never noticed it; not so the waiting-woman, who rejoiced because she should have power over the bride, who, now that she had lost the three drops of blood, had become weak, and unable to defend herself. And when she was going to mount her horse again the waiting-woman cried,

“Falada belongs to me, and this jade to you.” And the Princess had to give way and let it be as she said. Then the waiting-woman ordered the Princess with many hard words to take off her rich clothing and to put on her plain garments, and then she made her swear to say nothing of the matter when they came to the royal court; threatening to take her life if she refused. And all the while Falada noticed and remembered.

The waiting-woman then mounting Falada, and the Princess the sorry jade, they journeyed on till they reached the royal castle. There was great joy at their coming, and the King’s son hastened to meet them, and lifted the waiting woman from her horse, thinking she was his bride; and then he led her up the stairs, while the real Princess had to remain below. But the old King, who was looking out of the window, saw her standing in the yard, and noticed how delicate and gentle and beautiful she was, and then he went down and asked the seeming bride who it was that she had brought with her and that was now standing in the courtyard.

“Oh!” answered the bride, “I only brought her with me for company; give the maid something to do, that she may not be for ever standing idle.”

But the old King had no work to give her; until he bethought him of a boy he had who took care of the geese, and that she might help him. And so the real Princess was sent to keep geese with the goose-boy, who was called Conrad.

Soon after the false bride said to the Prince,

“Dearest husband, I pray thee do me a pleasure.”

“With all my heart,” answered he.

“Then” said she, “send for the knacker, that he may carry off the horse I came here upon, and make away with him; he was very troublesome to me on the journey.” For she was afraid that the horse might tell how she had behaved to the Princess. And when the order had been given that Falada should die, it came to the Princess’s ears, and she came to the knacker’s man secretly, and promised him a piece of gold if he would do her a service. There was in the town a great dark gate-way through which she had to pass morning and evening with her geese, and she asked the man to take Falada’s head and to nail it on the gate, that she might always see it as she passed by. And the man promised, and he took Falada’s head and nailed it fast in the dark gate-way.

Early next morning as she and Conrad drove their geese through the gate, she said as she went by,

“O Falada, dost thou hang there?”

And the head answered,

“Princess, dost thou so meanly fare?
But if thy mother knew thy pain,
Her heart would surely break in twain.”

But she went on through the town, driving her geese to the field. And when they came into the meadows, she sat down and undid her hair, which was all of gold, and when Conrad saw how it glistened, he wanted to pull out a few hairs for himself. And she said,

“O wind, blow Conrad’s hat away,
Make him run after as it flies,
While I with my gold hair will play,
And twist it up in seemly wise.”

Then there came a wind strong enough to blow Conrad’s hat far away over the fields, and he had to run after it; and by the time he came back she had put up her hair with combs and pins, and he could not get at any to pull it out; and he was sulky and would not speak to her; so they looked after the geese until the evening came, and then they went home.

The next morning, as they passed under the dark gate-way, the Princess said,

“O Falada, dost thou hang there?”

And Falada answered,

“Princess, dost thou so meanly fare?
But if thy mother knew thy pain,
Her heart would surely break in twain.”

And when they reached the fields she sat down and began to comb out her hair; then Conrad came up and wanted to seize upon some of it, and she cried,

“O wind, blow Conrad’s hat away,
Make him run after as it flies,
While I with my gold hair will play,
And do it up in seemly wise.”

Then the wind came and blew Conrad’s hat very far away, so that he had to run after it, and when he came back again her hair was put up again, so that he could pull none of it out; and they tended the geese until the evening.

And after they had got home, Conrad went to the old King and said, “I will tend the geese no longer with that girl!”

“Why not?” asked the old King.

“Because she vexes me the whole day long,” answered Conrad. Then the old King ordered him to tell how it was.

“Every morning,” said Conrad, “as we pass under the dark gate-way with the geese, there is an old horse’s head hanging on the wall, and she says to it,

“O Falada, dost thou hang there?”

And the head answers,

“Princess, dost thou so meanly fare?
But if thy mother knew thy pain,
Her heart would surely break in twain.”

And besides this, Conrad related all that happened in the fields, and how he was obliged to run after his hat.

The old King told him to go to drive the geese next morning as usual, and he himself went behind the gate and listened how the maiden spoke to Falada; and then he followed them into the fields, and hid himself behind a bush; and he watched the goose-boy and the goose-girl tend the geese; and after a while he saw the girl make her hair all loose, and how it gleamed and shone. Soon she said,

“O wind, blow Conrad’s hat away,
And make him follow as it flies,
While I with my gold hair will play,
And bind it up in seemly wise.”

Then there came a gust of wind and away went Conrad’s hat, and he after it, while the maiden combed and bound up her hair; and the old King saw all that went on. At last he went unnoticed away, and when the goose-girl came back in the evening he sent for her, and asked the reason of her doing all this.

“That I dare not tell you,” she answered, “nor can I tell any man of my woe, for when I was in danger of my life I swore an oath not to reveal it.” And he pressed her sore, and left her no peace, but he could get nothing out of her. At last he said,

“If you will not tell it me, tell it to the iron oven,” and went away. Then she crept into the iron oven, and began to weep and to lament, and at last she opened her heart and said,

“Here I sit forsaken of all the world, and I am a King’s daughter, and a wicked waiting-woman forced me to give up my royal garments and my place at the bridegroom’s side, and I am made a goose-girl, and have to do mean service. And if my mother knew, it would break her heart.”

Now the old King was standing outside by the oven-door listening, and he heard all she said, and he called to her and told her to come out of the oven. And he caused royal clothing to be put upon her, and it was a marvel to see how beautiful she was. The old King then called his son and proved to him that he had the wrong bride, for she was really only a waiting-woman, and that the true bride was here at hand, she who had been the goose-girl. The Prince was glad at heart when he saw her beauty and gentleness; and a great feast was made ready, and all the court people and good friends were bidden to it. The bridegroom sat in the midst with the Princess on one side and the waiting-woman on the other; and the false bride did not know the true one, because she was dazzled with her glittering braveries. When all the company had eaten and drunk and were merry, the old King gave the waiting-woman a question to answer, as to what such an one deserved, who had deceived her masters in such and such a manner, telling the whole story, and ending by asking,

"Now, what doom does such an one deserve?"

"No better than this," answered the false bride, "that she be put naked into a cask, studded inside with sharp nails, and be dragged along in it by two white horses from street to street, until she be dead."

"Thou hast spoken thy own doom," said the old King; "as thou hast said, so shall it be done." And when the sentence was fulfilled, the Prince married the true bride, and ever after they ruled over their kingdom in peace and blessedness.

THE RAVEN

THERE was once a Queen and she had a little daughter, who was as yet a babe in arms; and once the child was so restless that the mother could get no peace, do what she would; so she lost patience, and seeing a flight of ravens passing over the castle, she opened the window and said to her child,

“Oh, that thou wert a raven and couldst fly away, that I might be at peace.”

No sooner had she uttered the words, than the child was indeed changed into a raven, and fluttered from her arms out of the window. And she flew into a dark wood and stayed there a long time, and her parents knew nothing of her. Once a man was passing through the wood, and he heard the raven cry, and he followed the voice; and when he came near it said,

“I was born a King’s daughter, and have been bewitched, but thou canst set me free.”

“What shall I do?” asked the man.

“Go deeper into the wood,” said she, “and thou shalt find a house and an old woman sitting in it: she will offer thee meat and drink, but thou must take none; if thou eatest or drinkest thou fallest into a deep sleep, and canst not set me free at all. In the garden behind the house is a big heap of tan, stand upon that and wait for me. Three days, at about the middle of the day, shall I come to thee in a car drawn by four white horses the first time, by four red ones the second time, and lastly by four black ones; and if thou art not waking but sleeping, thou failest to set me free.”

The man promised to do all she said.

“But ah!” cried she, “I know quite well I shall not be set free of thee; something thou wilt surely take from the old woman.”

But the man promised yet once more that certainly he would not touch the meat or the drink. But when he came to the house the old woman came up to him.

“My poor man,” said she to him, “you are quite tired out, come and be refreshed, and eat and drink.”

“No,” said the man, “I will eat and drink nothing.”

But she left him no peace, saying,

“Even if you eat nothing, take a draught out of this cup once and away.”

So he was over-persuaded, and he drank.

In the afternoon, about two o’clock, he went out into the garden to stand upon the tan-heap and wait for the raven. As he stood there he felt all at once so tired, that he could bear it no longer, and laid himself down for a little; but not to sleep. But no sooner was he stretched at length than his eyes closed of themselves, and he fell asleep, and slept so sound, as if nothing in the world could awaken him.

At two o’clock came the raven in the car drawn by four white horses, but she was sad, knowing already that the man would be asleep, and so, when she came into the garden, there he lay sure enough. And she got out of the car and shook him and called to him, but he did not wake. The next day at noon the old woman came and brought him meat and drink, but he would take none. But she left him no peace, and persuaded him until he took a draught out of the cup. About two o'clock he went into the garden to stand upon the tan-heap, and to wait for the raven, but he was overcome with so great a weariness that his limbs would no longer hold him up; and whether he would or no he had to lie down, and he fell into a deep sleep. And when the raven came up with her four red horses, she was sad, knowing already that the man would be asleep. And she went up to him, and there he lay, and nothing would wake him.

The next day the old woman came and asked what was the matter with him, and if he wanted to die, that he would neither eat nor drink; but he answered,

"I neither can nor will eat and drink."

But she brought the dishes of food and the cup of wine, and placed them before him, and when the smell came in his nostrils he could not refrain, but took a deep draught. When the hour drew near, he went into the garden and stood on the tan-heap to wait for the king's daughter; as time went on he grew more and more weary, and at last he laid himself down and slept like a stone. At two o'clock came the raven with four black horses, and the car and all was black; and she was sad, knowing already that he was sleeping, and would not be able to set her free; and when she came up to him, there he lay and slept. She shook him and called to him, but she could not wake him. Then she laid a loaf by his side and some meat, and a flask of wine, for now, however much he ate and drank, it could not matter. And she took a ring of gold from her finger, and put it on his finger, and her name was engraven on it. And lastly she laid by him a letter, in which was set down what she had given him, and that all was of no use, and further also it said,

"I see that here thou canst not save me, but if thy mind is to the thing, come to the golden castle of Stromberg: I know well that if thou willst thou canst." And when all this was done, she got again into her car, and went to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man waked up and perceived that he had been to sleep, he was sad at heart to think that she had been, and gone, and that he had not set her free. Then, catching sight of what lay beside him, he read the letter that told him all. And he rose up and set off at once to go to the golden castle of Stromberg, though he knew not where it was. And when he had wandered about in the world for a long time, he came to a dark wood, and there spent a fortnight trying to find the way out, and not being able. At the end of this time, it being towards evening, he was so tired that he laid himself down under a clump of bushes and went to sleep. The next day he went on again, and in the evening, when he was going to lie down again to rest, he heard howlings and lamentations, so that he could not sleep. And about the hour when lamps are lighted, he looked up and saw a light glimmer in the forest; and he got up and followed it, and he found that it came from a house that looked very small indeed, because there stood a giant before it. And the man thought to himself that if he were to try to enter and the giant were to see him, it would go hard but he should lose his life. At last he made up his mind, and walked in. And the giant saw him.

“I am glad thou art come,” said he; “it is now a long time since I have had anything to eat; I shall make a good supper of thee.”

“That may be,” said the man, “but I shall not relish it; besides, if thou desirest to eat, I have somewhat here that may satisfy thee.”

“If that is true,” answered the giant, “thou mayest make thy mind easy; it was only for want of something better that I wished to devour thee.”

Then they went in and placed themselves at the table, and the man brought out bread, meat, and wine in plenty.

“This pleases me well,” said the giant, and he ate to his heart’s content. After a while the man asked him if he could tell him where the golden castle of Stromberg was.

“I will look on my land-chart,” said the giant, “for on it all towns and villages and houses are marked.”

So he fetched the land-chart which was in his room, and sought for the castle, but it was not to be found.

“Never mind,” said he, “I have up-stairs in the cupboard much bigger maps than this; we will have a look at them.” And so they did, but in vain.

And now the man wanted to pursue his journey, but the giant begged him to stay a few days longer, until his brother, who had gone to get in a store of provisions, should return. When the brother came, they asked him about the golden castle of Stromberg.

“When I have had time to eat a meal and be satisfied, I will look at the map.”

That being done, he went into his room with them, and they looked at his maps, but could find nothing: then he fetched other old maps, and they never left off searching until they found the golden castle of Stromberg, but it was many thousand miles away.

“How shall I ever get there?” said the man.

“I have a couple of hours to spare,” said the giant, “and I will set you on your way, but I shall have to come back and look after the child that we have in the house with us.”

Then the giant bore the man until within about a hundred hours’ journey from the castle, and saying,

“You can manage the rest of the way by yourself,” he departed; and the man went on day and night, until at last he came to the golden castle of Stromberg. It stood on a mountain of glass, and he could see the enchanted Princess driving round it, and then passing inside the gates. He was rejoiced when he saw her, and began at once to climb the mountain to get to her; but it was so slippery, as fast as he went he fell back again. And when he saw this he felt he should never reach her, and he was full of grief, and resolved at least to stay at the foot of the mountain and wait for her. So he built himself a hut, and sat there and waited a whole year; and every day he saw the Princess drive round and pass in, and was never able to reach her.

One day he looked out of his hut and saw three robbers fighting, and he called out, “Mercy on us!” Hearing a voice, they stopped for a moment, but went on again beating one another in a dreadful manner. And he cried out again, “Mercy on us!” They stopped and listened, and looked about them, and then went on again. And he cried out a third time, “Mercy on us!” and then, thinking he would go and see what was the matter, he went out and asked them what they were fighting for. One of them told him he had found a stick which would open any door only by knocking at it; the second said he had found a cloak which, if he put it on, made him invisible; the third said he was possessed of a horse that would ride over everything, even the glass mountain. Now they had fought because they could not agree whether they should enjoy these things in common or separately.

“Suppose we make a bargain,” said the man; “it is true I have no money, but I have other things yet more valuable to exchange for these; I must, however, make trial of them beforehand, to see if you have spoken truth concerning them.”

So they let him mount the horse, and put the cloak round him, and they gave him the stick into his hand, and as soon as he had all this he was no longer to be seen; but laying about him well, he gave them all a sound thrashing, crying out,

“Now, you good-for-nothing fellows, you have got what you deserve; perhaps you will be satisfied now!”

Then he rode up the glass mountain, and when he reached the castle gates he found them locked; but he beat with his stick upon the door and it opened at once. And he walked in, and up the stairs to the great room where sat the Princess with a golden cup and wine before her: she could not see him so long as the cloak was on him, but drawing near to her he pulled off the ring she had given him, and threw it into the cup with a clang.

“This is my ring,” she cried, “and the man who is to set me free must be here too!”

But though she sought through the whole castle she found him not; he had gone outside, seated himself on his horse, and thrown off the cloak. And when she came to look out at the door, she saw him and shrieked out for joy; and he dismounted and took her in his arms, and she kissed him, saying,

“Now hast thou set me free from my enchantment, and to-morrow we will be married.”

THE FROG PRINCE

IN the old times, when it was still of some use to wish for the thing one wanted, there lived a King whose daughters were all handsome, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun himself, who has seen so much, wondered each time he shone over her because of her beauty. Near the royal castle there was a great dark wood, and in the wood under an old linden-tree was a well; and when the day was hot, the King's daughter used to go forth into the wood and sit by the brink of the cool well, and if the time seemed long, she would take out a golden ball, and throw it up and catch it again, and this was her favourite pastime.

Now it happened one day that the golden ball, instead of falling back into the maiden's little hand which had sent it aloft, dropped to the ground near the edge of the well and rolled in. The king's daughter followed it with her eyes as it sank, but the well was deep, so deep that the bottom could not be seen. Then she began to weep, and she wept and wept as if she could never be comforted. And in the midst of her weeping she heard a voice saying to her,

"What ails thee, king's daughter? thy tears would melt a heart of stone."

And when she looked to see where the voice came from, there was nothing but a frog stretching his thick ugly head out of the water.

"Oh, is it you, old waddler?" said she; "I weep because my golden ball has fallen into the well."

"Never mind, do not weep," answered the frog; "I can help you; but what will you give me if I fetch up your ball again?"

"Whatever you like, dear frog," said she; "any of my clothes, my pearls and jewels, or even the golden crown that I wear."

"Thy clothes, thy pearls and jewels, and thy golden crown are not for me," answered the frog; "but if thou wouldst love me, and have me for thy companion and play-fellow, and let me sit by thee at table, and eat from thy plate, and drink from thy cup, and sleep in thy little bed, — if thou wouldst promise all this, then would I dive below the water and fetch thee thy golden ball again."

"Oh yes," she answered; "I will promise it all, whatever you want, if you will only get me my ball again."

But she thought to herself, "What nonsense he talks! as if he could do anything but sit in the water and croak with the other frogs, or could possibly be any one's companion."

But the frog, as soon as he heard her promise, drew his head under the water and sank down out of sight, but after a while he came to the surface again with the ball in his mouth, and he threw it on the grass.

The King's daughter was overjoyed to see her pretty play-thing again, and she caught it up and ran off with it.

"Stop, stop!" cried the frog; "take me up too; I cannot run as fast as you!"

But it was of no use, for croak, croak after her as he might, she would not listen to him, but made haste home, and very soon forgot all about the poor frog, who had to betake himself to his well again.

The next day, when the King's daughter was sitting at table with the King and all the court, and eating from her golden plate, there came something pitter patter up the marble stairs, and then there came a knocking at the door, and a voice crying "Youngest King's daughter, let me in!"

And she got up and ran to see who it could be, but when she opened the door, there was the frog sitting outside. Then she shut the door hastily and went back to her seat, feeling very uneasy. The King noticed how quickly her heart was beating, and said,

"My child, what are you afraid of? is there a giant standing at the door ready to carry you away?"

"Oh no," answered she; "no giant, but a horrid frog."

"And what does the frog want?" asked the King.

"O dear father," answered she, "when I was sitting by the well yesterday, and playing with my golden ball, it fell into the water, and while I was crying for the loss of it, the frog came and got it again for me on condition I would let him be my companion, but I never thought that he could leave the water and come after me; but now there he is outside the door, and he wants to come in to me."

And then they all heard him knocking the second time and crying,

"Youngest King's daughter,
Open to me!
By the well water
What promised you me?
Youngest King's daughter
Now open to me!"

"That which thou hast promised must thou perform," said the King; "so go now and let him in."

So she went and opened the door, and the frog hopped in, following at her heels, till she reached her chair. Then he stopped and cried,

"Lift me up to sit by you."

But she delayed doing so until the King ordered her. When once the frog was on the chair, he wanted to get on the table, and there he sat and said,

"Now push your golden plate a little nearer, so that we may eat together."

And so she did, but everybody might see how unwilling she was, and the frog feasted heartily, but every morsel seemed to stick in her throat.

"I have had enough now," said the frog at last, "and as I am tired, you must carry me to your room, and make ready your silken bed, and we will lie down and go to sleep."

Then the King's daughter began to weep, and was afraid of the cold frog, that nothing would satisfy him but he must sleep in her pretty clean bed. Now the King grew angry with her, saying, “That which thou hast promised in thy time of necessity, must thou now perform.”

So she picked up the frog with her finger and thumb, carried him upstairs and put him in a corner, and when she had lain down to sleep, he came creeping up, saying, “I am tired and want sleep as much as you; take me up, or I will tell your father.”

Then she felt beside herself with rage, and picking him up, she threw him with all her strength against the wall, crying,

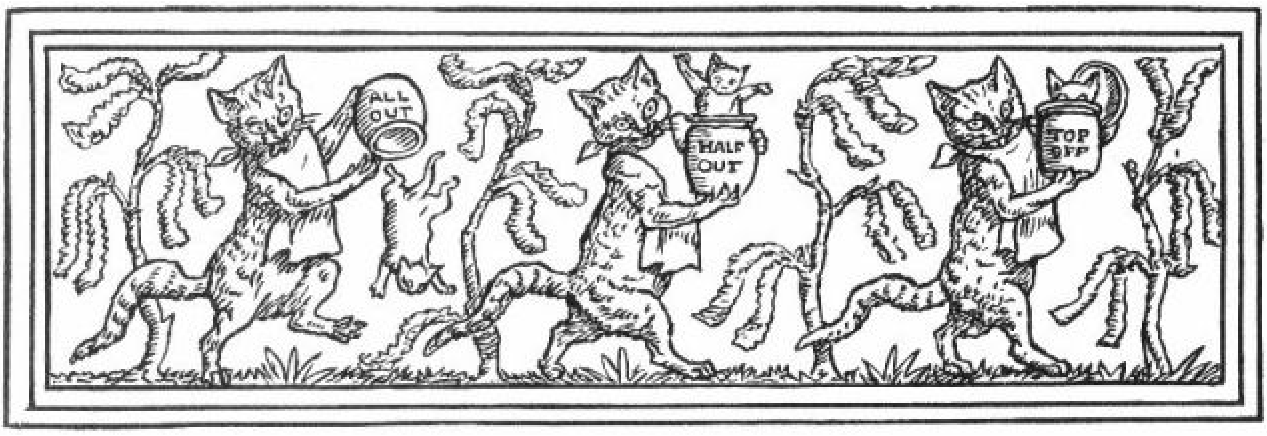
“Now will you be quiet, you horrid frog!”

But as he fell, he ceased to be a frog, and became all at once a prince with beautiful kind eyes. And it came to pass that, with her father’s consent, they became bride and bridegroom. And he told her how a wicked witch had bound him by her spells, and how no one but she alone could have released him, and that they two would go together to his father’s kingdom. And there came to the door a carriage drawn by eight white horses, with white plumes on their heads, and with golden harness, and behind the carriage was standing faithful Henry, the servant of the young prince. Now, faithful Henry had suffered such care and pain when his master was turned into a frog, that he had been obliged to wear three iron bands over his heart, to keep it from breaking with trouble and anxiety. When the carriage started to take the prince to his kingdom, and faithful Henry had helped them both in, he got up behind, and was full of joy at his master’s deliverance. And when they had gone a part of the way, the prince heard a sound at the back of the carriage, as if something had broken, and he turned round and cried,

“Henry, the wheel must be breaking!” but Henry answered,

“The wheel does not break,
’Tis the band round my heart
That, to lessen its ache,
When I grieved for your sake,
I bound round my heart.”

Again, and yet once again there was the same sound, and the prince thought it must be the wheel breaking, but it was the breaking of the other bands from faithful Henry’s heart, because it was now so relieved and happy.


ALL OUT
HALF OUT
TOP OFF

CAT & MOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP.

A CAT having made acquaintance with a mouse, professed such great love and friendship for her, that the mouse at last agreed that they should live and keep house together.

"We must make provision for the winter," said the cat, "or we shall suffer hunger, and you, little mouse, must not stir out, or you will be caught in a trap."

So they took counsel together and bought a little pot of fat. And then they could not tell where to put it for safety, but after long consideration the cat said there could not be a better place than the church, for nobody would steal there; and they would put it under the altar and not touch it until they were really in want. So this was done, and the little pot placed in safety.

But before long the cat was seized with a great wish to taste it.

"Listen to me, little mouse," said he; "I have been asked by my cousin to stand god-father to a little son she has brought into the world; he is white with brown spots; and they want to have the christening to-day, so let me go to it, and you stay at home and keep house."

"Oh yes, certainly," answered the mouse, "pray go by all means; and when you are feasting on all the good things, think of me; I should so like a drop of the sweet red wine."

But there was not a word of truth in all this; the cat had no cousin, and had not been asked to stand god-father: he went to the church, straight up to the little pot, and licked the fat off the top; then he took a walk over the roofs of the town, saw his acquaintances, stretched himself in the sun, and licked his whiskers as often as he thought of the little pot of fat; and then when it was evening he went home.

"Here you are at last," said the mouse; "I expect you have had a merry time."

"Oh, pretty well," answered the cat.

"And what name did you give the child?" asked the mouse.

"Top-off," answered the cat, drily.

"Top-off!" cried the mouse, "that is a singular and wonderful name! is it common in your family?"

"What does it matter?" said the cat; "it's not any worse than Crumb-picker, like your god-child."

A little time after this the cat was again seized with a longing.

"Again I must ask you," said he to the mouse, "to do me a favour, and keep house alone for a day. I have been asked a second time to stand god-father; and as the little one has a white ring round its neck, I cannot well refuse."

So the kind little mouse consented, and the cat crept along by the town wall until he reached the church, and going straight to the little pot of fat, devoured half of it.

“Nothing tastes so well as what one keeps to oneself,” said he, feeling quite content with his day’s work. When he reached home, the mouse asked what name had been given to the child.

“Half-gone,” answered the cat.

“Half-gone!” cried the mouse, “I never heard such a name in my life! I’ll bet it’s not to be found in the calendar.”

Soon after that the cat’s mouth began to water again for the fat.

“Good things always come in threes,” said he to the mouse; “again I have been asked to stand god-father, the little one is quite black with white feet, and not any white hair on its body; such a thing does not happen every day, so you will let me go, won’t you?”

“Top-off, Half-gone,” murmured the mouse, “they are such curious names, I cannot but wonder at them!”

“That’s because you are always sitting at home,” said the cat, “in your little grey frock and hairy tail, never seeing the world, and fancying all sorts of things.”

So the little mouse cleaned up the house and set it all in order. Meanwhile the greedy cat went and made an end of the little pot of fat.

“Now all is finished one’s mind will be easy,” said he, and came home in the evening, quite sleek and comfortable. The mouse asked at once what name had been given to the third child.

“It won’t please you any better than the others,” answered the cat. “It is called All-gone.”

“All-gone!” cried the mouse. “What an unheard-of-name! I never met with anything like it! All-gone! whatever can it mean?” And shaking her head, she curled herself round and went to sleep. After that the cat was not again asked to stand god-father.

When the winter had come and there was nothing more to be had out of doors, the mouse began to think of their store.

“Come, cat,” said she, “we will fetch our pot of fat, how good it will taste, to be sure!”

“Of course it will,” said the cat, “just as good as if you stuck your tongue out of window!”

So they set out, and when they reached the place, they found the pot, but it was standing empty.

“Oh, now I know what it all meant,” cried the mouse, “now I see what sort of a partner you have been! Instead of standing god-father you have devoured it all up; first Top-off, then Half-gone, then” ——

“Will you hold your tongue!” screamed the cat, “another word, and I devour you too!”

And the poor little mouse, having “All-gone” on her tongue, out it came, and the cat leaped upon her and made an end of her. And that is the way of the world.

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS.

THERE was once an old goat who had seven little ones, and was as fond of them as ever mother was of her children. One day she had to go into the wood to fetch food for them, so she called them all round her.

“Dear children,” said she, “I am going out into the wood; and while I am gone, be on your guard against the wolf, for if he were once to get inside he would eat you up, skin, bones, and all. The wretch often disguises himself, but he may always be known by his hoarse voice and black paws.”

“Dear mother,” answered the kids, “you need not be afraid, we will take good care of ourselves.” And the mother bleated good-bye, and went on her way with an easy mind.

It was not long before some one came knocking at the house-door, and crying out,

“Open the door, my dear children, your mother is come back, and has brought each of you something.”

But the little kids knew it was the wolf by the hoarse voice.

“We will not open the door,” cried they; “you are not our mother, she has a delicate and sweet voice, and your voice is hoarse; you must be the wolf.”

Then off went the wolf to a shop and bought a big lump of chalk, and ate it up to make his voice soft. And then he came back, knocked at the house-door, and cried,

“Open the door, my dear children, your mother is here, and has brought each of you something.”

But the wolf had put up his black paws against the window, and the kids seeing this, cried out,

“We will not open the door; our mother has no black paws like you; you must be the wolf.”

The wolf then ran to a baker.

“Baker,” said he, “I am hurt in the foot; pray spread some dough over the place.”

And when the baker had plastered his feet, he ran to the miller.

“Miller,” said he, “strew me some white meal over my paws.” But the miller refused, thinking the wolf must be meaning harm to some one.

“If you don’t do it,” cried the wolf, “I’ll eat you up!”

And the miller was afraid and did as he was told. And that just shows what men are.

And now came the rogue the third time to the door and knocked. “Open, children!” cried he. “Your dear mother has come home, and brought you each something from the wood.”

“First show us your paws,” said the kids, “so that we may know if you are really our mother or not.”

And he put up his paws against the window, and when they saw that they were white, all seemed right, and they opened the door; and when he was inside they saw it was the wolf, and they were terrified and tried to hide themselves. One ran under the table, the second got into the bed, the third into the oven, the fourth in the kitchen, the fifth in the cupboard, the sixth under the sink, the seventh in the clock-case. But the wolf found them all, and gave them short shrift; one after the other he swallowed down, all but the youngest, who was hid in the clock-case. And so the wolf, having got what he wanted, strolled forth into the green meadows, and laying himself down under a tree, he fell asleep.

Not long after, the mother goat came back from the wood; and, oh! what a sight met her eyes! the door was standing wide open, table, chairs, and stools, all thrown about, dishes broken, quilt and pillows torn off the bed. She sought her children, they were nowhere to be found. She called to each of them by name, but nobody answered, until she came to the name of the youngest.

“Here I am, mother,” a little voice cried, “here, in the clock-case.”

And so she helped him out, and heard how the wolf had come, and eaten all the rest. And you may think how she cried for the loss of her dear children. At last in her grief she wandered out of doors, and the youngest kid with her; and when they came into the meadow, there they saw the wolf lying under a tree, and snoring so that the branches shook. The mother goat looked at him carefully on all sides and she noticed how something inside his body was moving and struggling.

“Dear me!” thought she, “can it be that my poor children that he devoured for his evening meal are still alive?” And she sent the little kid back to the house for a pair of shears, and needle, and thread. Then she cut the wolf’s body open, and no sooner had she made one snip than out came the head of one of the kids, and then another snip, and then one after the other the six little kids all jumped out alive and well, for in his greediness the rogue had swallowed them down whole. How delightful this was! so they comforted their dear mother and hopped about like tailors at a wedding.

“Now fetch some good hard stones,” said the mother, “and we will fill his body with them, as he lies asleep.”

And so they fetched some in all haste, and put them inside him, and the mother sewed him up so quickly again that he was none the wiser.

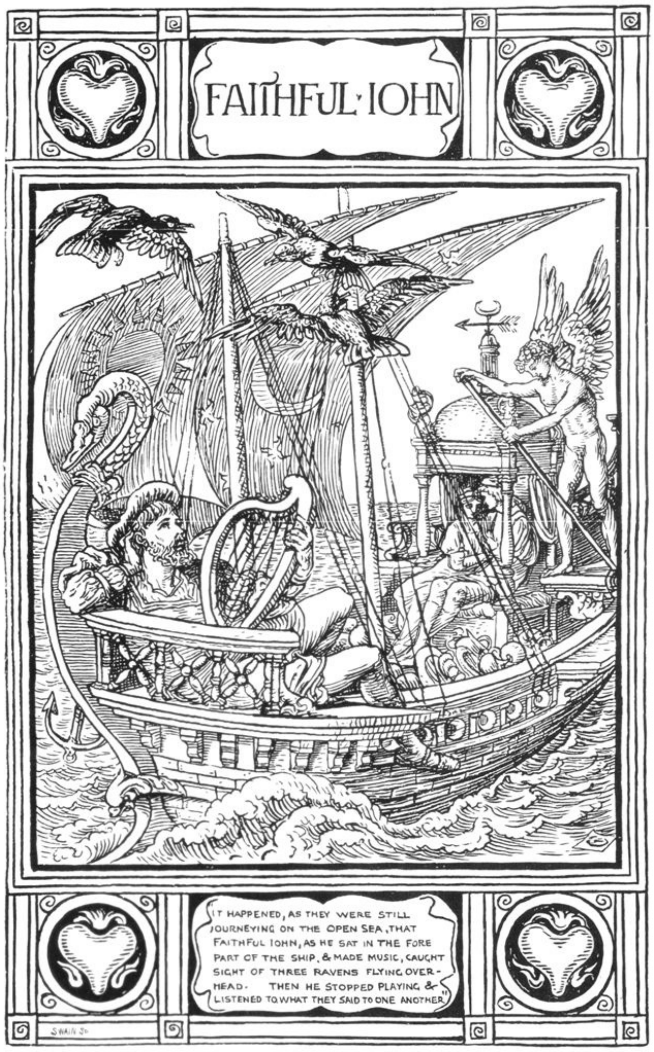
When the wolf at last awoke, and got up, the stones inside him made him feel very thirsty, and as he was going to the brook to drink, they struck and rattled one against another. And so he cried out:

“What is this I feel inside me
Knocking hard against my bones?
How should such a thing betide me!
They were kids, and now they’re stones.”

So he came to the brook, and stooped to drink, but the heavy stones weighed him down, so he fell over into the water and was drowned. And when the seven little kids saw it they came up running.

“The wolf is dead, the wolf is dead!” they cried, and taking hands, they danced with their mother all about the place.

FAITHFUL JOHN


FAITHFUL·IOHN
IT HAPPENED, AS THEY WERE STILL JOURNEYING ON THE OPEN SEA, THAT FAITHFUL IOHN, AS HE SAT IN THE FORE PART OF THE SHIP, & MADE MUSIC, CAUGHT SIGHT OF THREE RAVENS FLYING OVER-HEAD. THEN HE STOPPED PLAYING & LISTENED TO WHAT THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER
SWAIN SC.

THERE was once an old King, who, having fallen sick, thought to himself, “This is very likely my death-bed on which I am lying.”

Then he said, “Let Faithful John be sent for.”

Faithful John was his best-beloved servant, and was so called because he had served the King faithfully all his life long. When he came near the bed, the King said to him,

“Faithful John, I feel my end drawing near, and my only care is for my son; he is yet of tender years, and does not always know how to shape his conduct; and unless you promise me to instruct him in all his actions and be a true foster-father to him, I shall not be able to close my eyes in peace.”

Then answered Faithful John, “I will never forsake him, and will serve him faithfully, even though it should cost me my life.”

And the old King said, “Then I die, being of good cheer and at peace.” And he went on to say,

“After my death, you must lead him through the whole castle, into all the chambers, halls, and vaults, and show him the treasures that in them lie; but the last chamber in the long gallery, in which lies hidden the picture of the

Princess of the Golden Palace, you must not show him. If he were to see that picture, he would directly fall into so great a love for her, that he would faint with the strength of it, and afterwards for her sake run into great dangers; so you must guard him well."

And as Faithful John gave him his hand upon it, the old King became still and silent, laid his head upon the pillow, and died.

When the old King was laid in the grave, Faithful John told the young King what he had promised to his father on his death-bed, and said,

"And I will certainly hold to my promise and be faithful to you, as I was faithful to him, even though it should cost me my life."

When the days of mourning were at an end, Faithful John said to the Prince,

"It is now time that you should see your inheritance; I will show you all the paternal castle."

Then he led him over all the place, upstairs and down-stairs, and showed him all the treasures and the splendid chambers; one chamber only he did not open, that in which the perilous picture hung. Now the picture was so placed that when the door opened it was the first thing to be seen, and was so wonderfully painted that it seemed to breathe and move, and in the whole world was there nothing more lovely or more beautiful. The young King noticed how Faithful John always passed by this one door, and asked,

"Why do you not undo this door?"

"There is something inside that would terrify you," answered he. But the King answered,

"I have seen the whole castle, and I will know what is in here also." And he went forward and tried to open the door by force.

Then Faithful John called him back, and said, "I promised your father on his death-bed that you should not see what is in that room; it might bring great misfortune on you and me were I to break my promise."

But the young King answered, "I shall be undone if I do not go inside that room; I shall have no peace day or night until I have seen it with these eyes; and I will not move from this place until you have unlocked it."

Then Faithful John saw there was no help for it, and he chose out the key from the big bunch with a heavy heart and many sighs. When the door was opened he walked in first, and thought that by standing in front of the King he might hide the picture from him, but that was no good, the King stood on tiptoe, and looked over his shoulder. And when he saw the image of the lady that was so wonderfully beautiful, and so glittering with gold and jewels, he fell on the ground powerless. Faithful John helped him up, took him to his bed, and thought with sorrow, "Ah me! the evil has come to pass; what will become of us?"

Then he strengthened the King with wine, until he came to himself. The first words that he said were,

"Oh, the beautiful picture! whose portrait is it?"

"It is the portrait of the Princess of the Golden Palace," answered Faithful John. Then the King said, "My love for her is so great that if all the leaves of the forest were tongues they could not utter it! I stake my life on the chance of obtaining her, and you, my Faithful John, must stand by me."

The faithful servant considered for a long time how the business should be begun; it seemed to him that it would be a difficult matter to come only at a sight of the Princess. At last he thought out a way, and said to the King,

"All that she has about her is of gold — tables, chairs, dishes, drinking-cups, bowls, and all the household furniture; in your treasury are five tons of gold, let the goldsmiths of your kingdom work it up into all kinds of vessels and implements, into all kinds of birds, and wild creatures, and wonderful beasts, such as may please her; then we will carry them off with us, and go and seek our fortune."

The King had all the goldsmiths fetched, and they worked day and night, until at last some splendid things were got ready. When a ship had been loaded with them, Faithful John put on the garb of a merchant, and so did the King, so as the more completely to disguise themselves. Then they journeyed over the sea, and went so far that at last they came to the city where the Princess of the Golden Palace dwelt.

Faithful John told the King to stay in the ship, and to wait for him.

"Perhaps," said he, "I shall bring the Princess back with me, so take care that everything is in order; let the golden vessels be placed about, and the whole ship be adorned."

Then he gathered together in his apron some of the gold things, one of each kind, landed, and went up to the royal castle. And when he reached the courtyard of the castle there stood by the well a pretty maiden, who had two golden pails in her hand, and she was drawing water with them; and as she turned round to carry them away she saw the strange man, and asked him who he was. He answered,

"I am a merchant," and opened his apron, and let her look within it.

"Ah, what beautiful things!" cried she, and setting down her pails, she turned the golden toys over, and looked at them one after another: then she said,

"The Princess must see these; she takes so much pleasure in gold things that she will buy them all from you."

Then she took him by the hand and led him in, for she was the chamber-maid.

When the Princess saw the golden wares she was very pleased, and said,

"All these are so finely worked that I should like to buy them of you."

But the faithful John said,

"I am only the servant of a rich merchant, and what I have here is nothing to what my master has in the ship — the cunningest and costliest things that ever were made of gold."

The Princess then wanted it all to be brought to her; but he said,

"That would take up many days; so great is the number of them, and so much space would they occupy that there would not be enough room for them in your house."

But the Princess’s curiosity and fancy grew so much that at last she said,

“Lead me to the ship; I will myself go and see your master’s treasures.”

Then Faithful John led her to the ship joyfully, and the King, when he saw that her beauty was even greater than the picture had set forth, felt his heart leap at the sight. Then she climbed up into the ship, and the King received her. Faithful John stayed by the steersman, and gave orders for the ship to push off, saying, “Spread all sail, that she may fly like a bird in the air.”

So the King showed her all the golden things, each separately — the dishes, the bowls, the birds, the wild creatures, and the wonderful beasts. Many hours were passed in looking at them all, and in her pleasure the Princess never noticed that the ship was moving onwards. When she had examined the last, she thanked the merchant, and prepared to return home; but when she came to the ship’s side, she saw that they were on the high seas, far from land, and speeding on under full sail.

“Ah!” cried she, full of terror, “I am betrayed and carried off by this merchant. Oh that I had died rather than have fallen into his power!”

But the King took hold of her hand, and said,

“No merchant am I, but a King, and no baser of birth than thyself; it is because of my over-mastering love for thee that I have carried thee off by cunning. The first time I saw thy picture I fell fainting to the earth.”

When the Princess of the Golden Palace heard this she became more trustful, and her heart inclined favourably towards him, so that she willingly consented to become his wife.

It happened, however, as they were still journeying on the open sea, that Faithful John, as he sat in the forepart of the ship and made music, caught sight of three ravens in the air flying overhead. Then he stopped playing, and listened to what they said one to another, for he understood them quite well. The first one cried,

“Ay, there goes the Princess of the Golden Palace.”

“Yes,” answered the second; “but he has not got her safe yet.” And the third said,

“He has her, though; she sits beside him in the ship.”

Then the first one spoke again,

“What does that avail him? When they come on land a fox-red horse will spring towards them; then will the King try to mount him; and if he does, the horse will rise with him into the air, so that he will never see his bride again.” The second raven asked,

“Is there no remedy?”

“Oh yes; if another man mounts quickly, and takes the pistol out of the holster and shoots the horse dead with it, he will save the young King. But who knows that? and he that knows it and does it will become stone from toe to knee.” Then said the second,

“I know further, that if the horse should be killed, the young King will not even then be sure of his bride. When they arrive at the castle there will lie a wrought bride-shirt in a dish, and it will seem all woven of gold and silver, but it is really of sulphur and pitch, and if he puts it on it will burn him to the marrow of his bones." The third raven said,

"Is there no remedy?"

"Oh yes," answered the second; "if another man with gloves on picks up the shirt, and throws it into the fire, so that it is consumed, then is the young King delivered. But what avails that? He who knows it and does it will be turned into stone from his heart to his knee." Then spoke the third,

"I know yet more, that even when the bride-shirt is burnt up the King is not sure of his bride; when at the wedding the dance begins, and the young Queen dances, she will suddenly grow pale and fall to the earth as if she were dead, and unless some one lifts her up and takes three drops of blood from her right breast, she will die. But he that knows this and does this will become stone from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot."

When the ravens had spoken thus among themselves they flew away. Faithful John had understood it all, and from that time he remained quiet and sad, for he thought to himself that were he to conceal what he had heard from his master, misfortune would befall; and were he to discover it his own life would be sacrificed. At last, however, he said within himself,

"I will save my master, though I myself should perish!"

So when they came on land, it happened just as the ravens had foretold, there sprang forward a splendid fox-red horse.

"Come on!" said the King, "he shall carry me to the castle," and was going to mount, when Faithful John passed before him and mounted quickly, drew the pistol out of the holster, and shot the horse dead. Then the other servants of the king cried out (for they did not wish well to Faithful John),

"How shameful to kill that beautiful animal that was to have carried the king to his castle." But the King said,

"Hold your tongues, and let him be: he is my Faithful John; he knows what is the good of it."

Then they went up to the castle, and there stood in the hall a dish, and the wrought bride-shirt that lay on it seemed as if of gold and silver. The young King went up to it and was going to put it on, but Faithful John pushed him away, picked it up with his gloved hands, threw it quickly on the fire, and there let it burn. The other servants began grumbling again, and said,

"Look, he is even burning up the king's bridal shirt!" But the young King said,

"Who knows but that there may be a good reason for it? let him be, he is my Faithful John."

Then the wedding feast was held; and the bride led the dance; Faithful John watched her carefully, and all at once she grew pale and fell down as if she were dead. Then he went quickly to her, and carried her into a chamber hard by, laid her down, and kneeling, took three drops of blood from her right breast. Immediately she drew breath again and raised herself up, but the young King witnessing all, and not knowing why Faithful John had done this, grew very angry, and cried out,

"Throw him into prison!"

The next morning Faithful John was condemned to death and led to the gallows, and as he stood there ready to suffer, he said,

“He who is about to die is permitted to speak once before his end; may I claim that right?”

“Yes,” answered the King, “it is granted to you.” Then said Faithful John,

“I have been condemned unjustly, for I have always been faithful,” and he related how he had heard on the sea voyage the talk of the ravens, and how he had done everything in order to save his master. Then cried the King,

“O my Faithful John, pardon! pardon! lead him down!” But Faithful John, as he spoke the last words, fell lifeless, and became stone.

The King and Queen had great grief because of this, and the King said,

“Ah, how could I have evil-rewarded such faithfulness!” and he caused the stone image to be lifted up and put to stand in his sleeping-room by the side of his bed. And as often as he saw it he wept and said,

“Would that I could bring thee back to life, my Faithful John!”

After some time the Queen bore twins — two little sons — that grew and thrived, and were the joy of their parents. One day, when the Queen was in church, the two children were sitting and playing with their father, and he gazed at the stone image full of sadness, sighed, and cried,

“Oh that I could bring thee back to life, my Faithful John!” Then the stone began to speak, and said,

“Yes, thou canst bring me back to life again, if thou wilt bestow therefor thy best-beloved.” Then cried the King,

“All that I have in the world will I give up for thee!” The stone went on to say,

“If thou wilt cut off the heads of thy two children with thy own hand, and besmear me with their blood, I shall receive life again.”

The King was horror-struck at the thought that he must put his beloved children to death, but he remembered all John’s faithfulness, and how he had died for him, and he drew his sword and cut off his children’s heads with his own hand. And when he had besmeared the stone with their blood life returned to it, and Faithful John stood alive and well before him; and he said to the king,

“Thy faithfulness shall not be unrewarded,” and, taking up the heads of the children, he set them on again, and besmeared the wound with their blood, upon which in a moment they were whole again, and jumped about, and went on playing as if nothing had happened to them.

Now was the King full of joy; and when he saw the Queen coming he put the Faithful John and the two children in a great chest. When she came in he said to her,

“Hast thou prayed in church?”

“Yes,” answered she, “but I was thinking all the while of Faithful John, and how he came to such great misfortune through us.”

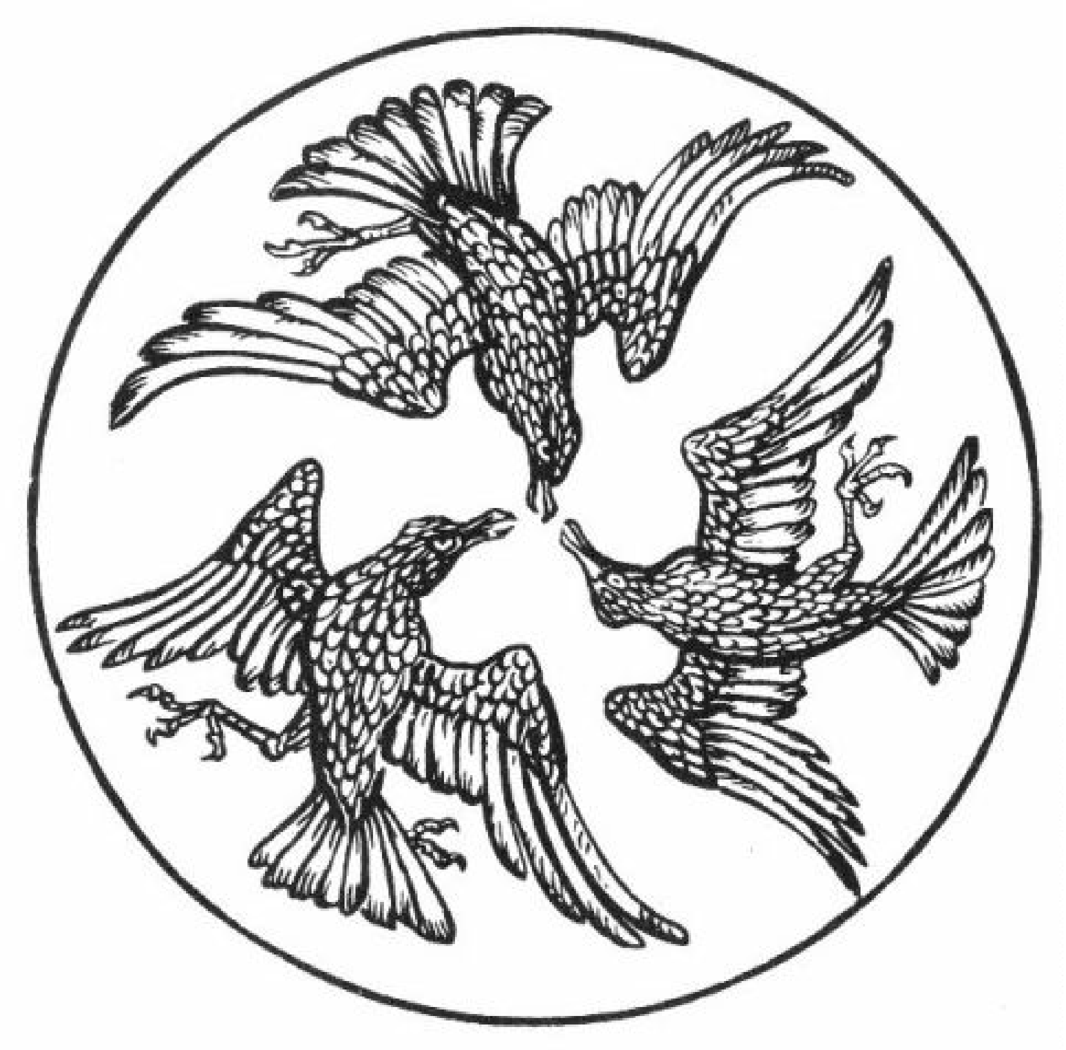
“Then,” said he, “dear wife, we can give him life again, but it will cost us both our little sons, whom we must sacrifice.”

The Queen grew pale and sick at heart, but said, “We owe it him, because of his great faithfulness.”

Then the King rejoiced because she thought as he did, and he went and unlocked the chest and took out the children and Faithful John, and said,

“God be praised, he is delivered, and our little sons are ours again;” and he related to her how it had come to pass.

After that they all lived together in happiness to their lives’ end.



THE WONDERFUL MUSICIAN

THERE was once a wonderful musician, and he was one day walking through a wood all alone, thinking of this and that: and when he had nothing more left to think about, he said to himself,

“I shall grow tired of being in this wood, so I will bring out a good companion.”

So he took the fiddle that hung at his back and fiddled so that the wood echoed. Before long a wolf came through the thicket and trotted up to him.

“Oh, here comes a wolf! I had no particular wish for such company,” said the musician: but the wolf drew nearer, and said to him,

“Ho, you musician, how finely you play! I must learn how to play too.”

“That is easily done,” answered the musician, “you have only to do exactly as I tell you.”

“O musician,” said the wolf, “I will obey you, as a scholar does his master.”

The musician told him to come with him. As they went a part of the way together they came to an old oak tree, which was hollow within and cleft through the middle.

“Look here,” said the musician, “if you want to learn how to fiddle, you must put your fore feet in this cleft.”

The wolf obeyed, but the musician took up a stone and quickly wedged both his paws with one stroke, so fast, that the wolf was a prisoner, and there obliged to stop.

“Stay there until I come back again,” said the musician, and went his way.

After a while he said again to himself,

“I shall grow weary here in this wood; I will bring out another companion,” and he took his fiddle and fiddled away in the wood. Before long a fox came slinking through the trees.

“Oh, here comes a fox!” said the musician; “I had no particular wish for such company.”

The fox came up to him and said,

“O my dear musician, how finely you play! I must learn how to play too.”

“That is easily done,” said the musician, “you have only to do exactly as I tell you.”

“O musician,” answered the fox, “I will obey you, as a scholar his master.”

“Follow me,” said the musician; and as they went a part of the way together they came to a footpath with a high hedge on each side. Then the musician stopped, and taking hold of a hazel-branch bent it down to the earth, and put his foot on the end of it; then he bent down a branch from the other side, and said: “Come on, little fox, if you wish to learn something, reach me your left fore foot.”

The fox obeyed, and the musician bound the foot to the left hand branch.

“Now, little fox,” said he, “reach me the right one;” then he bound it to the right hand branch. And when he had seen that the knots were fast enough he let go, and the branches flew back and caught up the fox, shaking and struggling, in the air.

“Wait there until I come back again,” said the musician, and went his way.

By and by he said to himself: “I shall grow weary in this wood; I will bring out another companion.”

So he took his fiddle, and the sound echoed through the wood. Then a hare sprang out before him.

“Oh, here comes a hare!” said he, “that’s not what I want.”

“Ah, my dear musician,” said the hare, “how finely you play! I should like to learn how to play too.”

“That is soon done,” said the musician, “only you must do whatever I tell you.”

“O musician,” answered the hare, “I will obey you, as a scholar his master.”

So they went a part of the way together, until they came to a clear place in the wood where there stood an aspen tree. The musician tied a long string round the neck of the hare, and knotted the other end of it to the tree.

“Now then, courage, little hare! run twenty times round the tree!” cried the musician, and the hare obeyed: as he ran round the twentieth time the string had wound twenty times round the tree trunk and the hare was imprisoned, and pull and tug as he would he only cut his tender neck with the string. “Wait there until I come back again,” said the musician, and walked on.

The wolf meanwhile had struggled, and pulled, and bitten, at the stone, and worked away so long, that at last he made his paws free and got himself out of the cleft. Full of anger and fury he hastened after the musician to tear him to pieces. When the fox saw him run by he began groaning, and cried out with all his might,

“Brother wolf, come and help me! the musician has betrayed me.” The wolf then pulled the branches down, bit the knots in two, and set the fox free, and he went with him to take vengeance on the musician. They found the imprisoned hare, and set him likewise free, and then they all went on together to seek their enemy.

The musician had once more played his fiddle, and this time he had been more fortunate. The sound had reached the ears of a poor woodcutter, who immediately, and in spite of himself, left his work, and, with his axe under his arm, came to listen to the music.

“At last here comes the right sort of companion,” said the musician; “it was a man I wanted, and not wild animals.” And then he began to play so sweetly that the poor man stood as if enchanted, and his heart was filled with joy. And as he was standing there up came the wolf, the fox, and the hare, and he could easily see that they meant mischief. Then he raised his shining axe, and stood in front of the musician, as if to say, “Whoever means harm to him had better take care of himself, for he will have to do with me!”

Then the animals were frightened, and ran back into the wood, and the musician, when he had played once more to the man to show his gratitude, went on his way.

THE TWELVE BROTHERS

ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen very peacefully together; they had twelve children, all boys. Now the King said to the Queen one day,

"If our thirteenth child should be a girl the twelve boys shall die, so that her riches may be the greater, and the kingdom fall to her alone."

Then he caused twelve coffins to be made; and they were filled with shavings, and a little pillow laid in each, and they were brought and put in a locked-up room; and the King gave the key to the Queen, and told her to say nothing about it to any one.

But the mother sat the whole day sorrowing, so that her youngest son, who never left her, and to whom she had given the Bible name Benjamin, said to her,

"Dear mother, why are you so sad?"

"Dearest child," answered she, "I dare not tell you."

But he let her have no peace until she went and unlocked the room, and showed him the twelve coffins with the shavings and the little pillows. Then she said,

"My dear Benjamin, your father has caused these coffins to be made for you and your eleven brothers, and if I bring a little girl into the world you are all to be put to death together and buried therein." And she wept as she spoke, and her little son comforted her and said,

"Weep not, dear mother, we will save ourselves and go far away." Then she answered,

"Yes, go with your eleven brothers out into the world, and let one of you always sit on the top of the highest tree that can be found, and keep watch upon the tower of this castle. If a little son is born I will put out a white flag, and then you may safely venture back again; but if it is a little daughter I will put out a red flag, and then flee away as fast as you can, and the dear God watch over you. Every night will I arise and pray for you — in winter that you may have a fire to warm yourselves by, and in summer that you may not languish in the heat."

After that, when she had given her sons her blessing, they went away out into the wood. One after another kept watch, sitting on the highest oak tree, looking towards the tower. When eleven days had passed, and Benjamin's turn came, he saw a flag put out, but it was not white, but blood red, to warn them that they were to die. When the brothers knew this they became angry, saying,

"Shall we suffer death because of a girl! we swear to be revenged; wherever we find a girl we will shed her blood."

Then they went deeper into the wood; and in the middle, where it was darkest, they found a little enchanted house, standing empty. Then they said,

"Here will we dwell; and you, Benjamin, the youngest and weakest, shall stay at home and keep house; we others will go abroad and purvey food."

Then they went into the wood and caught hares, wild roes, birds, and pigeons, and whatever else is good to eat, and brought them to Benjamin for him to cook and make ready to satisfy their hunger. So they lived together in the little house for ten years, and the time did not seem long.

By this time the Queen's little daughter was growing up, she had a kind heart and a beautiful face, and a golden star on her forehead. Once when there was a great wash she saw among the clothes twelve shirts, and she asked her mother,

"Whose are these twelve shirts? they are too small to be my father's." Then the mother answered with a sore heart,

"Dear child, they belong to your twelve brothers." The little girl said,

"Where are my twelve brothers? I have never heard of them." And her mother answered,

"God only knows where they are wandering about in the world." Then she led the little girl to the secret room and unlocked it, and showed her the twelve coffins with the shavings and the little pillows.

"These coffins," said she, "were intended for your twelve brothers, but they went away far from home when you were born," and she related how everything had come to pass. Then said the little girl,

"Dear mother, do not weep, I will go and seek my brothers."

So she took the twelve shirts and went far and wide in the great forest. The day sped on, and in the evening she came to the enchanted house. She went in and found a youth, who asked,

"Whence do you come, and what do you want?" and he marvelled at her beauty, her royal garments, and the star on her forehead. Then she answered,

"I am a king's daughter, and I seek my twelve brothers, and I will go everywhere under the blue sky until I find them." And she showed him the twelve shirts which belonged to them. Then Benjamin saw that it must be his sister, and said,

"I am Benjamin, your youngest brother."

And she began weeping for joy, and Benjamin also, and they kissed and cheered each other with great love. After a while he said,

"Dear sister, there is still a hindrance; we have sworn that any maiden that we meet must die, as it was because of a maiden that we had to leave our kingdom.” Then she said,

“I will willingly die, if so I may benefit my twelve brothers.”

“No,” answered he, “you shall not die; sit down under this tub until the eleven brothers come, and I agree with them about it.” She did so; and as night came on they returned from hunting, and supper was ready. And as they were sitting at table and eating, they asked,

“What news?” And Benjamin said,

“Don’t you know any?”

“No,” answered they. So he said,

“You have been in the wood, and I have stayed at home, and yet I know more than you.”

“Tell us!” cried they. He answered,

“Promise me that the first maiden we see shall not be put to death.”

“Yes, we promise,” cried they all, “she shall have mercy; tell us now.” Then he said,

“Our sister is here,” and lifted up the tub, and the king’s daughter came forth in her royal garments with her golden star on her forehead, and she seemed so beautiful, delicate, and sweet, that they all rejoiced, and fell on her neck and kissed her, and loved her with all their hearts.

After this she remained with Benjamin in the house and helped him with the work. The others went forth into the woods to catch wild animals, does, birds, and pigeons, for food for them all, and their sister and Benjamin took care that all was made ready for them. She fetched the wood for cooking, and the vegetables, and watched the pots on the fire, so that supper was always ready when the others came in. She kept also great order in the house, and the beds were always beautifully white and clean, and the brothers were contented, and lived in unity.

One day the two got ready a fine feast, and when they were all assembled they sat down and ate and drank, and were full of joy. Now there was a little garden belonging to the enchanted house, in which grew twelve lilies; the maiden, thinking to please her brothers, went out to gather the twelve flowers, meaning to give one to each as they sat at meat. But as she broke off the flowers, in the same moment the brothers were changed into twelve ravens, and flew over the wood far away, and the house with the garden also disappeared. So the poor maiden stood alone in the wild wood, and as she was looking around her she saw an old woman standing by her, who said,

“My child, what hast thou done! why couldst thou not leave the twelve flowers standing? they were thy twelve brothers, who are now changed to ravens for ever.” The maiden said, weeping,

“Is there no means of setting them free?”

“No,” said the old woman, “there is in the whole world no way but one, and that is difficult; thou canst not release them but by being dumb for seven years: thou must neither speak nor laugh; and wert thou to speak one single word, and it wanted but one hour of the seven years, all would be in vain, and thy brothers would perish because of that one word.”

Then the maiden said in her heart, “I am quite sure that I can set my brothers free,” and went and sought a tall tree, climbed up, and sat there spinning, and never spoke or laughed. Now it happened that a King, who was hunting in the wood, had with him a large greyhound, who ran to the tree where the maiden was, sprang up at it, and barked loudly. Up came the King and saw the beautiful Princess with the golden star on her forehead, and he was so charmed with her beauty that he prayed her to become his wife. She gave no answer, only a little nod of her head. Then he himself climbed the tree and brought her down, set her on his horse and took her home. The wedding was held with great splendour and rejoicing, but the bride neither spoke nor laughed. After they had lived pleasantly together for a few years, the King’s mother, who was a wicked woman, began to slander the young Queen, and said to the King,

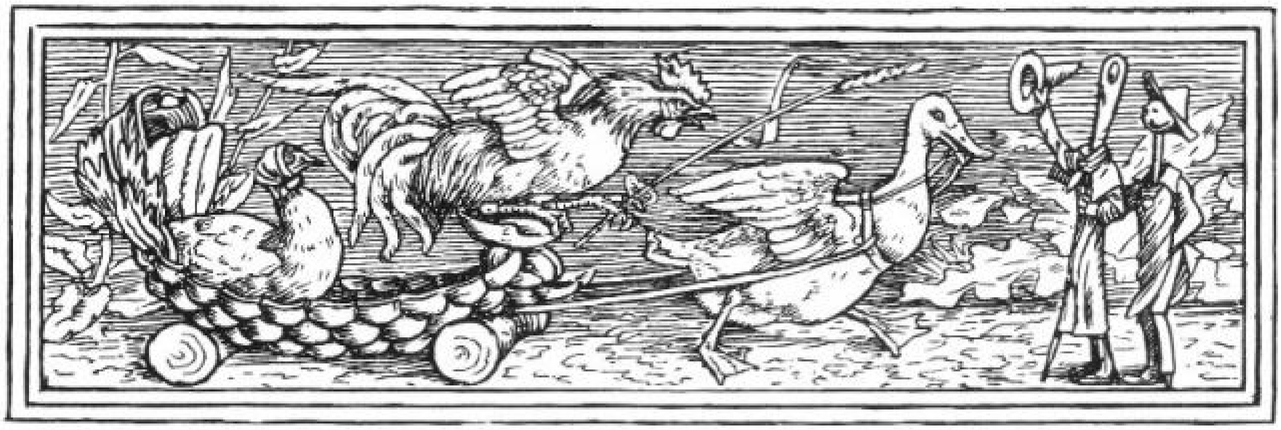
“She is only a low beggar-maid that you have taken to yourself; who knows what mean tricks she is playing? Even if she is really dumb and cannot speak she might at least laugh; not to laugh is the sign of a bad conscience.”

At first the King would believe nothing of it, but the old woman talked so long, and suggested so many bad things, that he at last let himself be persuaded, and condemned the Queen to death.

Now a great fire was kindled in the courtyard, and she was to be burned in it; and the King stood above at the window, and watched it all with weeping eyes, for he had held her very dear. And when she was already fast bound to the stake, and the fire was licking her garments with red tongues, the last moment of the seven years came to an end. Then a rushing sound was heard in the air, and twelve ravens came flying and sank downwards; and as they touched the earth they became her twelve brothers that she had lost. They rushed through the fire and quenched the flames, and set their dear sister free, kissing and consoling her. And now that her mouth was opened, and that she might venture to speak, she told the King the reason of her dumbness, and why she had never laughed. The King rejoiced when he heard of her innocence, and they all lived together in happiness until their death.

But the wicked mother-in-law was very unhappy, and died miserably.

THE VAGABONDS



THE cock said to the hen,

"It is nutting time, let us go together to the mountains and have a good feast for once, before the squirrels come and carry all away."

"Yes," answered the hen, "come along; we will have a jolly time together."

Then they set off together to the mountains, and as it was a fine day they stayed there till the evening. Now whether it was that they had eaten so much, or because of their pride and haughtiness, I do not know, but they would not go home on foot; so the cock set to work to make a little carriage out of nutshells. When it was ready, the hen seated herself in it, and said to the cock,

"Now you can harness yourself to it."

"That's all very fine," said the cock, "I would sooner go home on foot than do such a thing: and I never agreed to it. I don't mind being coachman, and sitting on the box; but as to drawing it myself, it's quite out of the question."

As they were wrangling, a duck came quacking,

"You thieving vagabonds, who told you you might go to my mountain? Look out, or it will be the worse for you!" and flew at the cock with bill wide open. But the cock was not backward, and he gave the duck a good dig in the body, and hacked at her with his spurs so valiantly that she begged for mercy, and willingly allowed herself to be harnessed to the carriage. Then the cock seated himself on the box and was coachman; so off they went at a great pace, the cock crying out "Run, duck, as fast as you can!"

When they had gone a part of the way they met two foot-passengers, a pin and a needle. They cried "Stop! stop!" and said that it would soon be blindman's holiday; that they could not go a step farther; that the ways were very muddy; might they just get in for a little? they had been standing at the door of the tailors' house of call and had been delayed because of beer.

The cock, seeing they were slender folks that would not take up a great deal of room, let them both step in, only they must promise not to tread on his toes nor on the hen's.

Late in the evening they came to an inn, and there they found that they could not go any farther that night, as the duck's paces were not good, she waddled so much from side to side; so they turned in. The landlord at first made some difficulty; his house was full already, and he thought they had no very distinguished appearance; at last, however, when they had made many fine speeches, and had promised him the egg that the hen had laid on the way, and that he should keep the duck, who laid one every day, he agreed to let them stay the night; and so they had a very gay time.

Early in the morning, when it was beginning to grow light, and everybody was still asleep, the cock waked up the hen, fetched the egg, and made a hole in it, and they ate it up between them, and put the eggshell on the hearth. Then they went up to the needle, who was still sleeping, picked him up by his head, and stuck him in the landlord's chair-cushion, and having also placed the pin in his towel, off they flew over the hills and far away. The duck, who had chosen to sleep in the open air, and had remained in the yard, heard the rustling of their wings, and, waking up, looked about till she found a brook, down which she swam a good deal faster than she had drawn the carriage.

A few hours later the landlord woke, and, leaving his feather-bed, began washing himself; but when he took the towel to dry himself he drew the pin all across his face, and made a red streak from ear to ear. Then he went into the kitchen to light his pipe, but when he stooped towards the hearth to take up a coal the eggshell flew in his eyes.

"Everything goes wrong this morning," said he, and let himself drop, full of vexation, into his grandfather's chair; but up he jumped in a moment, crying, "Oh dear!" for the needle had gone into him.

Now he became angry, and had his suspicions of the guests who had arrived so late the evening before; and when he looked round for them they were nowhere to be seen.

Then he swore that he would never more harbour such vagabonds, that consumed so much, paid nothing, and played such nasty tricks into the bargain.

THE BROTHER AND SISTER

THE brother took his sister's hand and said to her,

"Since our mother died we have had no good days; our stepmother beats us every day, and if we go near her she kicks us away; we have nothing to eat but hard crusts of bread left over; the dog under the table fares better; he gets a good piece every now and then. If our mother only knew, how she would pity us! Come, let us go together out into the wide world!"

So they went, and journeyed the whole day through fields and meadows and stony places, and if it rained the sister said,

"The skies and we are weeping together."

In the evening they came to a great wood, and they were so weary with hunger and their long journey, that they climbed up into a high tree and fell asleep.

The next morning, when they awoke, the sun was high in heaven, and shone brightly through the leaves. Then said the brother,

"Sister, I am thirsty; if I only knew where to find a brook, that I might go and drink! I almost think that I hear one rushing." So the brother got down and led his sister by the hand, and they went to seek the brook. But their wicked stepmother was a witch, and had known quite well that the two children had run away, and had sneaked after them, as only witches can, and had laid a spell on all the brooks in the forest. So when they found a little stream flowing smoothly over its pebbles, the brother was going to drink of it; but the sister heard how it said in its rushing,

"He a tiger will be who drinks of me,
Who drinks of me a tiger will be!"

Then the sister cried,

"Pray, dear brother, do not drink, or you will become a wild beast, and will tear me in pieces."

So the brother refrained from drinking, though his thirst was great, and he said he would wait till he came to the next brook. When they came to a second brook the sister heard it say,

"He a wolf will be who drinks of me,
Who drinks of me a wolf will be!"

Then the sister cried,

"Pray, dear brother, do not drink, or you will be turned into a wolf, and will eat me up!"

So the brother refrained from drinking, and said,

"I will wait until we come to the next brook, and then I must drink, whatever you say; my thirst is so great."

And when they came to the third brook the sister heard how in its rushing it said,

“Who drinks of me a fawn will be,
He a fawn will be who drinks of me!”

Then the sister said,

“O my brother, I pray drink not, or you will be turned into a fawn, and run away far from me.”

But he had already kneeled by the side of the brook and stooped and drunk of the water, and as the first drops passed his lips he became a fawn.

And the sister wept over her poor lost brother, and the fawn wept also, and stayed sadly beside her. At last the maiden said,

“Be comforted, dear fawn, indeed I will never leave you.”

Then she untied her golden girdle and bound it round the fawn’s neck, and went and gathered rushes to make a soft cord, which she fastened to him; and then she led him on, and they went deeper into the forest. And when they had gone a long long way, they came at last to a little house, and the maiden looked inside, and as it was empty she thought,

“We might as well live here.”

And she fetched leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the fawn, and every morning she went out and gathered roots and berries and nuts for herself, and fresh grass for the fawn, who ate out of her hand with joy, frolicking round her. At night, when the sister was tired, and had said her prayers, she laid her head on the fawn’s back, which served her for a pillow, and softly fell asleep. And if only the brother could have got back his own shape again, it would have been a charming life. So they lived a long while in the wilderness alone.

Now it happened that the King of that country held a great hunt in the forest. The blowing of the horns, the barking of the dogs, and the lusty shouts of the huntsmen sounded through the wood, and the fawn heard them and was eager to be among them.

“Oh,” said he to his sister, “do let me go to the hunt; I cannot stay behind any longer,” and begged so long that at last she consented.

“But mind,” said she to him, “come back to me at night. I must lock my door against the wild hunters, so, in order that I may know you, you must knock and say, ‘Little sister, let me in,’ and unless I hear that I shall not unlock the door.”

Then the fawn sprang out, and felt glad and merry in the open air. The King and his huntsmen saw the beautiful animal, and began at once to pursue him, but they could not come within reach of him, for when they thought they were certain of him he sprang away over the bushes and disappeared. As soon as it was dark he went back to the little house, knocked at the door, and said,

“Little sister, let me in.”

Then the door was opened to him, and he went in, and rested the whole night long on his soft bed. The next morning the hunt began anew, and when the fawn heard the hunting-horns and the tally-ho of the huntsmen he could rest no longer, and said,

"Little sister, let me out, I must go." The sister opened the door and said,

"Now, mind you must come back at night and say the same words."

When the King and his hunters saw the fawn with the golden collar again, they chased him closely, but he was too nimble and swift for them. This lasted the whole day, and at last the hunters surrounded him, and one of them wounded his foot a little, so that he was obliged to limp and to go slowly. Then a hunter slipped after him to the little house, and heard how he called out, "Little sister, let me in," and saw the door open and shut again after him directly. The hunter noticed all this carefully, went to the King, and told him all he had seen and heard. Then said the King,

"To-morrow we will hunt again."

But the sister was very terrified when she saw that her fawn was wounded. She washed his foot, laid cooling leaves round it, and said, "Lie down on your bed, dear fawn, and rest, that you may be soon well." The wound was very slight, so that the fawn felt nothing of it the next morning. And when he heard the noise of the hunting outside, he said,

"I cannot stay in, I must go after them; I shall not be taken easily again!" The sister began to weep, and said,

"I know you will be killed, and I left alone here in the forest, and forsaken of everybody. I cannot let you go!"

"Then I shall die here with longing," answered the fawn; "when I hear the sound of the horn I feel as if I should leap out of my skin."

Then the sister, seeing there was no help for it, unlocked the door with a heavy heart, and the fawn bounded away into the forest, well and merry. When the King saw him, he said to his hunters,

"Now, follow him up all day long till the night comes, and see that you do him no hurt."

So as soon as the sun had gone down, the King said to the huntsmen: "Now, come and show me the little house in the wood."

And when he got to the door he knocked at it, and cried,

"Little sister, let me in!"

Then the door opened, and the King went in, and there stood a maiden more beautiful than any he had seen before. The maiden shrieked out when she saw, instead of the fawn, a man standing there with a gold crown on his head. But the King looked kindly on her, took her by the hand, and said,

"Will you go with me to my castle, and be my dear wife?"

"Oh yes," answered the maiden, "but the fawn must come too. I could not leave him." And the King said,

"He shall remain with you as long as you live, and shall lack nothing." Then the fawn came bounding in, and the sister tied the cord of rushes to him, and led him by her own hand out of the little house.

The King put the beautiful maiden on his horse, and carried her to his castle, where the wedding was held with great pomp; so she became lady Queen, and they lived together happily for a long while; the fawn was well tended and cherished, and he gambolled about the castle garden.

Now the wicked stepmother, whose fault it was that the children were driven out into the world, never dreamed but that the sister had been eaten up by wild beasts in the forest, and that the brother, in the likeness of a fawn, had been slain by the hunters. But when she heard that they were so happy, and that things had gone so well with them, jealousy and envy arose in her heart, and left her no peace, and her chief thought was how to bring misfortune upon them.

Her own daughter, who was as ugly as sin, and had only one eye, complained to her, and said,

"I never had the chance of being a Queen."

"Never mind," said the old woman, to satisfy her; "when the time comes, I shall be at hand."

After a while the Queen brought a beautiful baby-boy into the world, and that day the King was out hunting. The old witch took the shape of the bedchamber woman, and went into the room where the Queen lay, and said to her,

"Come, the bath is ready; it will give you refreshment and new strength. Quick, or it will be cold."

Her daughter was within call, so they carried the sick Queen into the bath-room, and left her there. And in the bath-room they had made a great fire, so as to suffocate the beautiful young Queen.

When that was managed, the old woman took her daughter, put a cap on her, and laid her in the bed in the Queen's place, gave her also the Queen's form and countenance, only she could not restore the lost eye. So, in order that the King might not remark it, she had to lie on the side where there was no eye. In the evening, when the King came home and heard that a little son was born to him, he rejoiced with all his heart, and was going at once to his dear wife's bedside to see how she did. Then the old woman cried hastily,

"For your life, do not draw back the curtains, to let in the light upon her; she must be kept quiet." So the King went away, and never knew that a false Queen was lying in the bed.

Now, when it was midnight, and every one was asleep, the nurse, who was sitting by the cradle in the nursery and watching there alone, saw the door open, and the true Queen come in. She took the child out of the cradle, laid it in her bosom, and fed it. Then she shook out its little pillow, put the child back again, and covered it with the coverlet. She did not forget the fawn either: she went to him where he lay in the corner, and stroked his back tenderly. Then she went in perfect silence out at the door, and the nurse next morning asked the watchmen if any one had entered the castle during the night, but they said they had seen no one. And the Queen came many nights, and never said a word; the nurse saw her always, but she did not dare speak of it to any one.

After some time had gone by in this manner, the Queen seemed to find voice, and said one night,

“My child my fawn twice more I come to see,
Twice more I come, and then the end must be.”

The nurse said nothing, but as soon as the Queen had disappeared she went to the King and told him all. The King said,

“Ah, heaven! what do I hear! I will myself watch by the child to-morrow night.”

So at evening he went into the nursery, and at midnight the Queen appeared, and said,

“My child my fawn once more I come to see,
Once more I come, and then the end must be.”

And she tended the child, as she was accustomed to do, before she vanished. The King dared not speak to her, but he watched again the following night, and heard her say,

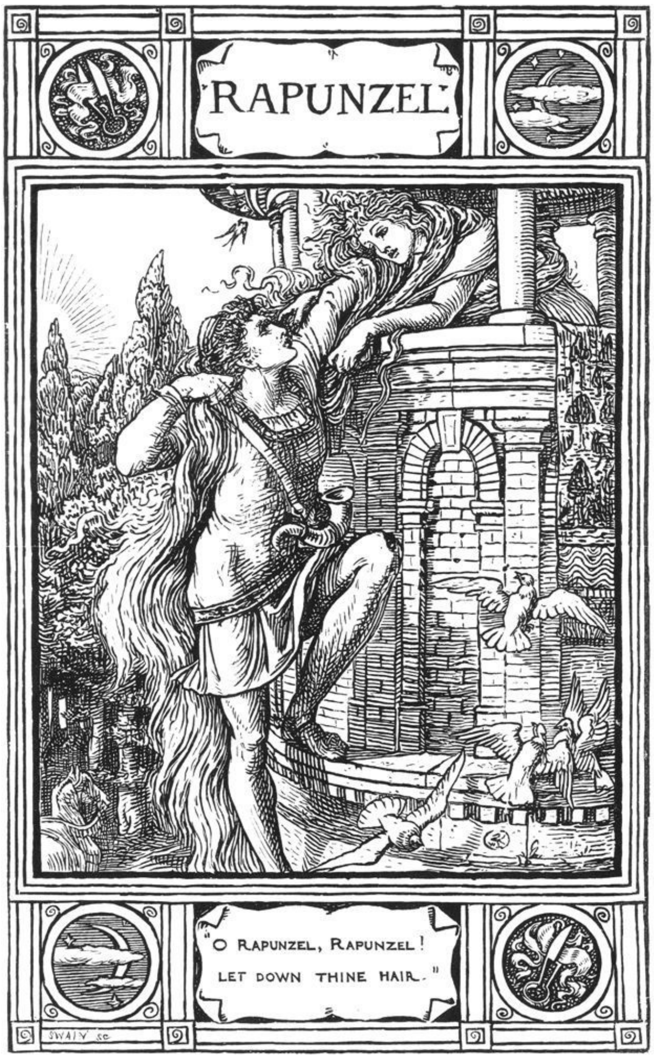
“My child my fawn this once I come to see,
This once I come, and now the end must be.”

Then the King could contain himself no longer, but rushed towards her, saying,

“You are no other than my dear wife!” Then she answered,

“Yes, I am your dear wife,” and in that moment, by the grace of heaven, her life returned to her, and she was once more well and strong. Then she told the King the snare that the wicked witch and her daughter had laid for her. The King had them both brought to judgment, and sentence was passed upon them. The daughter was sent away into the wood, where she was devoured by the wild beasts, and the witch was burned, and ended miserably. And as soon as her body was in ashes the spell was removed from the fawn, and he took human shape again; and then the sister and brother lived happily together until the end.

RAPUNZEL


RAPUNZEL
"O RAPUNZEL, RAPUNZEL!
LET DOWN THINE HAIR."
SWAIN SC

THERE once lived a man and his wife, who had long wished for a child, but in vain. Now there was at the back of their house a little window which overlooked a beautiful garden full of the finest vegetables and flowers; but there was a high wall all round it, and no one ventured into it, for it belonged to a witch of great might, and of whom all the world was afraid. One day that the wife was standing at the window, and looking into the garden, she saw a bed filled with the finest rampion; and it looked so fresh and green that she began to wish for some; and at length she longed for it greatly. This went on for days, and as she knew she could not get the rampion, she pined away, and grew pale and miserable. Then the man was uneasy, and asked, "What is the matter, dear wife?"

"Oh," answered she, "I shall die unless I can have some of that rampion to eat that grows in the garden at the back of our house." The man, who loved her very much, thought to himself,

"Rather than lose my wife I will get some rampion, cost what it will."

So in the twilight he climbed over the wall into the witch’s garden, plucked hastily a handful of rampion and brought it to his wife. She made a salad of it at once, and ate of it to her heart’s content. But she liked it so much, and it tasted so good, that the next day she longed for it thrice as much as she had done before; if she was to have any rest the man must climb over the wall once more. So he went in the twilight again; and as he was climbing back, he saw, all at once, the witch standing before him, and was terribly frightened, as she cried, with angry eyes,

“How dare you climb over into my garden like a thief, and steal my rampion! it shall be the worse for you!”

“Oh,” answered he, “be merciful rather than just, I have only done it through necessity; for my wife saw your rampion out of the window, and became possessed with so great a longing that she would have died if she could not have had some to eat.” Then the witch said,

“If it is all as you say you may have as much rampion as you like, on one condition — the child that will come into the world must be given to me. It shall go well with the child, and I will care for it like a mother.”

In his distress of mind the man promised everything; and when the time came when the child was born the witch appeared, and, giving the child the name of Rapunzel (which is the same as rampion), she took it away with her.

Rapunzel was the most beautiful child in the world. When she was twelve years old the witch shut her up in a tower in the midst of a wood, and it had neither steps nor door, only a small window above. When the witch wished to be let in, she would stand below and would cry,

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel! let down your hair!”

Rapunzel had beautiful long hair that shone like gold. When she heard the voice of the witch she would undo the fastening of the upper window, unbind the plaits of her hair, and let it down twenty ells below, and the witch would climb up by it.

After they had lived thus a few years it happened that as the King’s son was riding through the wood, he came to the tower; and as he drew near he heard a voice singing so sweetly that he stood still and listened. It was Rapunzel in her loneliness trying to pass away the time with sweet songs. The King’s son wished to go in to her, and sought to find a door in the tower, but there was none. So he rode home, but the song had entered into his heart, and every day he went into the wood and listened to it. Once, as he was standing there under a tree, he saw the witch come up, and listened while she called out,

“O Rapunzel, Rapunzel! let down your hair.”

Then he saw how Rapunzel let down her long tresses, and how the witch climbed up by it and went in to her, and he said to himself,

“Since that is the ladder I will climb it, and seek my fortune.” And the next day, as soon as it began to grow dusk, he went to the tower and cried,

“O Rapunzel, Rapunzel! let down your hair.”

And she let down her hair, and the King’s son climbed up by it.

Rapunzel was greatly terrified when she saw that a man had come in to her, for she had never seen one before; but the King's son began speaking so kindly to her, and told how her singing had entered into his heart, so that he could have no peace until he had seen her herself. Then Rapunzel forgot her terror, and when he asked her to take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and beautiful, she thought to herself,

"I certainly like him much better than old mother Gothel," and she put her hand into his hand, saying,

"I would willingly go with thee, but I do not know how I shall get out. When thou comest, bring each time a silken rope, and I will make a ladder, and when it is quite ready I will get down by it out of the tower, and thou shalt take me away on thy horse." They agreed that he should come to her every evening, as the old woman came in the day-time. So the witch knew nothing of all this until once Rapunzel said to her unwittingly,

"Mother Gothel, how is it that you climb up here so slowly, and the King's son is with me in a moment?"

"O wicked child," cried the witch, "what is this I hear! I thought I had hidden thee from all the world, and thou hast betrayed me!"

In her anger she seized Rapunzel by her beautiful hair, struck her several times with her left hand, and then grasping a pair of shears in her right — snip, snap — the beautiful locks lay on the ground. And she was so hard-hearted that she took Rapunzel and put her in a waste and desert place, where she lived in great woe and misery.

The same day on which she took Rapunzel away she went back to the tower in the evening and made fast the severed locks of hair to the window-hasp, and the King's son came and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel! let down your hair."

Then she let the hair down, and the King's son climbed up, but instead of his dearest Rapunzel he found the witch looking at him with wicked glittering eyes.

"Aha!" cried she, mocking him, "you came for your darling, but the sweet bird sits no longer in the nest, and sings no more; the cat has got her, and will scratch out your eyes as well! Rapunzel is lost to you; you will see her no more."

The King's son was beside himself with grief, and in his agony he sprang from the tower: he escaped with life, but the thorns on which he fell put out his eyes. Then he wandered blind through the wood, eating nothing but roots and berries, and doing nothing but lament and weep for the loss of his dearest wife.

So he wandered several years in misery until at last he came to the desert place where Rapunzel lived with her twin-children that she had borne, a boy and a girl. At first he heard a voice that he thought he knew, and when he reached the place from which it seemed to come Rapunzel knew him, and fell on his neck and wept. And when her tears touched his eyes they became clear again, and he could see with them as well as ever.

Then he took her to his kingdom, where he was received with great joy, and there they lived long and happily.

THE THREE LITTLE MEN IN THE WOOD

THERE was once a man, whose wife was dead, and a woman, whose husband was dead; and the man had a daughter, and so had the woman. The girls were acquainted with each other, and used to play together sometimes in the woman’s house. So the woman said to the man’s daughter,

“Listen to me, tell your father that I will marry him, and then you shall have milk to wash in every morning and wine to drink, and my daughter shall have water to wash in and water to drink.”

The girl went home and told her father what the woman had said. The man said,

“What shall I do! Marriage is a joy, and also a torment.”

At last, as he could come to no conclusion, he took off his boot, and said to his daughter,

“Take this boot, it has a hole in the sole; go up with it into the loft, hang it on the big nail and pour water in it. If it holds water, I will once more take to me a wife; if it lets out the water, so will I not.”

The girl did as she was told, but the water held the hole together, and the boot was full up to the top. So she went and told her father how it was. And he went up to see with his own eyes, and as there was no mistake about it, he went to the widow and courted her, and then they had the wedding.

The next morning, when the two girls awoke, there stood by the bedside of the man’s daughter milk to wash in and wine to drink, and by the bedside of the woman’s daughter there stood water to wash in and water to drink.

On the second morning there stood water to wash in and water to drink for both of them alike. On the third morning there stood water to wash in and water to drink for the man’s daughter, and milk to wash in and wine to drink for the woman’s daughter; and so it remained ever after. The woman hated her step-daughter, and never knew how to treat her badly enough from one day to another. And she was jealous because her step-daughter was pleasant and pretty, and her real daughter was ugly and hateful.

Once in winter, when it was freezing hard, and snow lay deep on hill and valley, the woman made a frock out of paper, called her step-daughter, and said,

“Here, put on this frock, go out into the wood and fetch me a basket of strawberries; I have a great wish for some.”

“Oh dear,” said the girl, “there are no strawberries to be found in winter; the ground is frozen, and the snow covers everything. And why should I go in the paper frock? it is so cold out of doors that one’s breath is frozen; the wind will blow through it, and the thorns will tear it off my back!”

“How dare you contradict me!” cried the step-mother, “be off, and don’t let me see you again till you bring me a basket of strawberries.”

Then she gave her a little piece of hard bread, and said,

“That will do for you to eat during the day,” and she thought to herself, “She is sure to be frozen or starved to death out of doors, and I shall never set eyes on her again."

So the girl went obediently, put on the paper frock, and started out with the basket. The snow was lying everywhere, far and wide, and there was not a blade of green to be seen. When she entered the wood she saw a little house with three little men peeping out of it. She wished them good day, and knocked modestly at the door. They called her in, and she came into the room and sat down by the side of the oven to warm herself and eat her breakfast. The little men said,

"Give us some of it."

"Willingly," answered she, breaking her little piece of bread in two, and giving them half. They then said,

"What are you doing here in the wood this winter time in your little thin frock?"

"Oh," answered she, "I have to get a basket of strawberries, and I must not go home without them."

When she had eaten her bread they gave her a broom, and told her to go and sweep the snow away from the back door. When she had gone outside to do it the little men talked among themselves about what they should do for her, as she was so good and pretty, and had shared her bread with them. Then the first one said,

"She shall grow prettier every day." The second said,

"Each time she speaks a piece of gold shall fall from her mouth." The third said,

"A king shall come and take her for his wife."

In the meanwhile the girl was doing as the little men had told her, and had cleared the snow from the back of the little house, and what do you suppose she found? fine ripe strawberries, showing dark red against the snow! Then she joyfully filled her little basket full, thanked the little men, shook hands with them all, and ran home in haste to bring her step-mother the thing she longed for. As she went in and said, "Good evening," a piece of gold fell from her mouth at once. Then she related all that had happened to her in the wood, and at each word that she spoke gold pieces fell out of her mouth, so that soon they were scattered all over the room.

"Just look at her pride and conceit!" cried the step-sister, "throwing money about in this way!" but in her heart she was jealous because of it, and wanted to go too into the wood to fetch strawberries. But the mother said,

"No, my dear little daughter, it is too cold, you will be frozen to death."

But she left her no peace, so at last the mother gave in, got her a splendid fur coat to put on, and gave her bread and butter and cakes to eat on the way.

The girl went into the wood and walked straight up to the little house. The three little men peeped out again, but she gave them no greeting, and without looking round or taking any notice of them she came stumping into the room, sat herself down by the oven, and began to eat her bread and butter and cakes.

"Give us some of that," cried the little men, but she answered,

"I've not enough for myself; how can I give away any?"

Now when she had done with her eating, they said,

"Here is a broom, go and sweep all clean by the back door."

"Oh, go and do it yourselves," answered she; "I am not your housemaid."

But when she saw that they were not going to give her anything, she went out to the door. Then the three little men said among themselves,

"What shall we do to her, because she is so unpleasant, and has such a wicked jealous heart, grudging everybody everything?" The first said,

"She shall grow uglier every day." The second said,

"Each time she speaks a toad shall jump out of her mouth at every word." The third said,

"She shall die a miserable death."

The girl was looking outside for strawberries, but as she found none, she went sulkily home. And directly she opened her mouth to tell her mother what had happened to her in the wood a toad sprang out of her mouth at each word, so that every one who came near her was quite disgusted.

The step-mother became more and more set against the man's daughter, whose beauty increased day by day, and her only thought was how to do her some injury. So at last she took a kettle, set it on the fire, and scalded some yarn in it. When it was ready she hung it over the poor girl's shoulder, and gave her an axe, and she was to go to the frozen river and break a hole in the ice, and there to rinse the yarn. She obeyed, and went and hewed a hole in the ice, and as she was about it there came by a splendid coach, in which the King sat. The coach stood still, and the King said,

"My child, who art thou, and what art thou doing there?" She answered,

"I am a poor girl, and am rinsing yarn."

Then the King felt pity for her, and as he saw that she was very beautiful, he said,

"Will you go with me?"

"Oh yes, with all my heart," answered she; and she felt very glad to be out of the way of her mother and sister.

So she stepped into the coach and went off with the King; and when they reached his castle the wedding was celebrated with great splendour, as the little men in the wood had foretold.

At the end of a year the young Queen had a son; and as the step-mother had heard of her great good fortune she came with her daughter to the castle, as if merely to pay the King and Queen a visit. One day, when the King had gone out, and when nobody was about, the bad woman took the Queen by the head, and her daughter took her by the heels, and dragged her out of bed, and threw her out of the window into a stream that flowed beneath it. Then the old woman put her ugly daughter in the bed, and covered her up to her chin. When the King came back, and wanted to talk to his wife a little, the old woman cried,

"Stop, stop! she is sleeping nicely; she must be kept quiet to-day."

The King dreamt of nothing wrong, and came again the next morning; and as he spoke to his wife, and she answered him, there jumped each time out of her mouth a toad instead of the piece of gold as heretofore. Then he asked why that should be, and the old woman said it was because of her great weakness, and that it would pass away.

But in the night, the boy who slept in the kitchen saw how something in the likeness of a duck swam up the gutter, and said, —

“My King, what mak’st thou?
Sleepest thou, or wak’st thou?”

But there was no answer. Then it said,

“What cheer my two guests keep they?”

So the kitchen-boy answered,

“In bed all soundly sleep they.”

It asked again,

“And my little baby, how does *he*?”

And he answered,

“He sleeps in his cradle quietly.”

Then the duck took the shape of the Queen and went to the child, and gave him to drink, smoothed his little bed, covered him up again, and then, in the likeness of a duck, swam back down the gutter. In this way she came two nights, and on the third she said to the kitchen-boy,

“Go and tell the King to brandish his sword three times over me on the threshold!”

Then the kitchen-boy ran and told the King, and he came with his sword and brandished it three times over the duck, and at the third time his wife stood before him living, and hearty, and sound, as she had been before.

The King was greatly rejoiced, but he hid the Queen in a chamber until the Sunday came when the child was to be baptized. And after the baptism he said,

“What does that person deserve who drags another out of bed and throws him in the water?”

And the old woman answered,

“No better than to be put into a cask with iron nails in it, and to be rolled in it down the hill into the water.”

Then said the King,

“You have spoken your own sentence;” and he ordered a cask to be fetched, and the old woman and her daughter were put into it, and the top hammered down, and the cask was rolled down the hill into the river.

THE THREE SPINSTERS

THERE was once a girl who was lazy and would not spin, and her mother could not persuade her to it, do what she would. At last the mother became angry and out of patience, and gave her a good beating, so that she cried out loudly. At that moment the Queen was going by; as she heard the crying, she stopped; and, going into the house, she asked the mother why she was beating her daughter, so that every one outside in the street could hear her cries.

The woman was ashamed to tell of her daughter's laziness, so she said,

"I cannot stop her from spinning; she is for ever at it, and I am poor and cannot furnish her with flax enough."

Then the Queen answered,

"I like nothing better than the sound of the spinning-wheel, and always feel happy when I hear its humming; let me take your daughter with me to the castle — I have plenty of flax, she shall spin there to her heart's content."

The mother was only too glad of the offer, and the Queen took the girl with her. When they reached the castle the Queen showed her three rooms which were filled with the finest flax as full as they could hold.

"Now you can spin me this flax," said she, "and when you can show it me all done you shall have my eldest son for bridegroom; you may be poor, but I make nothing of that — your industry is dowry enough."

The girl was inwardly terrified, for she could not have spun the flax, even if she were to live to be a hundred years old, and were to sit spinning every day of her life from morning to evening. And when she found herself alone she began to weep, and sat so for three days without putting her hand to it. On the third day the Queen came, and when she saw that nothing had been done of the spinning she was much surprised; but the girl excused herself by saying that she had not been able to begin because of the distress she was in at leaving her home and her mother. The excuse contented the Queen, who said, however, as she went away,

"To-morrow you must begin to work."

When the girl found herself alone again she could not tell how to help herself or what to do, and in her perplexity she went and gazed out of the window. There she saw three women passing by, and the first of them had a broad flat foot, the second had a big under-lip that hung down over her chin, and the third had a remarkably broad thumb. They all of them stopped in front of the window, and called out to know what it was that the girl wanted. She told them all her need, and they promised her their help, and said,

"Then will you invite us to your wedding, and not be ashamed of us, and call us your cousins, and let us sit at your table; if you will promise this, we will finish off your flax-spinning in a very short time."

"With all my heart," answered the girl; "only come in now, and begin at once."

Then these same women came in, and she cleared a space in the first room for them to sit and carry on their spinning. The first one drew out the thread and moved the treddle that turned the wheel, the second moistened the thread, the third twisted it, and rapped with her finger on the table, and as often as she rapped a heap of yarn fell to the ground, and it was most beautifully spun. But the girl hid the three spinsters out of the Queen's sight, and only showed her, as often as she came, the heaps of well-spun yarn; and there was no end to the praises she received. When the first room was empty they went on to the second, and then to the third, so that at last all was finished. Then the three women took their leave, saying to the girl,

"Do not forget what you have promised, and it will be all the better for you."

So when the girl took the Queen and showed her the empty rooms, and the great heaps of yarn, the wedding was at once arranged, and the bridegroom rejoiced that he should have so clever and diligent a wife, and praised her exceedingly.

"I have three cousins," said the girl, "and as they have shown me a great deal of kindness, I would not wish to forget them in my good fortune; may I be allowed to invite them to the wedding, and to ask them to sit at the table with us?"

The Queen and the bridegroom said at once,

"There is no reason against it."

So when the feast began in came the three spinsters in strange guise, and the bride said,

"Dear cousins, you are welcome."

"Oh," said the bridegroom, "how come you to have such dreadfully ugly relations?"

And then he went up to the first spinster and said,

"How is it that you have such a broad flat foot?"

"With treading," answered she, "with treading."

Then he went up to the second and said,

"How is it that you have such a great hanging lip?"

"With licking," answered she, "with licking."

Then he asked the third,

"How is it that you have such a broad thumb?"

"With twisting thread," answered she, "with twisting thread."

Then the bridegroom said that from that time forward his beautiful bride should never touch a spinning-wheel.

And so she escaped that tiresome flax-spinning.

HANSEL AND GRETHEL

NEAR a great forest there lived a poor woodcutter and his wife, and his two children; the boy’s name was Hansel and the girl’s Grethel. They had very little to bite or to sup, and once, when there was great dearth in the land, the man could not even gain the daily bread. As he lay in bed one night thinking of this, and turning and tossing, he sighed heavily, and said to his wife,

“What will become of us? we cannot even feed our children; there is nothing left for ourselves.”

“I will tell you what, husband,” answered the wife; “we will take the children early in the morning into the forest, where it is thickest; we will make them a fire, and we will give each of them a piece of bread, then we will go to our work and leave them alone; they will never find the way home again, and we shall be quit of them.”

“No, wife,” said the man, “I cannot do that; I cannot find in my heart to take my children into the forest and to leave them there alone; the wild animals would soon come and devour them.”

“O you fool,” said she, “then we will all four starve; you had better get the coffins ready,” — and she left him no peace until he consented.

“But I really pity the poor children,” said the man.

The two children had not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their step-mother had said to their father. Grethel wept bitterly, and said to Hansel,

“It is all over with us.”

“Do be quiet, Grethel,” said Hansel, “and do not fret; I will manage something.” And when the parents had gone to sleep he got up, put on his little coat, opened the back door, and slipped out. The moon was shining brightly, and the white flints that lay in front of the house glistened like pieces of silver. Hansel stooped and filled the little pocket of his coat as full as it would hold. Then he went back again, and said to Grethel,

“Be easy, dear little sister, and go to sleep quietly; God will not forsake us,” and laid himself down again in his bed.

When the day was breaking, and before the sun had risen, the wife came and awakened the two children, saying,

“Get up, you lazy bones; we are going into the forest to cut wood.”

Then she gave each of them a piece of bread, and said,

“That is for dinner, and you must not eat it before then, for you will get no more.”

Grethel carried the bread under her apron, for Hansel had his pockets full of the flints. Then they set off all together on their way to the forest. When they had gone a little way Hansel stood still and looked back towards the house, and this he did again and again, till his father said to him,

“Hansel, what are you looking at? take care not to forget your legs.”

“O father,” said Hansel, “I am looking at my little white kitten, who is sitting up on the roof to bid me good-bye.”

“You young fool,” said the woman, “that is not your kitten, but the sunshine on the chimney-pot.”

Of course Hansel had not been looking at his kitten, but had been taking every now and then a flint from his pocket and dropping it on the road.

When they reached the middle of the forest the father told the children to collect wood to make a fire to keep them warm; and Hansel and Grethel gathered brushwood enough for a little mountain; and it was set on fire, and when the flame was burning quite high the wife said,

“Now lie down by the fire and rest yourselves, you children, and we will go and cut wood; and when we are ready we will come and fetch you.”

So Hansel and Grethel sat by the fire, and at noon they each ate their pieces of bread. They thought their father was in the wood all the time, as they seemed to hear the strokes of the axe: but really it was only a dry branch hanging to a withered tree that the wind moved to and fro. So when they had stayed there a long time their eyelids closed with weariness, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they woke it was night, and Grethel began to cry, and said,

“How shall we ever get out of this wood?” But Hansel comforted her, saying,

“Wait a little while longer, until the moon rises, and then we can easily find the way home.”

And when the full moon got up Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the way where the flint stones shone like silver, and showed them the road. They walked on the whole night through, and at the break of day they came to their father’s house. They knocked at the door, and when the wife opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Grethel she said,

“You naughty children, why did you sleep so long in the wood? we thought you were never coming home again!”

But the father was glad, for it had gone to his heart to leave them both in the woods alone.

Not very long after that there was again great scarcity in those parts, and the children heard their mother say at night in bed to their father,

“Everything is finished up; we have only half a loaf, and after that the tale comes to an end. The children must be off; we will take them farther into the wood this time, so that they shall not be able to find the way back again; there is no other way to manage.”

The man felt sad at heart, and he thought,

“It would better to share one’s last morsel with one’s children.”

But the wife would listen to nothing that he said, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B too, and when a man has given in once he has to do it a second time.

But the children were not asleep, and had heard all the talk. When the parents had gone to sleep Hansel got up to go out and get more flint stones, as he did before, but the wife had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out; but he comforted his little sister, and said,

“Don’t cry, Grethel, and go to sleep quietly, and God will help us.”

Early the next morning the wife came and pulled the children out of bed. She gave them each a little piece of bread — less than before; and on the way to the wood Hansel crumbled the bread in his pocket, and often stopped to throw a crumb on the ground.

“Hansel, what are you stopping behind and staring for?” said the father.

“I am looking at my little pigeon sitting on the roof, to say good-bye to me,” answered Hansel.

“You fool,” said the wife, “that is no pigeon, but the morning sun shining on the chimney pots.”

Hansel went on as before, and strewed bread crumbs all along the road.

The woman led the children far into the wood, where they had never been before in all their lives. And again there was a large fire made, and the mother said,

“Sit still there, you children, and when you are tired you can go to sleep; we are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening, when we are ready to go home we will come and fetch you.”

So when noon came Grethel shared her bread with Hansel, who had strewed his along the road. Then they went to sleep, and the evening passed, and no one came for the poor children. When they awoke it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister, and said,

“Wait a little, Grethel, until the moon gets up, then we shall be able to see the way home by the crumbs of bread that I have scattered along it.”

So when the moon rose they got up, but they could find no crumbs of bread, for the birds of the woods and of the fields had come and picked them up. Hansel thought they might find the way all the same, but they could not. They went on all that night, and the next day from the morning until the evening, but they could not find the way out of the wood, and they were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but the few berries they could pick up. And when they were so tired that they could no longer drag themselves along, they lay down under a tree and fell asleep.

It was now the third morning since they had left their father’s house. They were always trying to get back to it, but instead of that they only found themselves farther in the wood, and if help had not soon come they would have been starved. About noon they saw a pretty snow-white bird sitting on a bough, and singing so sweetly that they stopped to listen. And when he had finished the bird spread his wings and flew before them, and they followed after him until they came to a little house, and the bird perched on the roof, and when they came nearer they saw that the house was built of bread, and roofed with cakes; and the window was of transparent sugar.

“We will have some of this,” said Hansel, “and make a fine meal. I will eat a piece of the roof, Grethel, and you can have some of the window — that will taste sweet.”

So Hansel reached up and broke off a bit of the roof, just to see how it tasted, and Grethel stood by the window and gnawed at it. Then they heard a thin voice call out from inside,

“Nibble, nibble, like a mouse,
Who is nibbling at my house?”

And the children answered,

“Never mind,
It is the wind.”

And they went on eating, never disturbing themselves. Hansel, who found that the roof tasted very nice, took down a great piece of it, and Grethel pulled out a large round window-pane, and sat her down and began upon it. Then the door opened, and an aged woman came out, leaning upon a crutch. Hansel and Grethel felt very frightened, and let fall what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said,

“Ah, my dear children, how come you here? you must come indoors and stay with me, you will be no trouble.”

So she took them each by the hand, and led them into her little house. And there they found a good meal laid out, of milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. After that she showed them two little white beds, and Hansel and Grethel laid themselves down on them, and thought they were in heaven.

The old woman, although her behaviour was so kind, was a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had built the little house on purpose to entice them. When they were once inside she used to kill them, cook them, and eat them, and then it was a feast-day with her. The witch’s eyes were red, and she could not see very far, but she had a keen scent, like the beasts, and knew very well when human creatures were near. When she knew that Hansel and Grethel were coming, she gave a spiteful laugh, and said triumphantly,

“I have them, and they shall not escape me!”

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she got up to look at them, and as they lay sleeping so peacefully with round rosy cheeks, she said to herself,

“What a fine feast I shall have!”

Then she grasped Hansel with her withered hand, and led him into a little stable, and shut him up behind a grating; and call and scream as he might, it was no good. Then she went back to Grethel and shook her, crying,

“Get up, lazy bones; fetch water, and cook something nice for your brother; he is outside in the stable, and must be fattened up. And when he is fat enough I will eat him.”

Grethel began to weep bitterly, but it was of no use, she had to do what the wicked witch bade her.

And so the best kind of victuals was cooked for poor Hansel, while Grethel got nothing but crab-shells. Each morning the old woman visited the little stable, and cried, “Hansel, stretch out your finger, that I may tell if you will soon be fat enough.”

Hansel, however, used to hold out a little bone, and the old woman, who had weak eyes, could not see what it was, and supposing it to be Hansel’s finger, wondered very much that it was not getting fatter. When four weeks had passed and Hansel seemed to remain so thin, she lost patience and could wait no longer.

“Now then, Grethel,” cried she to the little girl; “be quick and draw water; be Hansel fat or be he lean, to-morrow I must kill and cook him.”

Oh what a grief for the poor little sister to have to fetch water, and how the tears flowed down over her cheeks!

“Dear God, pray help us!” cried she; “if we had been devoured by wild beasts in the wood at least we should have died together.”

“Spare me your lamentations,” said the old woman; “they are of no avail.”

Early next morning Grethel had to get up, make the fire, and fill the kettle.

“First we will do the baking,” said the old woman; “I have heated the oven already, and kneaded the dough.”

She pushed poor Grethel towards the oven, out of which the flames were already shining.

“Creep in,” said the witch, “and see if it is properly hot, so that the bread may be baked.”

And Grethel once in, she meant to shut the door upon her and let her be baked, and then she would have eaten her. But Grethel perceived her intention, and said,

“I don’t know how to do it: how shall I get in?”

“Stupid goose,” said the old woman, “the opening is big enough, do you see? I could get in myself!” and she stooped down and put her head in the oven’s mouth. Then Grethel gave her a push, so that she went in farther, and she shut the iron door upon her, and put up the bar. Oh how frightfully she howled! but Grethel ran away, and left the wicked witch to burn miserably. Grethel went straight to Hansel, opened the stable-door, and cried,

“Hansel, we are free! the old witch is dead!”

Then out flew Hansel like a bird from its cage as soon as the door is opened. How rejoiced they both were! how they fell each on the other’s neck! and danced about, and kissed each other! And as they had nothing more to fear they went over all the old witch’s house, and in every corner there stood chests of pearls and precious stones.

“This is something better than flint stones,” said Hansel, as he filled his pockets, and Grethel, thinking she also would like to carry something home with her, filled her apron full.

“Now, away we go,” said Hansel;— “if we only can get out of the witch’s wood.”

When they had journeyed a few hours they came to a great piece of water.

“We can never get across this,” said Hansel, “I see no stepping-stones and no bridge.”

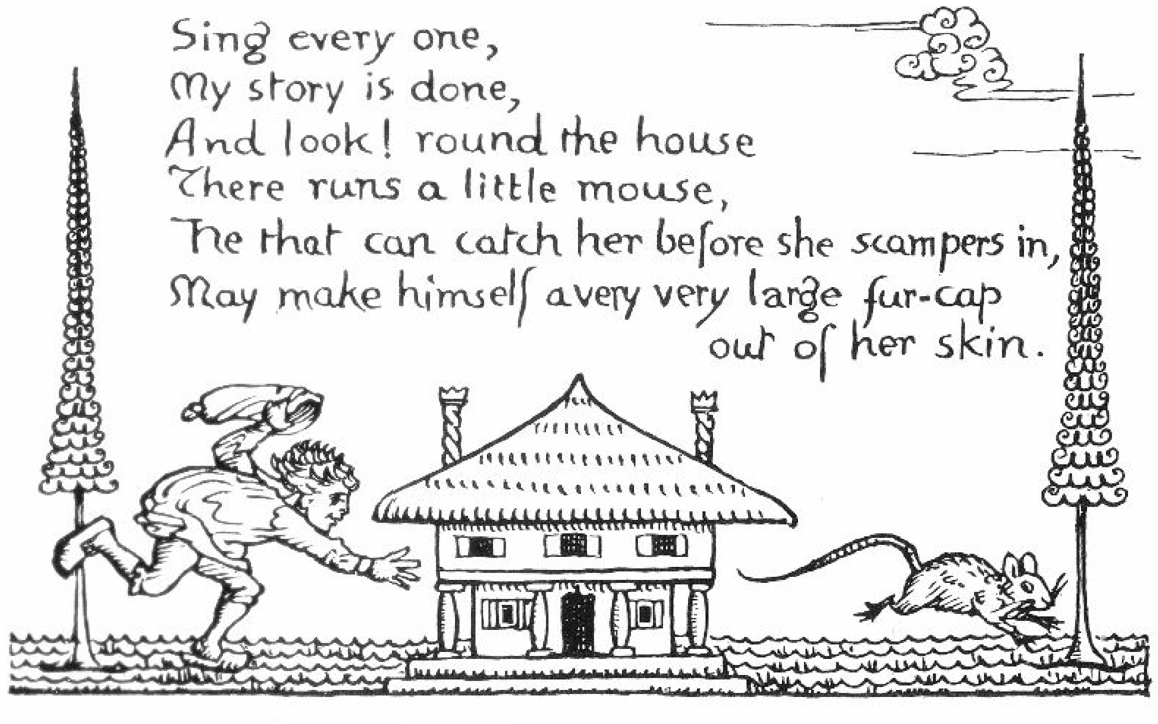
“And there is no boat either,” said Grethel; “but here comes a white duck; if I ask her she will help us over.” So she cried,

“Duck, duck, here we stand,
Hansel and Grethel, on the land,
Stepping-stones and bridge we lack,
Carry us over on your nice white back.”

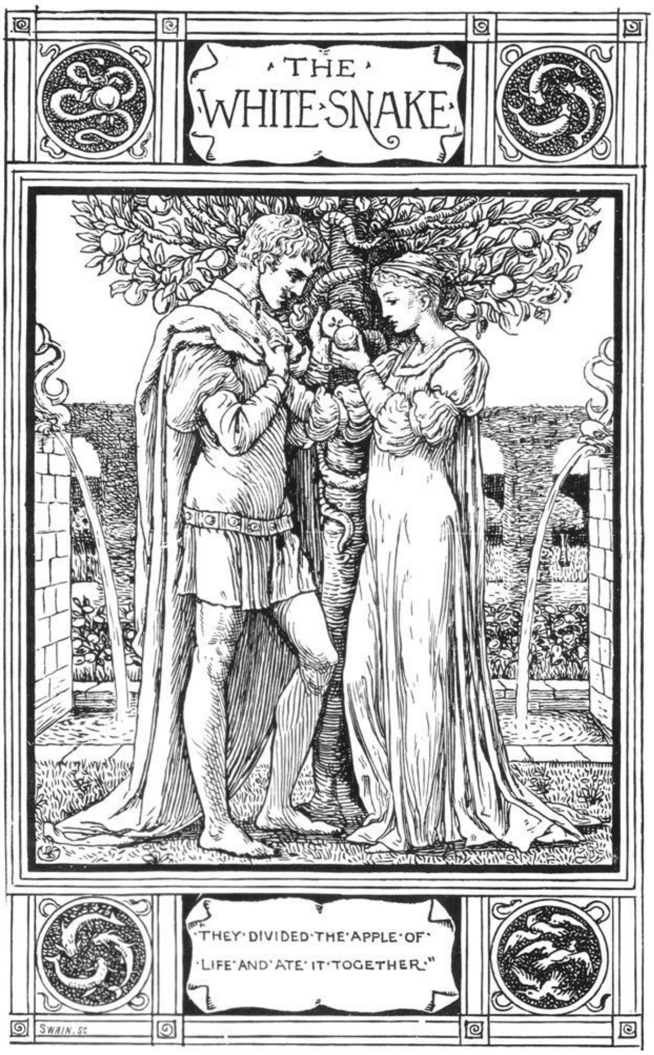
And the duck came accordingly, and Hansel got upon her and told his sister to come too.

“No,” answered Grethel, “that would be too hard upon the duck; we can go separately, one after the other.”

And that was how it was managed, and after that they went on happily, until they came to the wood, and the way grew more and more familiar, till at last they saw in the distance their father’s house. Then they ran till they came up to it, rushed in at the door, and fell on their father’s neck. The man had not had a quiet hour since he left his children in the wood; but the wife was dead. And when Grethel opened her apron the pearls and precious stones were scattered all over the room, and Hansel took one handful after another out of his pocket. Then was all care at an end, and they lived in great joy together.



Sing every one,
My story is done,
And look! round the house
There runs a little mouse,
He that can catch her before she scampers in,
May make himself a very very large fur-cap
out of her skin.


THE
WHITE·SNAKE
"THEY·DIVIDED·THE·APPLE·OF·
·LIFE·AND·ATE·IT·TOGETHER."
SWAIN, SC

THE WHITE SNAKE

A LONG time ago there lived a King whose wisdom was noised abroad in all the country. Nothing remained long unknown to him, and it was as if the knowledge of hidden things was brought to him in the air. However, he had one curious custom. Every day at dinner, after the table had been cleared and every one gone away, a trusty servant had to bring in one other dish. But it was covered up, and the servant himself did not know what was in it, and no one else knew, for the King waited until he was quite alone before he uncovered it. This had gone on a long time, but at last there came a day when the servant could restrain his curiosity no longer, but as he was carrying the dish away he took it into his own room. As soon as he had fastened the door securely, he lifted the cover, and there he saw a white snake lying on the dish. After seeing it he could not resist the desire to taste it, and so he cut off a small piece and put it in his mouth. As soon as it touched his tongue he heard outside his window a strange chorus of delicate voices. He went and listened, and found that it was the sparrows talking together, and telling each other all they had seen in the fields and woods. The virtue of the snake had given him power to understand the speech of animals.

Now it happened one day that the Queen lost her most splendid ring, and suspicion fell upon the trusty servant, who had the general superintendence, and he was accused of stealing it. The King summoned him to his presence, and after many reproaches told him that if by the next day he was not able to name the thief he should be considered guilty, and punished. It was in vain that he protested his innocence; he could get no better sentence. In his uneasiness and anxiety he went out into the courtyard, and began to consider what he could do in so great a necessity. There sat the ducks by the running water and rested themselves, and plumed themselves with their flat bills, and held a comfortable chat. The servant stayed where he was and listened to them. They told how they had waddled about all yesterday morning and found good food; and then one of them said pitifully,

“Something lies very heavy in my craw, — it is the ring that was lying under the Queen’s window; I swallowed it down in too great a hurry.”

Then the servant seized her by the neck, took her into the kitchen, and said to the cook,

“Kill this one, she is quite ready for cooking.”

“Yes,” said the cook, weighing it in her hand; “there will be no trouble of fattening this one — it has been ready ever so long.”

She then slit up its neck, and when it was opened the Queen’s ring was found in its craw. The servant could now clearly prove his innocence, and in order to make up for the injustice he had suffered the King permitted him to ask some favour for himself, and also promised him the place of greatest honour in the royal household.

But the servant refused it, and only asked for a horse and money for travelling, for he had a fancy to see the world, and look about him a little. So his request was granted, and he set out on his way; and one day he came to a pool of water, by which he saw three fishes who had got entangled in the rushes, and were panting for water. Although fishes are usually considered dumb creatures, he understood very well their lament that they were to perish so miserably; and as he had a compassionate heart he dismounted from his horse, and put the three fishes back again into the water. They quivered all over with joy, stretched out their heads, and called out to him,

"We will remember and reward thee, because thou hast delivered us." He rode on, and after a while he heard a small voice come up from the sand underneath his horse's feet. He listened, and understood how an ant-king was complaining,

"If only these men would keep off, with their great awkward beasts! here comes this stupid horse treading down my people with his hard hoofs!"

The man then turned his horse to the side-path, and the ant-king called out to him,

"We will remember and reward thee!"

The path led him through a wood, and there he saw a father-raven and mother-raven standing by their nest and throwing their young ones out.

"Off with you! young gallows-birds!" cried they; "we cannot stuff you any more; you are big enough to fend for yourselves!" The poor young ravens lay on the ground, fluttering, and beating the air with their pinions, and crying,

"We are poor helpless things, we cannot fend for ourselves, we cannot even fly! we can only die of hunger!"

Then the kind young man dismounted, killed his horse with his dagger, and left it to the young ravens for food. They came hopping up, feasted away at it, and cried,

"We will remember and reward thee!"

So now he had to use his own legs, and when he had gone a long way he came to a great town. There was much noise and thronging in the streets, and there came a man on a horse, who proclaimed,

"That the King's daughter seeks a husband, but he who wishes to marry her must perform a difficult task, and if he cannot carry it through successfully, he must lose his life."

Many had already tried, but had lost their lives, in vain. The young man, when he saw the King's daughter, was so dazzled by her great beauty, that he forgot all danger, went to the King and offered himself as a wooer.

Then he was led to the sea-side, and a gold ring was thrown into the water before his eyes. Then the King told him that he must fetch the ring up again from the bottom of the sea, saying,

"If you come back without it, you shall be put under the waves again and again until you are drowned."

Every one pitied the handsome young man, but they went, and left him alone by the sea. As he was standing on the shore and thinking of what he should do, there came three fishes swimming by, none other than those he had set free. The middle one had a mussel in his mouth, and he laid it on the strand at the young man's feet; and when he took it up and opened it there was the gold ring inside! Full of joy he carried it to the King, and expected the promised reward; but the King's daughter, proud of her high birth, despised him, and set him another task to perform. She went out into the garden, and strewed about over the grass ten sacks full of millet seed.

"By the time the sun rises in the morning you must have picked up all these," she said, "and not a grain must be wanting."

The young man sat down in the garden and considered how it was possible to do this task, but he could contrive nothing, and stayed there, feeling very sorrowful, and expecting to be led to death at break of day. But when the first beams of the sun fell on the garden he saw that the ten sacks were all filled, standing one by the other, and not even a grain was missing. The ant-king had arrived in the night with his thousands of ants, and the grateful creatures had picked up all the millet seed, and filled the sacks with great industry. The King's daughter came herself into the garden and saw with astonishment that the young man had performed all that had been given him to do. But she could not let her proud heart melt, but said,

"Although he has completed the two tasks, he shall not be my bridegroom unless he brings me an apple from the tree of life."

The young man did not know where the tree of life was to be found, but he set out and went on and on, as long as his legs could carry him, but he had no hope of finding it. When he had gone through three kingdoms he came one evening to a wood, and seated himself under a tree to go to sleep; but he heard a rustling in the boughs, and a golden apple fell into his hand. Immediately three ravens flew towards him, perched on his knee, and said,

"We are the three young ravens that you delivered from starving; when we grew big, and heard that you were seeking the golden apple, we flew over the sea to the end of the earth, where the tree of life stands, and we fetched the apple."

Full of joy the young man set off on his way home, and brought the golden apple to the King's beautiful daughter, who was without any further excuse.

So they divided the apple of life, and ate it together; and their hearts were filled with love, and they lived in undisturbed happiness to a great age.

THE STRAW, THE COAL, AND THE BEAN

THERE lived in a certain village a poor old woman who had collected a mess of beans, and was going to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and, in order to make it burn better, she put in a handful of straw. When the beans began to bubble in the pot, one of them fell out and lay, never noticed, near a straw which was already there; soon a red-hot coal jumped out of the fire and joined the pair. The straw began first, and said,

"Dear friends, how do you come here?" The coal answered,

"I jumped out of the fire by great good luck, or I should certainly have met with my death. I should have been burned to ashes." The bean said,

"I too have come out of it with a whole skin, but if the old woman had kept me in the pot I should have been cooked into a soft mass like my comrades."

"Nor should I have met with a better fate," said the straw; "the old woman has turned my brothers into fire and smoke, sixty of them she took up at once and deprived of life. Very luckily I managed to slip through her fingers."

"What had we better do now?" said the coal.

"I think," answered the bean, "that as we have been so lucky as to escape with our lives, we will join in good fellowship together, and, lest any more bad fortune should happen to us here, we will go abroad into foreign lands."

The proposal pleased the two others, and forthwith they started on their travels. Soon they came to a little brook, and as there was no stepping-stone, and no bridge, they could not tell how they were to get to the other side. The straw was struck with a good idea, and said,

"I will lay myself across, so that you can go over me as if I were a bridge!"

So the straw stretched himself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of an ardent nature, quickly trotted up to go over the new-made bridge. When, however, she reached the middle, and heard the water rushing past beneath her, she was struck with terror, and stopped, and could get no farther. So the straw began to get burnt, broke in two pieces, and fell in the brook, and the coal slipped down, hissing as she touched the water, and gave up the ghost. The bean, who had prudently remained behind on the bank, could not help laughing at the sight, and not being able to contain herself, went on laughing so excessively that she burst. And now would she certainly have been undone for ever, if a tailor on his travels had not by good luck stopped to rest himself by the brook. As he had a compassionate heart, he took out needle and thread and stitched her together again. The bean thanked him in the most elegant manner, but as he had sewn her up with black stitches, all beans since then have a black seam.

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE

THERE was once a fisherman and his wife who lived together in a hovel by the sea-shore, and the fisherman went out every day with his hook and line to catch fish, and he angled and angled.

One day he was sitting with his rod and looking into the clear water, and he sat and sat.

At last down went the line to the bottom of the water, and when he drew it up he found a great flounder on the hook. And the flounder said to him,

“Fisherman, listen to me; let me go, I am not a real fish but an enchanted prince. What good shall I be to you if you land me? I shall not taste well; so put me back into the water again, and let me swim away.”

“Well,” said the fisherman, “no need of so many words about the matter, as you can speak I had much rather let you swim away.”

Then he put him back into the clear water, and the flounder sank to the bottom, leaving a long streak of blood behind him. Then the fisherman got up and went home to his wife in their hovel.

“Well, husband,” said the wife, “have you caught nothing to-day?”

“No,” said the man— “that is, I did catch a flounder, but as he said he was an enchanted prince, I let him go again.”

“Then, did you wish for nothing?” said the wife.

“No,” said the man; “what should I wish for?”

“Oh dear!” said the wife; “and it is so dreadful always to live in this evil-smelling hovel; you might as well have wished for a little cottage; go again and call him; tell him we want a little cottage, I daresay he will give it us; go, and be quick.”

And when he went back, the sea was green and yellow, and not nearly so clear. So he stood and said,

“O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I’ve got,
For she wants what I do not.”

Then the flounder came swimming up, and said,

“Now then, what does she want?”

“Oh,” said the man, “you know when I caught you my wife says I ought to have wished for something. She does not want to live any longer in the hovel, and would rather have a cottage.

“Go home with you,” said the flounder, “she has it already.”

So the man went home, and found, instead of the hovel, a little cottage, and his wife was sitting on a bench before the door. And she took him by the hand, and said to him,

“Come in and see if this is not a great improvement.”

So they went in, and there was a little house-place and a beautiful little bedroom, a kitchen and larder, with all sorts of furniture, and iron and brass ware of the very best. And at the back was a little yard with fowls and ducks, and a little garden full of green vegetables and fruit.

"Look," said the wife, "is not that nice?"

"Yes," said the man, "if this can only last we shall be very well contented."

"We will see about that," said the wife. And after a meal they went to bed.

So all went well for a week or fortnight, when the wife said,

"Look here, husband, the cottage is really too confined, and the yard and garden are so small; I think the flounder had better get us a larger house; I should like very much to live in a large stone castle; so go to your fish and he will send us a castle."

"O my dear wife," said the man, "the cottage is good enough; what do we want a castle for?"

"We want one," said the wife; "go along with you; the flounder can give us one."

"Now, wife," said the man, "the flounder gave us the cottage; I do not like to go to him again, he may be angry."

"Go along," said the wife, "he might just as well give us it as not; do as I say!"

The man felt very reluctant and unwilling; and he said to himself,

"It is not the right thing to do;" nevertheless he went.

So when he came to the seaside, the water was purple and dark blue and grey and thick, and not green and yellow as before. And he stood and said,

"O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I've got,
For she wants what I do not."

"Now then, what does she want?" said the flounder.

"Oh," said the man, half frightened, "she wants to live in a large stone castle."

"Go home with you, she is already standing before the door," said the flounder.

Then the man went home, as he supposed, but when he got there, there stood in the place of the cottage a great castle of stone, and his wife was standing on the steps, about to go in; so she took him by the hand, and said,

"Let us enter."

With that he went in with her, and in the castle was a great hall with a marble pavement, and there were a great many servants, who led them through large doors, and the passages were decked with tapestry, and the rooms with golden chairs and tables, and crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling; and all the rooms had carpets. And the tables were covered with eatables and the best wine for any one who wanted them. And at the back of the house was a great stable-yard for horses and cattle, and carriages of the finest; besides, there was a splendid large garden, with the most beautiful flowers and fine fruit trees, and a pleasance full half a mile long, with deer and oxen and sheep, and everything that heart could wish for.

"There!" said the wife, "is not this beautiful?"

"Oh yes," said the man, "if it will only last we can live in this fine castle and be very well contented."

"We will see about that," said the wife, "in the meanwhile we will sleep upon it." With that they went to bed.

The next morning the wife was awake first, just at the break of day, and she looked out and saw from her bed the beautiful country lying all round. The man took no notice of it, so she poked him in the side with her elbow, and said,

"Husband, get up and just look out of the window. Look, just think if we could be king over all this country. Just go to your fish and tell him we should like to be king."

"Now, wife," said the man, "what should we be kings for? I don't want to be king."

"Well," said the wife, "if you don't want to be king, I will be king."

"Now, wife," said the man, "what do you want to be king for? I could not ask him such a thing."

"Why not?" said the wife, "you must go directly all the same; I must be king."

So the man went, very much put out that his wife should want to be king.

"It is not the right thing to do — not at all the right thing," thought the man. He did not at all want to go, and yet he went all the same.

And when he came to the sea the water was quite dark grey, and rushed far inland, and had an ill smell. And he stood and said,

"O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I've got,
For she wants what I do not."

"Now then, what does she want?" said the fish.

"Oh dear!" said the man, "she wants to be king."

"Go home with you, she is so already," said the fish.

So the man went back, and as he came to the palace he saw it was very much larger, and had great towers and splendid gateways; the herald stood before the door, and a number of soldiers with kettle-drums and trumpets.

And when he came inside everything was of marble and gold, and there were many curtains with great golden tassels. Then he went through the doors of the saloon to where the great throne-room was, and there was his wife sitting upon a throne of gold and diamonds, and she had a great golden crown on, and the sceptre in her hand was of pure gold and jewels, and on each side stood six pages in a row, each one a head shorter than the other. So the man went up to her and said,

"Well, wife, so now you are king!"

"Yes," said the wife, "now I am king."

So then he stood and looked at her, and when he had gazed at her for some time he said,

"Well, wife, this is fine for you to be king! now there is nothing more to wish for."

"O husband!" said the wife, seeming quite restless, "I am tired of this already. Go to your fish and tell him that now I am king I must be emperor."

"Now, wife," said the man, "what do you want to be emperor for?"

"Husband," said she, "go and tell the fish I want to be emperor."

"Oh dear!" said the man, "he could not do it — I cannot ask him such a thing. There is but one emperor at a time; the fish can't possibly make any one emperor — indeed he can't."

"Now, look here," said the wife, "I am king, and you are only my husband, so will you go at once? Go along! for if he was able to make me king he is able to make me emperor; and I will and must be emperor, so go along!"

So he was obliged to go; and as he went he felt very uncomfortable about it, and he thought to himself,

"It is not at all the right thing to do; to want to be emperor is really going too far; the flounder will soon be beginning to get tired of this."

With that he came to the sea, and the water was quite black and thick, and the foam flew, and the wind blew, and the man was terrified. But he stood and said,

"O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I've got,
For she wants what I do not."

"What is it now?" said the fish.

"Oh dear!" said the man, "my wife wants to be emperor."

"Go home with you," said the fish, "she is emperor already."

So the man went home, and found the castle adorned with polished marble and alabaster figures, and golden gates. The troops were being marshalled before the door, and they were blowing trumpets and beating drums and cymbals; and when he entered he saw barons and earls and dukes waiting about like servants; and the doors were of bright gold. And he saw his wife sitting upon a throne made of one entire piece of gold, and it was about two miles high; and she had a great golden crown on, which was about three yards high, set with brilliants and carbuncles; and in one hand she held the sceptre, and in the other the globe; and on both sides of her stood pages in two rows, all arranged according to their size, from the most enormous giant of two miles high to the tiniest dwarf of the size of my little finger; and before her stood earls and dukes in crowds. So the man went up to her and said,

“Well, wife, so now you are emperor.”

“Yes,” said she, “now I am emperor.”

Then he went and sat down and had a good look at her, and then he said,

“Well now, wife, there is nothing left to be, now you are emperor.”

“What are you talking about, husband?” said she; “I am emperor, and next I will be pope! so go and tell the fish so.”

“Oh dear!” said the man, “what is it that you don’t want? You can never become pope; there is but one pope in Christendom, and the fish can’t possibly do it.”

“Husband,” said she, “no more words about it; I must and will be pope; so go along to the fish.”

“Now, wife,” said the man, “how can I ask him such a thing? it is too bad — it is asking a little too much; and, besides, he could not do it.”

“What rubbish!” said the wife; “if he could make me emperor he can make me pope. Go along and ask him; I am emperor, and you are only my husband, so go you must.”

So he went, feeling very frightened, and he shivered and shook, and his knees trembled; and there arose a great wind, and the clouds flew by, and it grew very dark, and the sea rose mountains high, and the ships were tossed about, and the sky was partly blue in the middle, but at the sides very dark and red, as in a great tempest. And he felt very desponding, and stood trembling and said,

“O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I’ve got,
For she wants what I do not.”

“Well, what now?” said the fish.

“Oh dear!” said the man, “she wants to be pope.”

“Go home with you, she is pope already,” said the fish.

So he went home, and he found himself before a great church, with palaces all round. He had to make his way through a crowd of people; and when he got inside he found the place lighted up with thousands and thousands of lights; and his wife was clothed in a golden garment, and sat upon a very high throne, and had three golden crowns on, all in the greatest priestly pomp; and on both sides of her there stood two rows of lights of all sizes — from the size of the longest tower to the smallest rushlight, and all the emperors and kings were kneeling before her and kissing her foot.

“Well, wife,” said the man, and sat and stared at her, “so you are pope.”

“Yes,” said she, “now I am pope!”

And he went on gazing at her till he felt dazzled, as if he were sitting in the sun. And after a little time he said,

“Well, now, wife, what is there left to be, now you are pope?”

And she sat up very stiff and straight, and said nothing.

And he said again, “Well, wife, I hope you are contented at last with being pope; you can be nothing more.”

“We will see about that,” said the wife. With that they both went to bed; but she was as far as ever from being contented, and she could not get to sleep for thinking of what she should like to be next.

The husband, however, slept as fast as a top after his busy day; but the wife tossed and turned from side to side the whole night through, thinking all the while what she could be next, but nothing would occur to her; and when she saw the red dawn she slipped off the bed, and sat before the window to see the sun rise, and as it came up she said,

“Ah, I have it! what if I should make the sun and moon to rise — husband!” she cried, and stuck her elbow in his ribs, “wake up, and go to your fish, and tell him I want power over the sun and moon.”

The man was so fast asleep that when he started up he fell out of bed. Then he shook himself together, and opened his eyes and said,

“Oh, — wife, what did you say?”

“Husband,” said she, “if I cannot get the power of making the sun and moon rise when I want them, I shall never have another quiet hour. Go to the fish and tell him so.”

“O wife!” said the man, and fell on his knees to her, “the fish can really not do that for you. I grant you he could make you emperor and pope; do be contented with that, I beg of you.”

And she became wild with impatience, and screamed out,

“I can wait no longer, go at once!”

And so off he went as well as he could for fright. And a dreadful storm arose, so that he could hardly keep his feet; and the houses and trees were blown down, and the mountains trembled, and rocks fell in the sea; the sky was quite black, and it thundered and lightened; and the waves, crowned with foam, ran mountains high. So he cried out, without being able to hear his own words,

“O man, O man! — if man you be,
Or flounder, flounder, in the sea —
Such a tiresome wife I’ve got,
For she wants what I do not.”

“Well, what now?” said the flounder.

“Oh dear!” said the man, “she wants to order about the sun and moon.”

“Go home with you!” said the flounder, “you will find her in the old hovel.”

And there they are sitting to this very day.

THE GALLANT TAILOR

ONE summer morning a little tailor was sitting on his board near the window, and working cheerfully with all his might, when an old woman came down the street crying,

“Good jelly to sell! good jelly to sell!”

The cry sounded pleasant in the little tailor’s ears, so he put his head out of the window, and called out,

“Here, my good woman — come here, if you want a customer.”

So the poor woman climbed the steps with her heavy basket, and was obliged to unpack and display all her pots to the tailor. He looked at every one of them, and lifting all the lids, applied his nose to each, and said at last,

“The jelly seems pretty good; you may weigh me out four half ounces, or I don’t mind having a quarter of a pound.”

The woman, who had expected to find a good customer, gave him what he asked for, but went off angry and grumbling.

“This jelly is the very thing for me,” cried the little tailor; “it will give me strength and cunning;” and he took down the bread from the cupboard, cut a whole round of the loaf, and spread the jelly on it, laid it near him, and went on stitching more gallantly than ever. All the while the scent of the sweet jelly was spreading throughout the room, where there were quantities of flies, who were attracted by it and flew to partake.

“Now then, who asked you to come?” said the tailor, and drove the unbidden guests away. But the flies, not understanding his language, were not to be got rid of like that, and returned in larger numbers than before. Then the tailor, not being able to stand it any longer, took from his chimney-corner a ragged cloth, and saying,

“Now, I’ll let you have it!” beat it among them unmercifully. When he ceased, and counted the slain, he found seven lying dead before him.

“This is indeed somewhat,” he said, wondering at his own gallantry; “the whole town shall know this.”

So he hastened to cut out a belt, and he stitched it, and put on it in large capitals “Seven at one blow!”

“ — The town, did I say!” said the little tailor; “the whole world shall know it!” And his heart quivered with joy, like a lamb’s tail.

The tailor fastened the belt round him, and began to think of going out into the world, for his workshop seemed too small for his worship. So he looked about in all the house for something that it would be useful to take with him, but he found nothing but an old cheese, which he put in his pocket. Outside the door he noticed that a bird had got caught in the bushes, so he took that and put it in his pocket with the cheese. Then he set out gallantly on his way, and as he was light and active he felt no fatigue. The way led over a mountain, and when he reached the topmost peak he saw a terrible giant sitting there, and looking about him at his ease. The tailor went bravely up to him, called out to him, and said,

“Comrade, good day! there you sit looking over the wide world! I am on the way thither to seek my fortune: have you a fancy to go with me?”

The giant looked at the tailor contemptuously, and said,

“You little rascal! you miserable fellow!”

“That may be!” answered the little tailor, and undoing his coat he showed the giant his belt; “you can read there whether I am a man or not!”

The giant read: “Seven at one blow!” and thinking it meant men that the tailor had killed, felt at once more respect for the little fellow. But as he wanted to prove him, he took up a stone and squeezed it so hard that water came out of it.

“Now you can do that,” said the giant,— “that is, if you have the strength for it.”

“That’s not much,” said the little tailor, “I call that play,” and he put his hand in his pocket and took out the cheese and squeezed it, so that the whey ran out of it.

“Well,” said he, “what do you think of that?”

The giant did not know what to say to it, for he could not have believed it of the little man. Then the giant took up a stone and threw it so high that it was nearly out of sight.

“Now, little fellow, suppose you do that!”

“Well thrown,” said the tailor; “but the stone fell back to earth again, — I will throw you one that will never come back.” So he felt in his pocket, took out the bird, and threw it into the air. And the bird, when it found itself at liberty, took wing, flew off, and returned no more.

“What do you think of that, comrade?” asked the tailor.

“There is no doubt that you can throw,” said the giant; “but we will see if you can carry.”

He led the little tailor to a mighty oak-tree which had been felled, and was lying on the ground, and said,

“Now, if you are strong enough, help me to carry this tree out of the wood.”

“Willingly,” answered the little man; “you take the trunk on your shoulders, I will take the branches with all their foliage, that is much the most difficult.”

So the giant took the trunk on his shoulders, and the tailor seated himself on a branch, and the giant, who could not see what he was doing, had the whole tree to carry, and the little man on it as well. And the little man was very cheerful and merry, and whistled the tune: "*There were three tailors riding by*," as if carrying the tree was mere child's play. The giant, when he had struggled on under his heavy load a part of the way, was tired out, and cried,

"Look here, I must let go the tree!"

The tailor jumped off quickly, and taking hold of the tree with both arms, as if he were carrying it, said to the giant,

"You see you can't carry the tree though you are such a big fellow!"

They went on together a little farther, and presently they came to a cherry-tree, and the giant took hold of the topmost branches, where the ripest fruit hung, and pulling them downwards, gave them to the tailor to hold, bidding him eat. But the little tailor was much too weak to hold the tree, and as the giant let go, the tree sprang back, and the tailor was caught up into the air. And when he dropped down again without any damage, the giant said to him,

"How is this? haven't you strength enough to hold such a weak sprig as that?"

"It is not strength that is lacking," answered the little tailor; "how should it to one who has slain seven at one blow! I just jumped over the tree because the hunters are shooting down there in the bushes. You jump it too, if you can."

The giant made the attempt, and not being able to vault the tree, he remained hanging in the branches, so that once more the little tailor got the better of him. Then said the giant,

"As you are such a gallant fellow, suppose you come with me to our den, and stay the night."

The tailor was quite willing, and he followed him. When they reached the den there sat some other giants by the fire, and each had a roasted sheep in his hand, and was eating it. The little tailor looked round and thought,

"There is more elbow-room here than in my workshop."

And the giant showed him a bed, and told him he had better lie down upon it and go to sleep. The bed was, however, too big for the tailor, so he did not stay in it, but crept into a corner to sleep. As soon as it was midnight the giant got up, took a great staff of iron and beat the bed through with one stroke, and supposed he had made an end of that grasshopper of a tailor. Very early in the morning the giants went into the wood and forgot all about the little tailor, and when they saw him coming after them alive and merry, they were terribly frightened, and, thinking he was going to kill them, they ran away in all haste.

So the little tailor marched on, always following his nose. And after he had gone a great way he entered the courtyard belonging to a King's palace, and there he felt so overpowered with fatigue that he lay down and fell asleep. In the meanwhile came various people, who looked at him very curiously, and read on his belt, “Seven at one blow!”

“Oh!” said they, “why should this great lord come here in time of peace? what a mighty champion he must be.”

Then they went and told the King about him, and they thought that if war should break out what a worthy and useful man he would be, and that he ought not to be allowed to depart at any price. The King then summoned his council, and sent one of his courtiers to the little tailor to beg him, so soon as he should wake up, to consent to serve in the King’s army. So the messenger stood and waited at the sleeper’s side until his limbs began to stretch, and his eyes to open, and then he carried his answer back. And the answer was,

“That was the reason for which I came,” said the little tailor, “I am ready to enter the King’s service.”

So he was received into it very honourably, and a separate dwelling set apart for him.

But the rest of the soldiers were very much set against the little tailor, and they wished him a thousand miles away.

“What shall be done about it?” they said among themselves; “if we pick a quarrel and fight with him then seven of us will fall at each blow. That will be of no good to us.”

So they came to a resolution, and went all together to the King to ask for their discharge.

“We never intended,” said they, “to serve with a man who kills seven at a blow.”

The King felt sorry to lose all his faithful servants because of one man, and he wished that he had never seen him, and would willingly get rid of him if he might. But he did not dare to dismiss the little tailor for fear he should kill all the King’s people, and place himself upon the throne. He thought a long while about it, and at last made up his mind what to do. He sent for the little tailor, and told him that as he was so great a warrior he had a proposal to make to him. He told him that in a wood in his dominions dwelt two giants, who did great damage by robbery, murder, and fire, and that no man durst go near them for fear of his life. But that if the tailor should overcome and slay both these giants the King would give him his only daughter in marriage, and half his kingdom as dowry, and that a hundred horsemen should go with him to give him assistance.

“That would be something for a man like me!” thought the little tailor, “a beautiful princess and half a kingdom are not to be had every day,” and he said to the King,

“Oh yes, I can soon overcome the giants, and yet have no need of the hundred horsemen; he who can kill seven at one blow has no need to be afraid of two.”

So the little tailor set out, and the hunched horsemen followed him. When he came to the border of the wood he said to his escort,

“Stay here while I go to attack the giants.”

Then he sprang into the wood, and looked about him right and left. After a while he caught sight of the two giants; they were lying down under a tree asleep, and snoring so that all the branches shook. The little tailor, all alive, filled both his pockets with stones and climbed up into the tree, and made his way to an overhanging bough, so that he could seat himself just above the sleepers; and from there he let one stone after another fall on the chest of one of the giants. For a long time the giant was quite unaware of this, but at last he waked up and pushed his comrade, and said,

"What are you hitting me for?"

"You are dreaming," said the other, "I am not touching you." And they composed themselves again to sleep, and the tailor let fall a stone on the other giant.

"What can that be?" cried he, "what are you casting at me?"

"I am casting nothing at you," answered the first, grumbling.

They disputed about it for a while, but as they were tired, they gave it up at last, and their eyes closed once more. Then the little tailor began his game anew, picked out a heavier stone and threw it down with force upon the first giant's chest.

"This is too much!" cried he, and sprang up like a madman and struck his companion such a blow that the tree shook above them. The other paid him back with ready coin, and they fought with such fury that they tore up trees by their roots to use for weapons against each other, so that at last they both of them lay dead upon the ground. And now the little tailor got down.

"Another piece of luck!" said he,— "that the tree I was sitting in did not get torn up too, or else I should have had to jump like a squirrel from one tree to another."

Then he drew his sword and gave each of the giants a few hacks in the breast, and went back to the horsemen and said,

"The deed is done, I have made an end of both of them: but it went hard with me, in the struggle they rooted up trees to defend themselves, but it was of no use, they had to do with a man who can kill seven at one blow."

"Then are you not wounded?" asked the horsemen.

"Nothing of the sort!" answered the tailor, "I have not turned a hair."

The horsemen still would not believe it, and rode into the wood to see, and there they found the giants wallowing in their blood, and all about them lying the uprooted trees.

The little tailor then claimed the promised boon, but the King repented him of his offer, and he sought again how to rid himself of the hero.

"Before you can possess my daughter and the half of my kingdom," said he to the tailor, "you must perform another heroic act. In the wood lives a unicorn who does great damage; you must secure him."

"A unicorn does not strike more terror into me than two giants. Seven at one blow! — that is my way," was the tailor's answer.

So, taking a rope and an axe with him, he went out into the wood, and told those who were ordered to attend him to wait outside. He had not far to seek, the unicorn soon came out and sprang at him, as if he would make an end of him without delay. "Softly, softly," said he, "most haste, worst speed," and remained standing until the animal came quite near, then he slipped quietly behind a tree. The unicorn ran with all his might against the tree and stuck his horn so deep into the trunk that he could not get it out again, and so was taken.

"Now I have you," said the tailor, coming out from behind the tree, and, putting the rope round the unicorn's neck, he took the axe, set free the horn, and when all his party were assembled he led forth the animal and brought it to the King.

The King did not yet wish to give him the promised reward, and set him a third task to do. Before the wedding could take place the tailor was to secure a wild boar which had done a great deal of damage in the wood.

The huntsmen were to accompany him.

"All right," said the tailor, "this is child's play."

But he did not take the huntsmen into the wood, and they were all the better pleased, for the wild boar had many a time before received them in such a way that they had no fancy to disturb him. When the boar caught sight of the tailor he ran at him with foaming mouth and gleaming tusks to bear him to the ground, but the nimble hero rushed into a chapel which chanced to be near, and jumped quickly out of a window on the other side. The boar ran after him, and when he got inside the door shut after him, and there he was imprisoned, for the creature was too big and unwieldy to jump out of the window too. Then the little tailor called the huntsmen that they might see the prisoner with their own eyes; and then he betook himself to the king, who now, whether he liked it or not, was obliged to fulfil his promise, and give him his daughter and the half of his kingdom. But if he had known that the great warrior was only a little tailor he would have taken it still more to heart. So the wedding was celebrated with great splendour and little joy, and the tailor was made into a king.

One night the young queen heard her husband talking in his sleep and saying,

"Now boy, make me that waistcoat and patch me those breeches, or I will lay my yard measure about your shoulders!"

And so, as she perceived of what low birth her husband was, she went to her father the next morning and told him all, and begged him to set her free from a man who was nothing better than a tailor. The king bade her be comforted, saying,

"To-night leave your bedroom door open, my guard shall stand outside, and when he is asleep they shall come in and bind him and carry him off to a ship, and he shall be sent to the other side of the world."

So the wife felt consoled, but the king's water-bearer, who had been listening all the while, went to the little tailor and disclosed to him the whole plan.

"I shall put a stop to all this," said he.

At night he lay down as usual in bed, and when his wife thought that he was asleep, she got up, opened the door and lay down again. The little tailor, who only made believe to be asleep, began to murmur plainly, “Now, boy, make me that waistcoat and patch me those breeches, or I will lay my yard measure about your shoulders! I have slain seven at one blow, killed two giants, caught a unicorn, and taken a wild boar, and shall I be afraid of those who are standing outside my room door?”

And when they heard the tailor say this, a great fear seized them; they fled away as if they had been wild hares, and none of them would venture to attack him.

And so the little tailor all his lifetime remained a king.

ASCHENPUTTEL

SEVEN AT
ONE BLOW

THERE was once a rich man whose wife lay sick, and when she felt her end drawing near she called to her only daughter to come near her bed, and said,

"Dear child, be pious and good, and God will always take care of you, and I will look down upon you from heaven, and will be with you."

And then she closed her eyes and expired. The maiden went every day to her mother's grave and wept, and was always pious and good. When the winter came the snow covered the grave with a white covering, and when the sun came in the early spring and melted it away, the man took to himself another wife.

The new wife brought two daughters home with her, and they were beautiful and fair in appearance, but at heart were black and ugly. And then began very evil times for the poor step-daughter.

"Is the stupid creature to sit in the same room with us?" said they; "those who eat food must earn it. Out upon her for a kitchen-maid!"

They took away her pretty dresses, and put on her an old gray kirtle, and gave her wooden shoes to wear.

"Just look now at the proud princess, how she is decked out!" cried they laughing, and then they sent her into the kitchen. There she was obliged to do heavy work from morning to night, get up early in the morning, draw water, make the fires, cook, and wash. Besides that, the sisters did their utmost to torment her, — mocking her, and strewing peas and lentils among the ashes, and setting her to pick them up. In the evenings, when she was quite tired out with her hard day's work, she had no bed to lie on, but was obliged to rest on the hearth among the cinders. And as she always looked dusty and dirty, they named her Aschenputtel.

It happened one day that the father went to the fair, and he asked his two step-daughters what he should bring back for them.

"Fine clothes!" said one.

"Pearls and jewels!" said the other.

"But what will you have, Aschenputtel?" said he.

"The first twig, father, that strikes against your hat on the way home; that is what I should like you to bring me."

So he bought for the two step-daughters fine clothes, pearls, and jewels, and on his way back, as he rode through a green lane, a hazel-twig struck against his hat; and he broke it off and carried it home with him. And when he reached home he gave to the step-daughters what they had wished for, and to Aschenputtel he gave the hazel-twig. She thanked him, and went to her mother's grave, and planted this twig there, weeping so bitterly that the tears fell upon it and watered it, and it flourished and became a fine tree. Aschenputtel went to see it three times a day, and wept and prayed, and each time a white bird rose up from the tree, and if she uttered any wish the bird brought her whatever she had wished for.

Now if came to pass that the king ordained a festival that should last for three days, and to which all the beautiful young women of that country were bidden, so that the king's son might choose a bride from among them. When the two step-daughters heard that they too were bidden to appear, they felt very pleased, and they called Aschenputtel, and said,

"Comb our hair, brush our shoes, and make our buckles fast, we are going to the wedding feast at the king's castle."

Aschenputtel, when she heard this, could not help crying, for she too would have liked to go to the dance, and she begged her step-mother to allow her.

"What, you Aschenputtel!" said she, "in all your dust and dirt, you want to go to the festival! you that have no dress and no shoes! you want to dance!"

But as she persisted in asking, at last the step-mother said,

"I have strewed a dish-full of lentils in the ashes, and if you can pick them all up again in two hours you may go with us."

Then the maiden went to the back-door that led into the garden, and called out,

“O gentle doves, O turtle-doves,
And all the birds that be,
The lentils that in ashes lie
Come and pick up for me!
The good must be put in the dish,
The bad you may eat if you wish.”

Then there came to the kitchen-window two white doves, and after them some turtle-doves, and at last a crowd of all the birds under heaven, chirping and fluttering, and they alighted among the ashes; and the doves nodded with their heads, and began to pick, peck, pick, peck, and then all the others began to pick, peck, pick, peck, and put all the good grains into the dish. Before an hour was over all was done, and they flew away. Then the maiden brought the dish to her step-mother, feeling joyful, and thinking that now she should go to the feast; but the step-mother said,

“No, Aschenputtel, you have no proper clothes, and you do not know how to dance, and you would be laughed at!”

And when Aschenputtel cried for disappointment, she added,

“If you can pick two dishes full of lentils out of the ashes, nice and clean, you shall go with us,” thinking to herself, “for that is not possible.” When she had strewed two dishes full of lentils among the ashes the maiden went through the back-door into the garden, and cried,

“O gentle doves, O turtle-doves,
And all the birds that be,
The lentils that in ashes lie
Come and pick up for me!
The good must be put in the dish,
The bad you may eat if you wish.”

So there came to the kitchen-window two white doves, and then some turtle-doves, and at last a crowd of all the other birds under heaven, chirping and fluttering, and they alighted among the ashes, and the doves nodded with their heads and began to pick, peck, pick, peck, and then all the others began to pick, peck, pick, peck, and put all the good grains into the dish. And before half-an-hour was over it was all done, and they flew away. Then the maiden took the dishes to the step-mother, feeling joyful, and thinking that now she should go with them to the feast; but she said “All this is of no good to you; you cannot come with us, for you have no proper clothes, and cannot dance; you would put us to shame.”

Then she turned her back on poor Aschenputtel, and made haste to set out with her two proud daughters.

And as there was no one left in the house, Aschenputtel went to her mother’s grave, under the hazel bush, and cried,

"Little tree, little tree, shake over me,
That silver and gold may come down and cover me."

Then the bird threw down a dress of gold and silver, and a pair of slippers embroidered with silk and silver. And in all haste she put on the dress and went to the festival. But her step-mother and sisters did not know her, and thought she must be a foreign princess, she looked so beautiful in her golden dress. Of Aschenputtel they never thought at all, and supposed that she was sitting at home, and picking the lentils out of the ashes. The King's son came to meet her, and took her by the hand and danced with her, and he refused to stand up with any one else, so that he might not be obliged to let go her hand; and when any one came to claim it he answered,

"She is my partner."

And when the evening came she wanted to go home, but the prince said he would go with her to take care of her, for he wanted to see where the beautiful maiden lived. But she escaped him, and jumped up into the pigeon-house. Then the prince waited until the father came, and told him the strange maiden had jumped into the pigeon-house. The father thought to himself,

"It cannot surely be Aschenputtel," and called for axes and hatchets, and had the pigeon-house cut down, but there was no one in it. And when they entered the house there sat Aschenputtel in her dirty clothes among the cinders, and a little oil-lamp burnt dimly in the chimney; for Aschenputtel had been very quick, and had jumped out of the pigeon-house again, and had run to the hazel bush; and there she had taken off her beautiful dress and had laid it on the grave, and the bird had carried it away again, and then she had put on her little gray kirtle again, and had sat down in the kitchen among the cinders.

The next day, when the festival began anew, and the parents and step-sisters had gone to it, Aschenputtel went to the hazel bush and cried,

"Little tree, little tree, shake over me,
That silver and gold may come down and cover me."

Then the bird cast down a still more splendid dress than on the day before. And when she appeared in it among the guests every one was astonished at her beauty. The prince had been waiting until she came, and he took her hand and danced with her alone. And when any one else came to invite her he said,

"She is my partner."

And when the evening came she wanted to go home, and the prince followed her, for he wanted to see to what house she belonged; but she broke away from him, and ran into the garden at the back of the house. There stood a fine large tree, bearing splendid pears; she leapt as lightly as a squirrel among the branches, and the prince did not know what had become of her. So he waited until the father came, and then he told him that the strange maiden had rushed from him, and that he thought she had gone up into the pear-tree. The father thought to himself,

"It cannot surely be Aschenputtel," and called for an axe, and felled the tree, but there was no one in it. And when they went into the kitchen there sat Aschenputtel among the cinders, as usual, for she had got down the other side of the tree, and had taken back her beautiful clothes to the bird on the hazel bush, and had put on her old gray kirtle again.

On the third day, when the parents and the step-children had set off, Aschenputtel went again to her mother's grave, and said to the tree,

"Little tree, little tree, shake over me,
That silver and gold may come down and cover me."

Then the bird cast down a dress, the like of which had never been seen for splendour and brilliancy, and slippers that were of gold.

And when she appeared in this dress at the feast nobody knew what to say for wonderment. The prince danced with her alone, and if any one else asked her he answered,

"She is my partner."

And when it was evening Aschenputtel wanted to go home, and the prince was about to go with her, when she ran past him so quickly that he could not follow her. But he had laid a plan, and had caused all the steps to be spread with pitch, so that as she rushed down them the left shoe of the maiden remained sticking in it. The prince picked it up, and saw that it was of gold, and very small and slender. The next morning he went to the father and told him that none should be his bride save the one whose foot the golden shoe should fit. Then the two sisters were very glad, because they had pretty feet. The eldest went to her room to try on the shoe, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her great toe into it, for the shoe was too small; then her mother handed her a knife, and said,

"Cut the toe off, for when you are queen you will never have to go on foot." So the girl cut her toe off, squeezed her foot into the shoe, concealed the pain, and went down to the prince. Then he took her with him on his horse as his bride, and rode off. They had to pass by the grave, and there sat the two pigeons on the hazel bush, and cried,

"There they go, there they go!
There is blood on her shoe;
The shoe is too small,
— Not the right bride at all!"

Then the prince looked at her shoe, and saw the blood flowing. And he turned his horse round and took the false bride home again, saying she was not the right one, and that the other sister must try on the shoe. So she went into her room to do so, and got her toes comfortably in, but her heel was too large. Then her mother handed her the knife, saying, "Cut a piece off your heel; when you are queen you will never have to go on foot."

So the girl cut a piece off her heel, and thrust her foot into the shoe, concealed the pain, and went down to the prince, who took his bride before him on his horse and rode off. When they passed by the hazel bush the two pigeons sat there and cried,

“There they go, there they go!
There is blood on her shoe;
The shoe is too small,
— Not the right bride at all!”

Then the prince looked at her foot, and saw how the blood was flowing from the shoe, and staining the white stocking. And he turned his horse round and brought the false bride home again.

“This is not the right one,” said he, “have you no other daughter?”

“No,” said the man, “only my dead wife left behind her a little stunted Aschenputtel; it is impossible that she can be the bride.” But the King’s son ordered her to be sent for, but the mother said,

“Oh no! she is much too dirty, I could not let her be seen.”

But he would have her fetched, and so Aschenputtel had to appear.

First she washed her face and hands quite clean, and went in and curtseyed to the prince, who held out to her the golden shoe. Then she sat down on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe, and slipped it into the golden one, which fitted it perfectly. And when she stood up, and the prince looked in her face, he knew again the beautiful maiden that had danced with him, and he cried,

“This is the right bride!”

The step-mother and the two sisters were thunderstruck, and grew pale with anger; but he put Aschenputtel before him on his horse and rode off. And as they passed the hazel bush, the two white pigeons cried,

“There they go, there they go!
No blood on her shoe;
The shoe’s not too small,
The right bride is she after all.”

And when they had thus cried, they came flying after and perched on Aschenputtel’s shoulders, one on the right, the other on the left, and so remained.

And when her wedding with the prince was appointed to be held the false sisters came, hoping to curry favour, and to take part in the festivities. So as the bridal procession went to the church, the eldest walked on the right side and the younger on the left, and the pigeons picked out an eye of each of them. And as they returned the elder was on the left side and the younger on the right, and the pigeons picked out the other eye of each of them. And so they were condemned to go blind for the rest of their days because of their wickedness and falsehood.

THE MOUSE, THE BIRD, AND THE SAUSAGE

ONCE on a time, a mouse and a bird and a sausage lived and kept house together in perfect peace among themselves, and in great prosperity. It was the bird's business to fly to the forest every day and bring back wood. The mouse had to draw the water, make the fire, and set the table; and the sausage had to do the cooking. Nobody is content in this world: much will have more! One day the bird met another bird on the way, and told him of his excellent condition in life. But the other bird called him a poor simpleton to do so much work, while the two others led easy lives at home.

When the mouse had made up her fire and drawn water, she went to rest in her little room until it was time to lay the cloth. The sausage stayed by the saucepans, looked to it that the victuals were well cooked, and just before dinner-time he stirred the broth or the stew three or four times well round himself, so as to enrich and season and flavour it. Then the bird used to come home and lay down his load, and they sat down to table, and after a good meal they would go to bed and sleep their fill till the next morning. It really was a most satisfactory life.

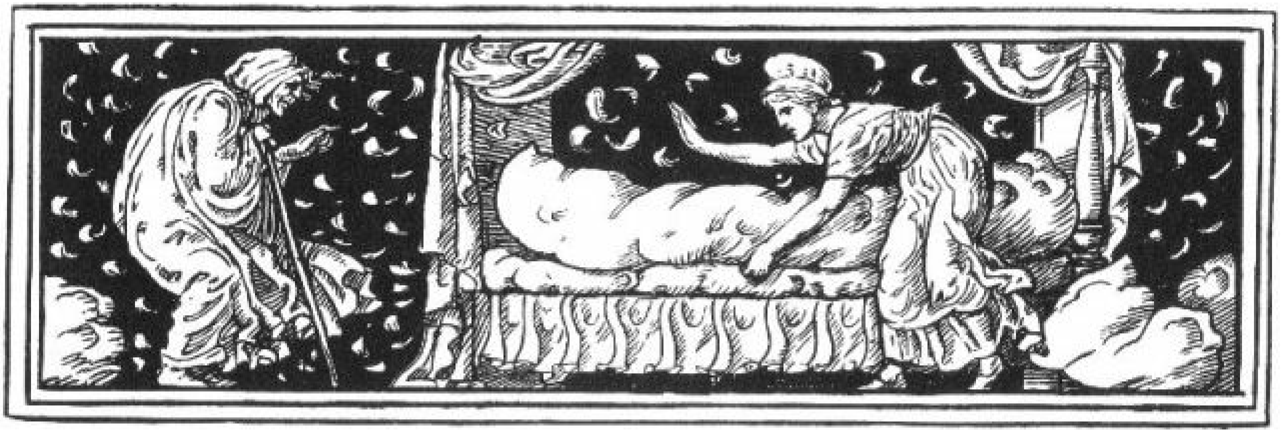
But the bird came to the resolution next day never again to fetch wood: he had, he said, been their slave long enough, now they must change about and make a new arrangement So in spite of all the mouse and the sausage could say, the bird was determined to have his own way. So they drew lots to settle it, and it fell so that the sausage was to fetch wood, the mouse was to cook, and the bird was to draw water.

Now see what happened. The sausage went away after wood, the bird made up the fire, and the mouse put on the pot, and they waited until the sausage should come home, bringing the wood for the next day. But the sausage was absent so long, that they thought something must have happened to him, and the bird went part of the way to see if he could see anything of him. Not far off he met with a dog on the road, who, looking upon the sausage as lawful prey, had picked him up, and made an end of him. The bird then lodged a complaint against the dog as an open and flagrant robber, but it was all no good, as the dog declared that he had found forged letters upon the sausage, so that he deserved to lose his life.

The bird then very sadly took up the wood and carried it home himself, and related to the mouse all he had seen and heard. They were both very troubled, but determined to look on the bright side of things, and still to remain together. And so the bird laid the cloth, and the mouse prepared the food, and finally got into the pot, as the sausage used to do, to stir and flavour the broth, but then she had to part with fur and skin, and lastly with life!

And when the bird came to dish up the dinner, there was no cook to be seen; and he turned over the heap of wood, and looked and looked, but the cook never appeared again. By accident the wood caught fire, and the bird hastened to fetch water to put it out, but he let fall the bucket in the well, and himself after it, and as he could not get out again, he was obliged to be drowned.

MOTHER HULDA



A WIDOW had two daughters; one was pretty and industrious, the other was ugly and lazy. And as the ugly one was her own daughter, she loved her much the best, and the pretty one was made to do all the work, and be the drudge of the house. Every day the poor girl had to sit by a well on the high road and spin until her fingers bled. Now it happened once that as the spindle was bloody, she dipped it into the well to wash it; but it slipped out of her hand and fell in. Then she began to cry, and ran to her step-mother, and told her of her misfortune; and her step-mother scolded her without mercy, and said in her rage,

"As you have let the spindle fall in, you must go and fetch it out again!"

Then the girl went back again to the well, not knowing what to do, and in the despair of her heart she jumped down into the well the same way the spindle had gone. After that she knew nothing; and when she came to herself she was in a beautiful meadow, and the sun was shining on the flowers that grew round her. And she walked on through the meadow until she came to a baker's oven that was full of bread; and the bread called out to her,

"Oh, take me out, take me out, or I shall burn; I am baked enough already!"

Then she drew near, and with the baker's peel she took out all the loaves one after the other. And she went farther on till she came to a tree weighed down with apples, and it called out to her,

"Oh, shake me, shake me, we apples are all of us ripe!"

Then she shook the tree until the apples fell like rain, and she shook until there were no more to fall; and when she had gathered them together in a heap, she went on farther. At last she came to a little house, and an old woman was peeping out of it, but she had such great teeth that the girl was terrified and about to run away, only the old woman called her back.

"What are you afraid of, my dear child? Come and live with me, and if you do the house-work well and orderly, things shall go well with you. You must take great pains to make my bed well, and shake it up thoroughly, so that the feathers fly about, and then in the world it snows, for I am Mother

Hulda."[A]

[Footnote A: In Hesse, when it snows, they say, "Mother Hulda is making her bed."]

As the old woman spoke so kindly, the girl took courage, consented, and went to her work. She did everything to the old woman's satisfaction, and shook the bed with such a will that the feathers flew about like snow-flakes: and so she led a good life, had never a cross word, but boiled and roast meat every day. When she had lived a long time with Mother Hulda, she began to feel sad, not knowing herself what ailed her; at last she began to think she must be home-sick; and although she was a thousand times better off than at home where she was, yet she had a great longing to go home. At last she said to her mistress,

"I am home-sick, and although I am very well off here, I cannot stay any longer; I must go back to my own home."

Mother Hulda answered,

"It pleases me well that you should wish to go home, and, as you have served me faithfully, I will undertake to send you there!"

She took her by the hand and led her to a large door standing open, and as she was passing through it there fell upon her a heavy shower of gold, and the gold hung all about her, so that she was covered with it.

"All this is yours, because you have been so industrious," said Mother Hulda; and, besides that, she returned to her her spindle, the very same that she had dropped in the well. And then the door was shut again, and the girl found herself back again in the world, not far from her mother's house; and as she passed through the yard the cock stood on the top of the well and cried,

"Cock-a-doodle doo!
Our golden girl has come home too!"

Then she went in to her mother, and as she had returned covered with gold she was well received.

So the girl related all her history, and what had happened to her, and when the mother heard how she came to have such great riches she began to wish that her ugly and idle daughter might have the same good fortune. So she sent her to sit by the well and spin; and in order to make her spindle bloody she put her hand into the thorn hedge. Then she threw the spindle into the well, and jumped in herself. She found herself, like her sister, in the beautiful meadow, and followed the same path, and when she came to the baker's oven, the bread cried out,

"Oh, take me out, take me out, or I shall burn; I am quite done already!"

But the lazy-bones answered,

"I have no desire to black my hands," and went on farther. Soon she came to the apple-tree, who called out,

"Oh, shake me, shake me, we apples are all of us ripe!"

But she answered,

"That is all very fine; suppose one of you should fall on my head," and went on farther. When she came to Mother Hulda's house she did not feel afraid, as she knew beforehand of her great teeth, and entered into her service at once. The first day she put her hand well to the work, and was industrious, and did everything Mother Hulda bade her, because of the gold she expected; but the second day she began to be idle, and the third day still more so, so that she would not get up in the morning. Neither did she make Mother Hulda's bed as it ought to have been made, and did not shake it for the feathers to fly about. So that Mother Hulda soon grew tired of her, and gave her warning, at which the lazy thing was well pleased, and thought that now the shower of gold was coming; so Mother Hulda led her to the door, and as she stood in the doorway, instead of the shower of gold a great kettle full of pitch was emptied over her.

"That is the reward for your service," said Mother Hulda, and shut the door. So the lazy girl came home all covered with pitch, and the cock on the top of the well seeing her, cried,

"Cock-a-doodle doo!
Our dirty girl has come home too!"

And the pitch remained sticking to her fast, and never, as long as she lived, could it be got off.

COCK
A
DOODLE
DOO!

LITTLE RED CAP

THERE was once a sweet little maid, much beloved by everybody, but most of all by her grandmother, who never knew how to make enough of her. Once she sent her a little cap of red velvet, and as it was very becoming to her, and she never wore anything else, people called her Little Red-cap. One day her mother said to her,

“Come, Little Red-cap, here are some cakes and a flask of wine for you to take to grandmother; she is weak and ill, and they will do her good. Make haste and start before it grows hot, and walk properly and nicely, and don’t run, or you might fall and break the flask of wine, and there would be none left for grandmother. And when you go into her room, don’t forget to say, Good morning, instead of staring about you.”

“I will be sure to take care,” said Little Red-cap to her mother, and gave her hand upon it. Now the grandmother lived away in the wood, half-an-hour’s walk from the village; and when Little Red-cap had reached the wood, she met the wolf; but as she did not know what a bad sort of animal he was, she did not feel frightened.

“Good day, Little Red-cap,” said he.

“Thank you kindly, Wolf,” answered she.

“Where are you going so early, Little Red-cap?”

“To my grandmother’s.”

“What are you carrying under your apron?”

“Cakes and wine; we baked yesterday; and my grandmother is very weak and ill, so they will do her good, and strengthen her.”

“Where does your grandmother live, Little Red-cap?”

“A quarter of an hour’s walk from here; her house stands beneath the three oak trees, and you may know it by the hazel bushes,” said Little Red-cap. The wolf thought to himself,

“That tender young thing would be a delicious morsel, and would taste better than the old one; I must manage somehow to get both of them.”

Then he walked by Little Red-cap a little while, and said,

“Little Red-cap, just look at the pretty flowers that are growing all round you, and I don’t think you are listening to the song of the birds; you are posting along just as if you were going to school, and it is so delightful out here in the wood.”

Little Red-cap glanced round her, and when she saw the sunbeams darting here and there through the trees, and lovely flowers everywhere, she thought to herself,

“If I were to take a fresh nosegay to my grandmother she would be very pleased, and it is so early in the day that I shall reach her in plenty of time;” and so she ran about in the wood, looking for flowers. And as she picked one she saw a still prettier one a little farther off, and so she went farther and farther into the wood. But the wolf went straight to the grandmother’s house and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" cried the grandmother.

"Little Red-cap," he answered, "and I have brought you some cake and wine. Please open the door."

"Lift the latch," cried the grandmother; "I am too feeble to get up."

So the wolf lifted the latch, and the door flew open, and he fell on the grandmother and ate her up without saying one word. Then he drew on her clothes, put on her cap, lay down in her bed, and drew the curtains.

Little Red-cap was all this time running about among the flowers, and when she had gathered as many as she could hold, she remembered her grandmother, and set off to go to her. She was surprised to find the door standing open, and when she came inside she felt very strange, and thought to herself,

"Oh dear, how uncomfortable I feel, and I was so glad this morning to go to my grandmother!"

And when she said, "Good morning," there was no answer. Then she went up to the bed and drew back the curtains; there lay the grandmother with her cap pulled over her eyes, so that she looked very odd.

"O grandmother, what large ears you have got!"

"The better to hear with."

"O grandmother, what great eyes you have got!"

"The better to see with."

"O grandmother, what large hands you have got!"

"The better to take hold of you with."

"But, grandmother, what a terrible large mouth you have got!"

"The better to devour you!" And no sooner had the wolf said it than he made one bound from the bed, and swallowed up poor Little Red-cap.

Then the wolf, having satisfied his hunger, lay down again in the bed, went to sleep, and began to snore loudly. The huntsman heard him as he was passing by the house, and thought,

"How the old woman snores — I had better see if there is anything the matter with her."

Then he went into the room, and walked up to the bed, and saw the wolf lying there.

"At last I find you, you old sinner!" said he; "I have been looking for you a long time." And he made up his mind that the wolf had swallowed the grandmother whole, and that she might yet be saved. So he did not fire, but took a pair of shears and began to slit up the wolf's body. When he made a few snips Little Red-cap appeared, and after a few more snips she jumped out and cried, "Oh dear, how frightened I have been! it is so dark inside the wolf." And then out came the old grandmother, still living and breathing. But Little Red-cap went and quickly fetched some large stones, with which she filled the wolf's body, so that when he waked up, and was going to rush away, the stones were so heavy that he sank down and fell dead.

They were all three very pleased. The huntsman took off the wolf's skin, and carried it home. The grandmother ate the cakes, and drank the wine, and held up her head again, and Little Red-cap said to herself that she would never more stray about in the wood alone, but would mind what her mother told her.

It must also be related how a few days afterwards, when Little Red-cap was again taking cakes to her grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and wanted to tempt her to leave the path; but she was on her guard, and went straight on her way, and told her grandmother how that the wolf had met her, and wished her good-day, but had looked so wicked about the eyes that she thought if it had not been on the high road he would have devoured her.

"Come," said the grandmother, "we will shut the door, so that he may not get in."

Soon after came the wolf knocking at the door, and calling out, "Open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red-cap, bringing you cakes." But they remained still, and did not open the door. After that the wolf slunk by the house, and got at last upon thereof to wait until Little Red-cap should return home in the evening; then he meant to spring down upon her, and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother discovered his plot. Now there stood before the house a great stone trough, and the grandmother said to the child, "Little Red-cap, I was boiling sausages yesterday, so take the bucket, and carry away the water they were boiled in, and pour it into the trough."

And Little Red-cap did so until the great trough was quite full. When the smell of the sausages reached the nose of the wolf he snuffed it up, and looked round, and stretched out his neck so far that he lost his balance and began to slip, and he slipped down off the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. Then Little Red-cap went cheerfully home, and came to no harm.

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

THERE was once an ass whose master had made him carry sacks to the mill for many a long year, but whose strength began at last to fail, so that each day as it came found him less capable of work. Then his master began to think of turning him out, but the ass, guessing that something was in the wind that boded him no good, ran away, taking the road to Bremen; for there he thought he might get an engagement as town musician. When he had gone a little way he found a hound lying by the side of the road panting, as if he had run a long way.

"Now, Holdfast, what are you so out of breath about?" said the ass.

"Oh dear!" said the dog, "now I am old, I get weaker every day, and can do no good in the hunt, so, as my master was going to have me killed, I have made my escape; but now, how am I to gain a living?"

"I will tell you what," said the ass, "I am going to Bremen to become town musician. You may as well go with me, and take up music too. I can play the lute, and you can beat the drum."

And the dog consented, and they walked on together. It was not long before they came to a cat sitting in the road, looking as dismal as three wet days.

"Now then, what is the matter with you, old shaver?" said the ass.

"I should like to know who would be cheerful when his neck is in danger?" answered the cat. "Now that I am old my teeth are getting blunt, and I would rather sit by the oven and purr than run about after mice, and my mistress wanted to drown me; so I took myself off; but good advice is scarce, and I do not know what is to become of me."

"Go with us to Bremen," said the ass, "and become town musician. You understand serenading."

The cat thought well of the idea, and went with them accordingly. After that the three travellers passed by a yard, and a cock was perched on the gate crowing with all his might.

"Your cries are enough to pierce bone and marrow," said the ass; "what is the matter?"

"I have foretold good weather for Lady-day, so that all the shirts may be washed and dried; and now on Sunday morning company is coming, and the mistress has told the cook that I must be made into soup, and this evening my neck is to be wrung, so that I am crowing with all my might while I can."

"You had much better go with us, Chanticleer," said the ass. "We are going to Bremen. At any rate that will be better than dying. You have a powerful voice, and when we are all performing together it will have a very good effect."

So the cock consented, and they went on all four together.

But Bremen was too far off to be reached in one day, and towards evening they came to a wood, where they determined to pass the night. The ass and the dog lay down under a large tree; the cat got up among the branches, and the cock flew up to the top, as that was the safest place for him. Before he went to sleep he looked all round him to the four points of the compass, and perceived in the distance a little light shining, and he called out to his companions that there must be a house not far off, as he could see a light, so the ass said,

"We had better get up and go there, for these are uncomfortable quarters." The dog began to fancy a few bones, not quite bare, would do him good. And they all set off in the direction of the light, and it grew larger and brighter, until at last it led them to a robber's house, all lighted up. The ass, being the biggest, went up to the window, and looked in.

"Well, what do you see?" asked the dog.

"What do I see?" answered the ass; "here is a table set out with splendid eatables and drinkables, and robbers sitting at it and making themselves very comfortable."

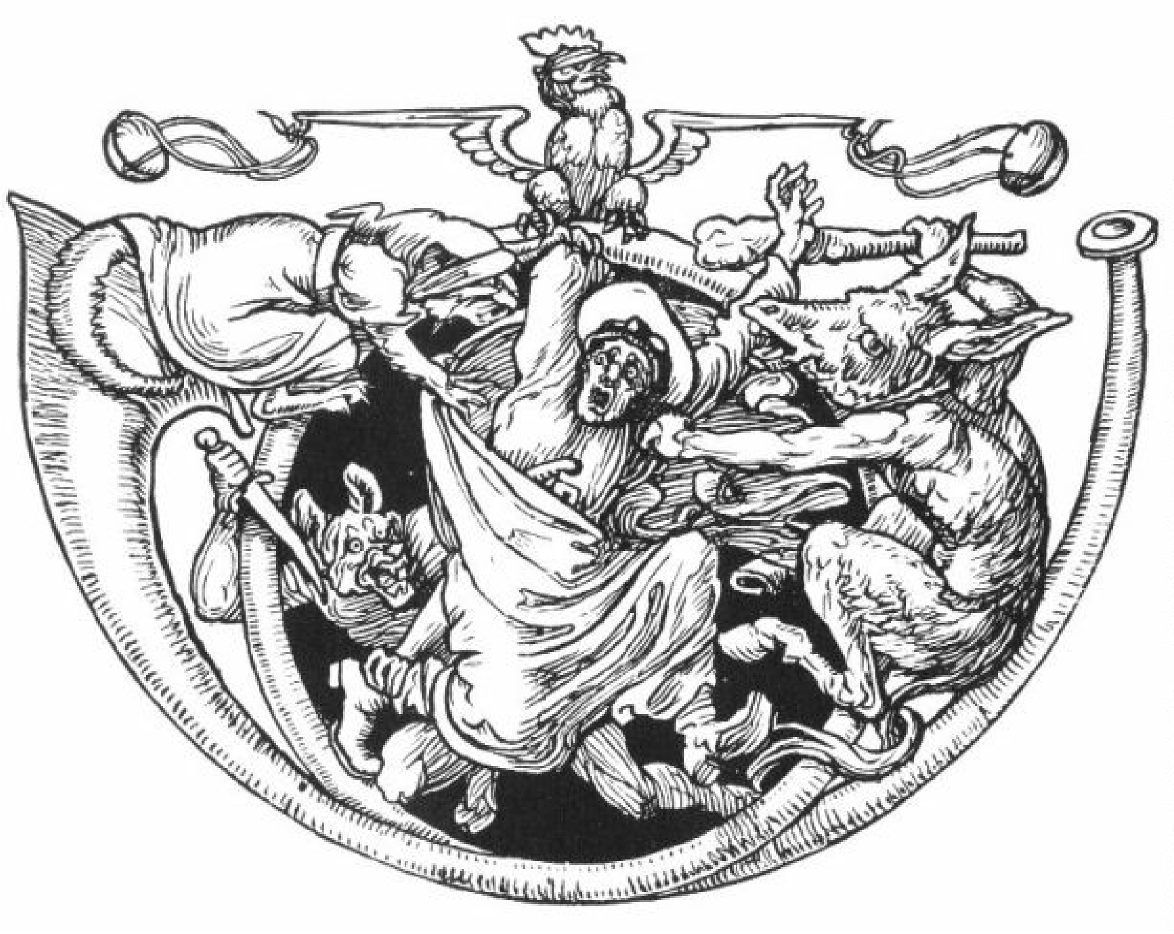
"That would just suit us," said the cock.

"Yes, indeed, I wish we were there," said the ass. Then they consulted together how it should be managed so as to get the robbers out of the house, and at last they hit on a plan. The ass was to place his forefeet on the window-sill, the dog was to get on the ass's back, the cat on the top of the dog, and lastly the cock was to fly up and perch on the cat's head. When that was done, at a given signal they all began to perform their music. The ass brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed; then they burst through into the room, breaking all the panes of glass. The robbers fled at the dreadful sound; they thought it was some goblin, and fled to the wood in the utmost terror. Then the four companions sat down to table, made free with the remains of the meal, and feasted as if they had been hungry for a month. And when they had finished they put out the lights, and each sought out a sleeping-place to suit his nature and habits. The ass laid himself down outside on the dunghill, the dog behind the door, the cat on the hearth by the warm ashes, and the cock settled himself in the cockloft, and as they were all tired with their long journey they soon fell fast asleep.

When midnight drew near, and the robbers from afar saw that no light was burning, and that everything appeared quiet, their captain said to them that he thought that they had run away without reason, telling one of them to go and reconnoitre. So one of them went, and found everything quite quiet; he went into the kitchen to strike a light, and taking the glowing fiery eyes of the cat for burning coals, he held a match to them in order to kindle it. But the cat, not seeing the joke, flew into his face, spitting and scratching. Then he cried out in terror, and ran to get out at the back door, but the dog, who was lying there, ran at him and bit his leg; and as he was rushing through the yard by the dunghill the ass struck out and gave him a great kick with his hindfoot; and the cock, who had been wakened with the noise, and felt quite brisk, cried out, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

Then the robber got back as well as he could to his captain, and said, "Oh dear! in that house there is a grewsome witch, and I felt her breath and her long nails in my face; and by the door there stands a man who stabbed me in the leg with a knife; and in the yard there lies a black spectre, who beat me with his wooden club; and above, upon the roof, there sits the justice, who cried, ‘Bring that rogue here!’ And so I ran away from the place as fast as I could.”

From that time forward the robbers never ventured to that house, and the four Bremen town musicians found themselves so well off where they were, that there they stayed. And the person who last related this tale is still living, as you see.



PRUDENT HANS

ONE day, Hans's mother said,

"Where are you going, Hans?"

Hans answered,

"To Grethel's, mother."

"Manage well, Hans."

"All right! Good-bye, mother."

"Good-bye, Hans."

Then Hans came to Grethel's.

"Good morning, Grethel."

"Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me to-day?"

"I have brought nothing, but I want something."

So Grethel gave Hans a needle; and then he said,

"Good-bye, Grethel," and she said, "Good-bye, Hans."

Hans carried the needle away with him, and stuck it in a hay-cart that was going along, and he followed it home.

"Good evening, mother."

"Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"What did you take her?"

"I took nothing, but I brought away something."

"What did Grethel give you?"

"A needle, mother."

"What did you do with it, Hans?"

"Stuck it in the hay-cart."

"That was very stupid of you, Hans. You should have stuck it in your sleeve."

"All right, mother! I'll do better next time."

When next time came, Hans's mother said,

"Where are you going, Hans?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"Manage well, Hans."

"All right! Good-bye, mother."

"Good-bye, Hans."

Then Hans came to Grethel.

"Good morning, Grethel."

"Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me to-day?"

"I've brought nothing, but I want something."

So Grethel gave Hans a knife, and then he said, "Good-bye, Grethel," and she said, "Good-bye, Hans."

Hans took the knife away with him, and stuck it in his sleeve, and went home.

"Good evening, mother."

"Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?"

"To Grethel's."

"What did you take her?"

"I took nothing, but I brought away something."

"What did Grethel give you, Hans?"

"A knife, mother."

"What did you do with it, Hans?"

"Stuck it in my sleeve, mother."

"That was very stupid of you, Hans. You should have put it in your pocket."

"All right, mother! I'll do better next time."

When next time came, Hans's mother said,

"Where to, Hans?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"Manage well, Hans."

"All right! Good-bye, mother."

"Good-bye, Hans."

So Hans came to Grethel's. "Good morning, Grethel."

"Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me to-day?"

"I've brought nothing, but I want to take away something."

So Grethel gave Hans a young goat; then he said,

"Good-bye, Grethel," and she said, "Good-bye, Hans."

So Hans carried off the goat, and tied its legs together, and put it in his pocket, and by the time he got home it was suffocated.

"Good evening, mother."

"Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"What did you take her, Hans?"

"I took nothing, but I brought away something."

"What did Grethel give you, Hans?"

"A goat, mother."

"What did you do with it, Hans?"

"Put it in my pocket, mother."

"That was very stupid of you, Hans. You should have tied a cord round its neck, and led it home."

"All right, mother! I'll do better next time."

Then when next time came,

"Where to, Hans?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"Manage well, Hans."

"All right! Good-bye, mother."

"Good-bye, Hans."

Then Hans came to Grethel's.

"Good morning, Grethel."

"Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me to-day?"

"I've brought nothing, but I want to take away something."

So Grethel gave Hans a piece of bacon. Then he said, “Good-bye, Grethel.”

She said, “Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans took the bacon, and tied a string round it, and dragged it after him on his way home, and the dogs came and ate it up, so that when he got home he had the string in his hand, and nothing at the other end of it.

“Good evening, mother.”

“Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?”

“To Grethel’s, mother.”

“What did you take her, Hans?”

“I took her nothing, but I brought away something.”

“What did Grethel give you, Hans?”

“A piece of bacon, mother.”

“What did you do with it, Hans?”

“I tied a piece of string to it, and led it home, but the dogs ate it, mother.”

“That was very stupid of you, Hans. You ought to have carried it on your head.”

“All right! I’ll do better next time, mother.”

When next time came,

“Where to, Hans?”

“To Grethel’s, mother.”

“Manage well, Hans.”

“All right! Good-bye, mother.”

“Good-bye, Hans.”

Then Hans came to Grethel’s.

“Good morning, Grethel.”

“Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?”

“I have brought nothing, but I want to take away something.”

So Grethel gave Hans a calf.

“Good-bye, Grethel.”

“Good-bye, Hans.”

Hans took the calf, and set it on his head, and carried it home, and the calf scratched his face.

“Good evening, mother.”

“Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?”

“To Grethel’s, mother.”

“What did you take her?”

“I took nothing, but I brought away something.”

“What did Grethel give you, Hans?”

“A calf, mother.”

“What did you do with the calf, Hans?”

“I carried it home on my head, but it scratched my face.”

“That was very stupid of you, Hans. You ought to have led home the calf, and tied it to the manger.”

“All right! I’ll do better next time, mother.”

When next time came,

"Where to, Hans?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"Manage well, Hans."

"All right, mother! Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Hans."

Then Hans came to Grethel's.

"Good morning, Grethel."

"Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me to-day?"

"I have brought nothing, but I want to take away something."

Then Grethel said to Hans,

"You shall take away me."

Then Hans took Grethel, and tied a rope round her neck, and led her home, and fastened her up to the manger, and went to his mother.

"Good evening, mother."

"Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?"

"To Grethel's, mother."

"What did you take her, Hans?"

"Nothing, mother."

"What did Grethel give you, Hans?"

"Nothing but herself, mother."

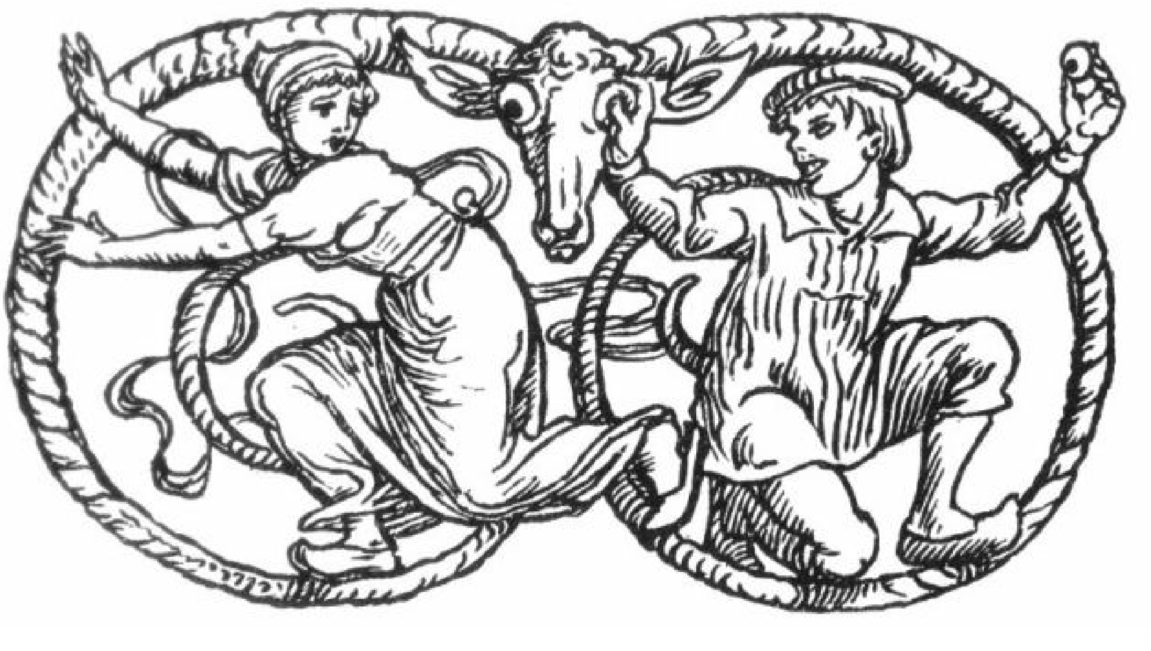
"Where have you left Grethel, Hans?"

"I led her home with a rope, and tied her up to the manger to eat hay, mother."

"That was very stupid of you, Hans. You should have cast sheep's eyes at her."

"All right, mother! I'll do better next time."

Then Hans went into the stable, and taking all the eyes out of the sheep, he threw them in Grethel's face. Then Grethel was angry, and getting loose, she ran away and became the bride of another.



CLEVER ELSE

THERE was once a man who had a daughter who was called “Clever Else,” and when she was grown up, her father said she must be married, and her mother said,

“Yes, if we could only find some one that she would consent to have.”

At last one came from a distance, and his name was Hans, and when he proposed to her, he made it a condition that Clever Else should be very careful as well.

“Oh,” said the father, “she does not want for brains.”

“No, indeed,” said the mother, “she can see the wind coming up the street and hear the flies cough.”

“Well,” said Hans, “if she does not turn out to be careful too, I will not have her.”

Now when they were all seated at table, and had well eaten, the mother said,

“Else, go into the cellar and draw some beer.”

Then Clever Else took down the jug from the hook in the wall, and as she was on her way to the cellar she rattled the lid up and down so as to pass away the time. When she got there, she took a stool and stood it in front of the cask, so that she need not stoop and make her back ache with needless trouble. Then she put the jug under the tap and turned it, and while the beer was running, in order that her eyes should not be idle, she glanced hither and thither, and finally caught sight of a pickaxe that the workmen had left sticking in the ceiling just above her head. Then Clever Else began to cry, for she thought,

“If I marry Hans, and we have a child, and it grows big, and we send it into the cellar to draw beer, that pickaxe might fall on his head and kill him.”

So there she sat and cried with all her might, lamenting the anticipated misfortune. All the while they were waiting upstairs for something to drink, and they waited in vain. At last the mistress said to the maid,

“Go down to the cellar and see why Else does not come.”

So the maid went, and found her sitting in front of the cask crying with all her might.

“What are you crying for?” said the maid.

“Oh dear me,” answered she, “how can I help crying? if I marry Hans, and we have a child, and it grows big, and we send it here to draw beer, perhaps the pickaxe may fall on its head and kill it.”

“Our Else is clever indeed!” said the maid, and directly sat down to bewail the anticipated misfortune. After a while, when the people upstairs found that the maid did not return, and they were becoming more and more thirsty, the master said to the boy,

“You go down into the cellar, and see what Else and the maid are doing.”

The boy did so, and there he found both Clever Else and the maid sitting crying together. Then he asked what was the matter.

“Oh dear me,” said Else, “how can we help crying? if I marry Hans, and we have a child, and it grows big, and we send it here to draw beer, the pickaxe might fall on its head and kill it.”

“Our Else is clever indeed!” said the boy, and sitting down beside her, he began howling with a good will. Upstairs they were all waiting for him to come back, but as he did not come, the master said to the mistress,

“You go down to the cellar and see what Else is doing.”

So the mistress went down and found all three in great lamentations, and when she asked the cause, then Else told her how the future possible child might be killed as soon as it was big enough to be sent to draw beer, by the pickaxe falling on it. Then the mother at once exclaimed,

“Our Else is clever indeed!” and, sitting down, she wept with the rest.

Upstairs the husband waited a little while, but as his wife did not return, and as his thirst constantly increased, he said,

“I must go down to the cellar myself, and see what has become of Else.” And when he came into the cellar, and found them all sitting and weeping together, he was told that it was all owing to the child that Else might possibly have, and the possibility of its being killed by the pickaxe so happening to fall just at the time the child might be sitting underneath it drawing beer; and when he heard all this, he cried,

“How clever is our Else!” and sitting down, he joined his tears to theirs.

The intended bridegroom stayed upstairs by himself a long time, but as nobody came back to him, he thought he would go himself and see what they were all about. And there he found all five lamenting and crying most pitifully, each one louder than the other.

“What misfortune has happened?” cried he.

“O my dear Hans,” said Else, “if we marry and have a child, and it grows big, and we send it down here to draw beer, perhaps that pickaxe which has been left sticking up there might fall down on the child’s head and kill it; and how can we help crying at that!”

“Now,” said Hans, “I cannot think that greater sense than that could be wanted in my household; so as you are so clever, Else, I will have you for my wife,” and taking her by the hand he led her upstairs, and they had the wedding at once.

A little while after they were married, Hans said to his wife,

“I am going out to work, in order to get money; you go into the field and cut the corn, so that we may have bread.”

“Very well, I will do so, dear Hans,” said she. And after Hans was gone she cooked herself some nice stew, and took it with her into the field. And when she got there, she said to herself,

“Now, what shall I do? shall I reap first, or eat first? All right, I will eat first.” Then she ate her fill of stew, and when she could eat no more, she said to herself, "Now, what shall I do? shall I reap first, or sleep first? All right, I will sleep first." Then she lay down in the corn and went to sleep. And Hans got home, and waited there a long while, and Else did not come, so he said to himself,

"My clever Else is so industrious that she never thinks of coming home and eating."

But when evening drew near and still she did not come, Hans set out to see how much corn she had cut; but she had cut no corn at all, but there she was lying in it asleep. Then Hans made haste home, and fetched a bird-net with little bells and threw it over her; and still she went on sleeping. And he ran home again and locked himself in, and sat him down on his bench to work. At last, when it was beginning to grow dark, Clever Else woke, and when she got up and shook herself, the bells jingled at each movement that she made. Then she grew frightened, and began to doubt whether she were really Clever Else or not, and said to herself,

"Am I, or am I not?" And, not knowing what answer to make, she stood for a long while considering; at last she thought,

"I will go home to Hans and ask him if I am I or not; he is sure to know."

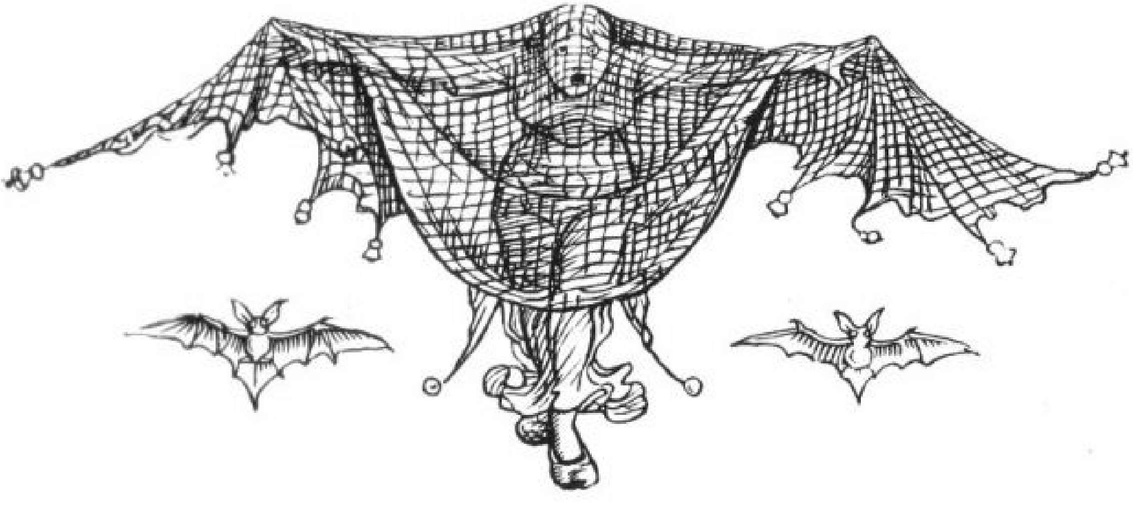
So she ran up to the door of her house, but it was locked; then she knocked at the window, and cried,

"Hans, is Else within?"

"Yes," answered Hans, "she is in."

Then she was in a greater fright than ever, and crying,

"Oh dear, then I am not I," she went to inquire at another door, but the people hearing the jingling of the bells would not open to her, and she could get in nowhere. So she ran away beyond the village, and since then no one has seen her.



THE TABLE, THE ASS, AND THE STICK.

THERE was once a tailor who had three sons and one goat. And the goat, as she nourished them all with her milk, was obliged to have good food, and so she was led every day down to the willows by the water-side; and this business the sons did in turn. One day the eldest took the goat to the churchyard, where the best sprouts are, that she might eat her fill, and gambol about.

In the evening, when it was time to go home, he said,

"Well, goat, have you had enough?"

The goat answered,

"I am so full,
I cannot pull
Another blade of grass — ba! baa!"

"Then come home," said the youth, and fastened a string to her, led her to her stall, and fastened her up.

"Now," said the old tailor, "has the goat had her proper food?"

"Oh," answered the son, "she is so full, she no more can pull."

But the father, wishing to see for himself, went out to the stall, stroked his dear goat, and said,

"My dear goat, are you full?" And the goat answered,

"How can I be full?
There was nothing to pull,
Though I looked all about me — ba! baa!"

"What is this that I hear?" cried the tailor, and he ran and called out to the youth,

"O you liar, to say that the goat was full, and she has been hungry all the time!" And in his wrath he took up his yard-measure and drove his son out of the house with many blows.

The next day came the turn of the second son, and he found a fine place in the garden hedge, where there were good green sprouts, and the goat ate them all up. In the evening, when he came to lead her home, he said,

"Well, goat, have you had enough?" And the goat answered,

"I am so full,
I could not pull
Another blade of grass — ba! baa!"

"Then come home," said the youth, and led her home, and tied her up.

"Now," said the old tailor, "has the goat had her proper food?"

"Oh," answered the son, "she is so full, she no more can pull."

The tailor, not feeling satisfied, went out to the stall, and said, “My dear goat, are you really full?” And the goat answered,

“How can I be full?
There was nothing to pull,
Though I looked all about me — ba! baa!”

“The good-for-nothing rascal,” cried the tailor, “to let the dear creature go fasting!” and, running back, he chased the youth with his yard-wand out of the house.

Then came the turn of the third son, who, meaning to make all sure, found some shrubs with the finest sprouts possible, and left the goat to devour them. In the evening, when he came to lead her home, he said,

“Well, goat, are you full?” And the goat answered,

“I am so full,
I could not pull
Another blade of grass — ba! baa!”

“Then come home,” said the youth; and he took her to her stall, and fastened her up.

“Now,” said the old tailor, “has the goat had her proper food?”

“Oh,” answered the son, “she is so full, she no more can pull.”

But the tailor, not trusting his word, went to the goat and said,

“My dear goat, are you really full?” The malicious animal answered,

“How can I be full?
There was nothing to pull,
Though I looked all about me — ba! baa!”

“Oh, the wretches!” cried the tailor. “The one as good-for-nothing and careless as the other. I will no longer have such fools about me;” and rushing back, in his wrath he laid about him with his yard-wand, and belaboured his son’s back so unmercifully that he ran away out of the house.

So the old tailor was left alone with the goat. The next day he went out to the stall, and let out the goat, saying,

“Come, my dear creature, I will take you myself to the willows.”

So he led her by the string, and brought her to the green hedges and pastures where there was plenty of food to her taste, and saying to her,

“Now, for once, you can eat to your heart’s content,” he left her there till the evening. Then he returned, and said,

“Well, goat, are you full?”

She answered,

“I am so full,
I could not pull,
Another blade of grass — ba! baa!”

"Then come home," said the tailor, and leading her to her stall, he fastened her up.

Before he left her he turned once more, saying,

"Now then, for once you are full." But the goat actually cried,

"How can I be full?
There was nothing to pull,
Though I looked all about me — ba! baa!"

When the tailor heard that he marvelled, and saw at once that his three sons had been sent away without reason.

"Wait a minute," cried he, "you ungrateful creature! It is not enough merely to drive you away — I will teach you to show your face again among honourable tailors."

So in haste he went and fetched his razor, and seizing the goat he shaved her head as smooth as the palm of his hand. And as the yard-measure was too honourable a weapon, he took the whip and fetched her such a crack that with many a jump and spring she ran away.

The tailor felt very sad as he sat alone in his house, and would willingly have had his sons back again, but no one knew where they had gone.

The eldest son, when he was driven from home, apprenticed himself to a joiner, and he applied himself diligently to his trade, and when the time came for him to travel his master gave him a little table, nothing much to look at, and made of common wood; but it had one great quality. When any one set it down and said, "Table, be covered!" all at once the good little table had a clean cloth on it, and a plate, and knife, and fork, and dishes with roast and boiled, and a large glass of red wine sparkling so as to cheer the heart. The young apprentice thought he was set up for life, and he went merrily out into the world, and never cared whether an inn were good or bad, or whether he could get anything to eat there or not. When he was hungry, it did not matter where he was, whether in the fields, in the woods, or in a meadow, he set down his table and said, "Be covered!" and there he was provided with everything that heart could wish. At last it occurred to him that he would go back to his father, whose wrath might by this time have subsided, and perhaps because of the wonderful table he might receive him again gladly. It happened that one evening during his journey home he came to an inn that was quite full of guests, who bade him welcome, and asked him to sit down with them and eat, as otherwise he would have found some difficulty in getting anything.

"No," answered the young joiner, "I could not think of depriving you; you had much better be my guests."

Then they laughed, and thought he must be joking. But he brought his little wooden table, and put it in the middle of the room, and said, "Table, be covered!" Immediately it was set out with food much better than the landlord had been able to provide, and the good smell of it greeted the noses of the guests very agreeably. "Fall to, good friends," said the joiner; and the guests, when they saw how it was, needed no second asking, but taking up knife and fork fell to valiantly. And what seemed most wonderful was that when a dish was empty immediately a full one stood in its place. All the while the landlord stood in a corner, and watched all that went on. He could not tell what to say about it; but he thought "such cooking as that would make my inn prosper." The joiner and his fellowship kept it up very merrily until late at night. At last they went to sleep, and the young joiner, going to bed, left his wishing-table standing against the wall. The landlord, however, could not sleep for thinking of the table, and he remembered that there was in his lumber room an old table very like it, so he fetched it, and taking away the joiner's table, he left the other in its place. The next morning the joiner paid his reckoning, took up the table, not dreaming that he was carrying off the wrong one, and went on his way. About noon he reached home, and his father received him with great joy.

"Now, my dear son, what have you learned?" said he to him.

"I have learned to be a joiner, father," he answered.

"That is a good trade," returned the father; "but what have you brought back with you from your travels?"

"The best thing I've got, father, is this little table," said he.

The tailor looked at it on all sides, and said,

"You have certainly produced no masterpiece. It is a rubbishing old table."

"But it is a very wonderful one," answered the son. "When I set it down, and tell it to be covered, at once the finest meats are standing on it, and wine so good that it cheers the heart. Let us invite all the friends and neighbours, that they may feast and enjoy themselves, for the table will provide enough for all."

When the company was all assembled, he put his table in the middle of the room, and said, "Table, be covered!"

But the table never stirred, and remained just as empty as any other table that does not understand talking. When the poor joiner saw that the table remained unfurnished, he felt ashamed to stand there like a fool. The company laughed at him freely, and were obliged to return unfilled and uncheered to their houses. The father gathered his pieces together and returned to his tailoring, and the son went to work under another master.

The second son had bound himself apprentice to a miller. And when his time was up, his master said to him,

"As you have behaved yourself so well, I will give you an ass of a remarkable kind: he will draw no cart, and carry no sack."

"What is the good of him then?" asked the young apprentice.

"He spits out gold," answered the miller. "If you put a cloth before him and say, 'Bricklebrit,' out come gold pieces."

"That is a capital thing," said the apprentice, and, thanking his master, he went out into the world. Whenever he wanted gold he had only to say "Bricklebrit" to his ass, and there was a shower of gold pieces, and so he had no cares as he travelled about. Wherever he came he lived on the best, and the dearer the better, as his purse was always full. And when he had been looking about him about the world a long time, he thought he would go and find out his father, who would perhaps forget his anger and receive him kindly because of his gold ass. And it happened that he came to lodge in the same inn where his brother's table had been exchanged. He was leading his ass in his hand, and the landlord was for taking the ass from him to tie it up, but the young apprentice said,

"Don't trouble yourself, old fellow, I will take him into the stable myself and tie him up, and then I shall know where to find him."

The landlord thought this was very strange, and he never supposed that a man who was accustomed to look after his ass himself could have much to spend; but when the stranger, feeling in his pocket, took out two gold pieces and told him to get him something good for supper; the landlord stared, and ran and fetched the best that could be got. After supper the guest called the reckoning, and the landlord, wanting to get all the profit he could, said that it would amount to two gold pieces more. The apprentice felt in his pocket, but his gold had come to an end.

"Wait a moment, landlord," said he, "I will go and fetch some money," and he went out of the room, carrying the table-cloth with him. The landlord could not tell what to make of it, and, curious to know his proceedings, slipped after him, and as the guest shut the stable-door, he peeped in through a knot-hole. Then he saw how the stranger spread the cloth before the ass, saying, "Bricklebrit," and directly the ass spat out gold, which rained upon the ground.

"Dear me," said the landlord, "that is an easy way of getting ducats; a purse of money like that is no bad thing."

After that the guest paid his reckoning and went to bed; but the landlord slipped down to the stable in the middle of the night, led the gold-ass away, and tied up another ass in his place. The next morning early the apprentice set forth with his ass, never doubting that it was the right one. By noon he came to his father's house, who was rejoiced to see him again, and received him gladly.

"What trade have you taken up, my son?" asked the father.

"I am a miller, dear father," answered he.

"What have you brought home from your travels?" continued the father.

"Nothing but an ass," answered the son.

"We have plenty of asses here," said the father. "You had much better have brought me a nice goat!"

"Yes," answered the son, "but this is no common ass. When I say, 'Bricklebrit,' the good creature spits out a whole clothful of gold pieces. Let me call all the neighbours together. I will make rich people of them all."

"That will be fine!" said the tailor. "Then I need labour no more at my needle;" and he rushed out himself and called the neighbours together. As soon as they were all assembled, the miller called out to them to make room, and brought in the ass, and spread his cloth before him.

“Now, pay attention,” said he, and cried, “Bricklebrit!” but no gold pieces came, and that showed that the animal was not more scientific than any other ass.

So the poor miller made a long face when he saw that he had been taken in, and begged pardon of the neighbours, who all went home as poor as they had come. And there was nothing for it but that the old man must take to his needle again, and that the young one should take service with a miller.

The third brother had bound himself apprentice to a turner; and as turning is a very ingenious handicraft, it took him a long time to learn it. His brother told him in a letter how badly things had gone with them, and how on the last night of their travels the landlord deprived them of their treasures. When the young turner had learnt his trade, and was ready to travel, his master, to reward him for his good conduct, gave him a sack, and told him that there was a stick inside it.

“I can hang up the sack, and it may be very useful to me,” said the young man. “But what is the good of the stick?”

“I will tell you,” answered the master. “If any one does you any harm, and you say, ‘Stick, out of the sack!’ the stick will jump out upon them, and will belabour them so soundly that they shall not be able to move or to leave the place for a week, and it will not stop until you say, ‘Stick, into the sack!’”

The apprentice thanked him, and took up the sack and started on his travels, and when any one attacked him he would say, “Stick, out of the sack!” and directly out jumped the stick, and dealt a shower of blows on the coat or jerkin, and the back beneath, which quickly ended the affair. One evening the young turner reached the inn where his two brothers had been taken in. He laid his knapsack on the table, and began to describe all the wonderful things he had seen in the world.

“Yes,” said he, “you may talk of your self-spreading table, gold-supplying ass, and so forth; very good things, I do not deny, but they are nothing in comparison with the treasure that I have acquired and carry with me in that sack!”

Then the landlord opened his ears.

“What in the world can it be?” thought he. “Very likely the sack is full of precious stones; and I have a perfect right to it, for all good things come in threes.”

When bedtime came the guest stretched himself on a bench, and put his sack under his head for a pillow, and the landlord, when he thought the young man was sound asleep, came, and, stooping down, pulled gently at the sack, so as to remove it cautiously, and put another in its place. The turner had only been waiting for this to happen, and just as the landlord was giving a last courageous pull, he cried, “Stick, out of the sack!” Out flew the stick directly, and laid to heartily on the landlord’s back; and in vain he begged for mercy; the louder he cried the harder the stick beat time on his back, until he fell exhausted to the ground. Then the turner said, "If you do not give me the table and the ass directly, this game shall begin all over again."

"Oh dear, no!" cried the landlord, quite collapsed; "I will gladly give it all back again if you will only make this terrible goblin go back into the sack."

Then said the young man, "I will be generous instead of just, but beware!" Then he cried, "Stick, into the sack!" and left him in peace.

The next morning the turner set out with the table and the ass on his way home to his father. The tailor was very glad, indeed, to see him again, and asked him what he had learned abroad.

"My dear father," answered he, "I am become a turner."

"A very ingenious handicraft," said the father. "And what have you brought with you from your travels?"

"A very valuable thing, dear father," answered the son. "A stick in a sack!"

"What!" cried the father. "A stick! The thing is not worth so much trouble when you can cut one from any tree."

"But it is not a common stick, dear father," said the young man. "When I say, 'Stick, out of the bag!' out jumps the stick upon any one who means harm to me, and makes him dance again, and does not leave off till he is beaten to the earth, and asks pardon. Just look here, with this stick I have recovered the table and the ass which the thieving landlord had taken from my two brothers. Now, let them both be sent for, and bid all the neighbours too, and they shall eat and drink to their hearts' content, and I will fill their pockets with gold."

The old tailor could not quite believe in such a thing, but he called his sons and all the neighbours together. Then the turner brought in the ass, opened a cloth before him, and said to his brother,

"Now, my dear brother, speak to him." And the miller said, "Bricklebrit!" and immediately the cloth was covered with gold pieces, until they had all got more than they could carry away. (I tell you this because it is a pity you were not there.) Then the turner set down the table, and said,

"Now, my dear brother, speak to it." And the joiner said, "Table, be covered!" and directly it was covered, and set forth plentifully with the richest dishes. Then they held a feast such as had never taken place in the tailor's house before, and the whole company remained through the night, merry and content.

The tailor after that locked up in a cupboard his needle and thread, his yard-measure and goose, and lived ever after with his three sons in great joy and splendour.

But what became of the goat, the unlucky cause of the tailor's sons being driven out? I will tell you. She felt so ashamed of her bald head that she ran into a fox's hole and hid herself. When the fox came home he caught sight of two great eyes staring at him out of the darkness, and was very frightened and ran away. A bear met him, and seeing that he looked very disturbed, asked him,

"What is the matter, brother fox, that you should look like that?"

"Oh dear," answered the fox, "a grisly beast is sitting in my hole, and he stared at me with fiery eyes!"

"We will soon drive him out," said the bear; and went to the hole and looked in, but when he caught sight of the fiery eyes he likewise felt great terror seize him, and not wishing to have anything to do with so grisly a beast, he made off. He was soon met by a bee, who remarked that he had not a very courageous air, and said to him,

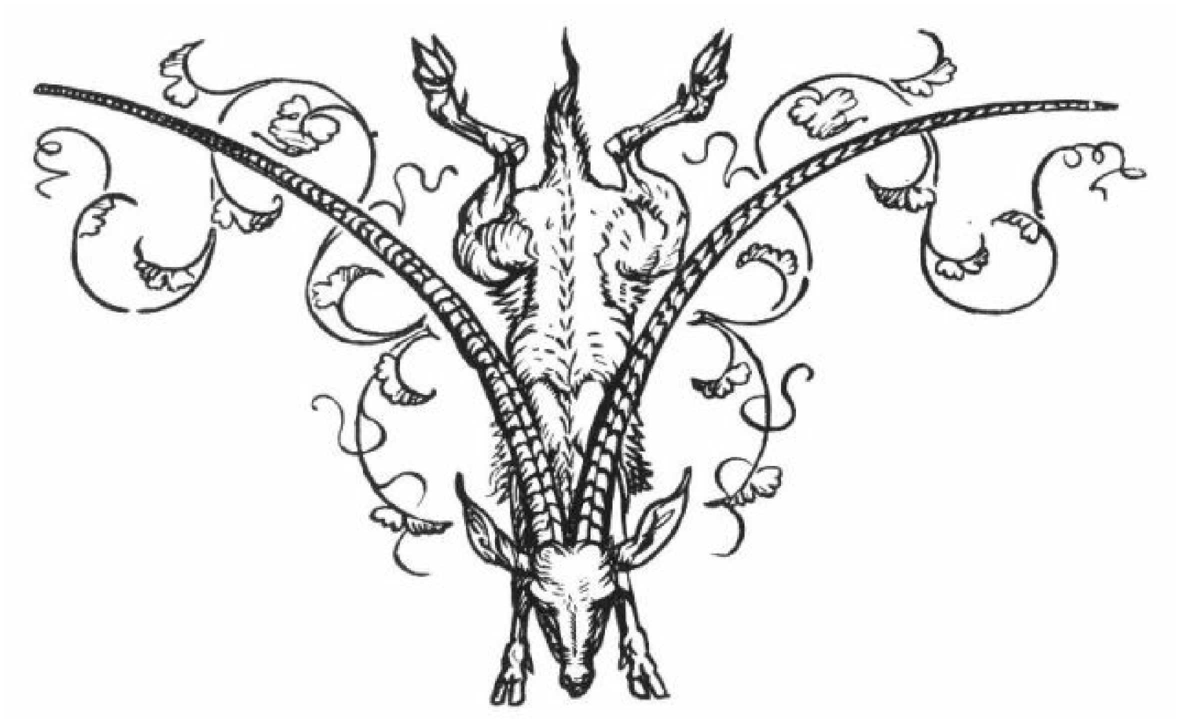
"Bear, you have a very depressed countenance, what has become of your high spirit?"

"You may well ask," answered the bear. "In the fox's hole there sits a grisly beast with fiery eyes, and we cannot drive him out."

The bee answered, "I know you despise me, bear. I am a poor feeble little creature, but I think I can help you."

So she flew into the fox's hole, and settling on the goat's smooth-shaven head, stung her so severely that she jumped up, crying, "Ba-baa!" and ran out like mad into the world; and to this hour no one knows where she ran to.

TOM THUMB



THERE was once a poor countryman who used to sit in the chimney-corner all evening and poke the fire, while his wife sat at her spinning-wheel.

And he used to say,

“How dull it is without any children about us; our house is so quiet, and other people’s houses so noisy and merry!”

“Yes,” answered his wife, and sighed, “if we could only have one, and that one ever so little, no bigger than my thumb, how happy I should be! It would, indeed, be having our heart’s desire.”

Now, it happened that after a while the woman had a child who was perfect in all his limbs, but no bigger than a thumb. Then the parents said,

“He is just what we wished for, and we will love him very much,” and they named him according to his stature, “Tom Thumb.” And though they gave him plenty of nourishment, he grew no bigger, but remained exactly the same size as when he was first born; and he had very good faculties, and was very quick and prudent, so that all he did prospered.

One day his father made ready to go into the forest to cut wood, and he said, as if to himself,

“Now, I wish there was some one to bring the cart to meet me.”

“O father,” cried Tom Thumb, “I can bring the cart, let me alone for that, and in proper time, too!”

Then the father laughed, and said,

“How will you manage that? You are much too little to hold the reins.”

“That has nothing to do with it, father; while my mother goes on with her spinning I will sit in the horse’s ear and tell him where to go.”

“Well,” answered the father, “we will try it for once.”

When it was time to set off, the mother went on spinning, after setting Tom Thumb in the horse’s ear; and so he drove off, crying,

“Gee-up, gee-wo!”

So the horse went on quite as if his master were driving him, and drew the waggon along the right road to the wood.

Now it happened just as they turned a corner, and the little fellow was calling out “Gee-up!” that two strange men passed by.

“Look,” said one of them, “how is this? There goes a waggon, and the driver is calling to the horse, and yet he is nowhere to be seen.”

“It is very strange,” said the other; “we will follow the waggon, and see where it belongs.”

And the waggon went right through the wood, up to the place where the wood had been hewed. When Tom Thumb caught sight of his father, he cried out,

“Look, father, here am I with the waggon; now, take me down.”

The father held the horse with his left hand, and with the right he lifted down his little son out of the horse’s ear, and Tom Thumb sat down on a stump, quite happy and content. When the two strangers saw him they were struck dumb with wonder. At last one of them, taking the other aside, said to him, “Look here, the little chap would make our fortune if we were to show him in the town for money. Suppose we buy him.”

So they went up to the woodcutter, and said,

“Sell the little man to us; we will take care he shall come to no harm.”

“No,” answered the father; “he is the apple of my eye, and not for all the money in the world would I sell him.”

But Tom Thumb, when he heard what was going on, climbed up by his father’s coat tails, and, perching himself on his shoulder, he whispered in his ear,

“Father, you might as well let me go. I will soon come back again.”

Then the father gave him up to the two men for a large piece of money. They asked him where he would like to sit,

“Oh, put me on the brim of your hat,” said he. “There I can walk about and view the country, and be in no danger of falling off.”

So they did as he wished, and when Tom Thumb had taken leave of his father, they set off all together. And they travelled on until it grew dusk, and the little fellow asked to be set down a little while for a change, and after some difficulty they consented. So the man took him down from his hat, and set him in a field by the roadside, and he ran away directly, and, after creeping about among the furrows, he slipped suddenly into a mouse-hole, just what he was looking for.

“Good evening, my masters, you can go home without me!” cried he to them, laughing. They ran up and felt about with their sticks in the mouse-hole, but in vain. Tom Thumb crept farther and farther in, and as it was growing dark, they had to make the best of their way home, full of vexation, and with empty purses.

When Tom Thumb found they were gone, he crept out of his hiding-place underground.

“It is dangerous work groping about these holes in the darkness,” said he; “I might easily break my neck.”

But by good fortune he came upon an empty snail shell.

“That’s all right,” said he. “Now I can get safely through the night;” and he settled himself down in it. Before he had time to get to sleep, he heard two men pass by, and one was saying to the other,

“How can we manage to get hold of the rich parson’s gold and silver?”

“I can tell you how,” cried Tom Thumb.

“How is this?” said one of the thieves, quite frightened, “I hear some one speak!”

So they stood still and listened, and Tom Thumb spoke again.

“Take me with you; I will show you how to do it!”

“Where are you, then?” asked they.

“Look about on the ground and notice where the voice comes from,” answered he.

At last they found him, and lifted him up.

“You little elf,” said they, “how can you help us?”

“Look here,” answered he, “I can easily creep between the iron bars of the parson’s room and hand out to you whatever you would like to have.”

“Very well,” said they, “we will try what you can do.”

So when they came to the parsonage-house, Tom Thumb crept into the room, but cried out with all his might,

“Will you have all that is here?” So the thieves were terrified, and said,

“Do speak more softly, lest any one should be awaked.”

But Tom Thumb made as if he did not hear them, and cried out again,

“What would you like? will you have all that is here?” so that the cook, who was sleeping in a room hard by, heard it, and raised herself in bed and listened. The thieves, however, in their fear of being discovered, had run back part of the way, but they took courage again, thinking that it was only a jest of the little fellow’s. So they came back and whispered to him to be serious, and to hand them out something.

Then Tom Thumb called out once more as loud as he could,

“Oh yes, I will give it all to you, only put out your hands.”

Then the listening maid heard him distinctly that time, and jumped out of bed, and burst open the door. The thieves ran off as if the wild huntsman were behind them; but the maid, as she could see nothing, went to fetch a light. And when she came back with one, Tom Thumb had taken himself off, without being seen by her, into the barn; and the maid, when she had looked in every hole and corner and found nothing, went back to bed at last, and thought that she must have been dreaming with her eyes and ears open.

So Tom Thumb crept among the hay, and found a comfortable nook to sleep in, where he intended to remain until it was day, and then to go home to his father and mother. But other things were to befall him; indeed, there is nothing but trouble and worry in this world! The maid got up at dawn of day to feed the cows. The first place she went to was the barn, where she took up an armful of hay, and it happened to be the very heap in which Tom Thumb lay asleep. And he was so fast asleep, that he was aware of nothing, and never waked until he was in the mouth of the cow, who had taken him up with the hay.

"Oh dear," cried he, "how is it that I have got into a mill!" but he soon found out where he was, and he had to be very careful not to get between the cow's teeth, and at last he had to descend into the cow's stomach.

"The windows were forgotten when this little room was built," said he, "and the sunshine cannot get in; there is no light to be had."

His quarters were in every way unpleasant to him, and, what was the worst, new hay was constantly coming in, and the space was being filled up. At last he cried out in his extremity, as loud as he could,

"No more hay for me! no more hay for me!"

The maid was then milking the cow, and as she heard a voice, but could see no one, and as it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so frightened that she fell off her stool, and spilt the milk. Then she ran in great haste to her master, crying,

"Oh, master dear, the cow spoke!"

"You must be crazy," answered her master, and he went himself to the cow-house to see what was the matter. No sooner had he put his foot inside the door, than Tom Thumb cried out again,

"No more hay for me! no more hay for me!"

Then the parson himself was frightened, supposing that a bad spirit had entered into the cow, and he ordered her to be put to death. So she was killed, but the stomach, where Tom Thumb was lying, was thrown upon a dunghill. Tom Thumb had great trouble to work his way out of it, and he had just made a space big enough for his head to go through, when a new misfortune happened. A hungry wolf ran up and swallowed the whole stomach at one gulp. But Tom Thumb did not lose courage. "Perhaps," thought he, "the wolf will listen to reason," and he cried out from the inside of the wolf,

"My dear wolf, I can tell you where to get a splendid meal!"

"Where is it to be had?" asked the wolf.

"In such and such a house, and you must creep into it through the drain, and there you will find cakes and bacon and broth, as much as you can eat," and he described to him His father's house. The wolf needed not to be told twice. He squeezed himself through the drain in the night, and feasted in the store-room to his heart's content. When, at last, he was satisfied, he wanted to go away again, but he had become so big, that to creep the same way back was impossible. This Tom Thumb had reckoned upon, and began to make a terrible din inside the wolf, crying and calling as loud as he could.

"Will you be quiet?" said the wolf; "you will wake the folks up!"

"Look here," cried the little man, "you are very well satisfied, and now I will do something for my own enjoyment," and began again to make all the noise he could. At last the father and mother were awakened, and they ran to the room-door and peeped through the chink, and when they saw a wolf in occupation, they ran and fetched weapons — the man an axe, and the wife a scythe.

“Stay behind,” said the man, as they entered the room; “when I have given him a blow, and it does not seem to have killed him, then you must cut at him with your scythe.”

Then Tom Thumb heard his father’s voice, and cried,

“Dear father, I am here in the wolf’s inside.”

Then the father called out full of joy,

“Thank heaven that we have found our dear child!” and told his wife to keep the scythe out of the way, lest Tom Thumb should be hurt with it. Then he drew near and struck the wolf such a blow on the head that he fell down dead; and then he fetched a knife and a pair of scissors, slit up the wolf’s body, and let out the little fellow.

“Oh, what anxiety we have felt about you!” said the father.

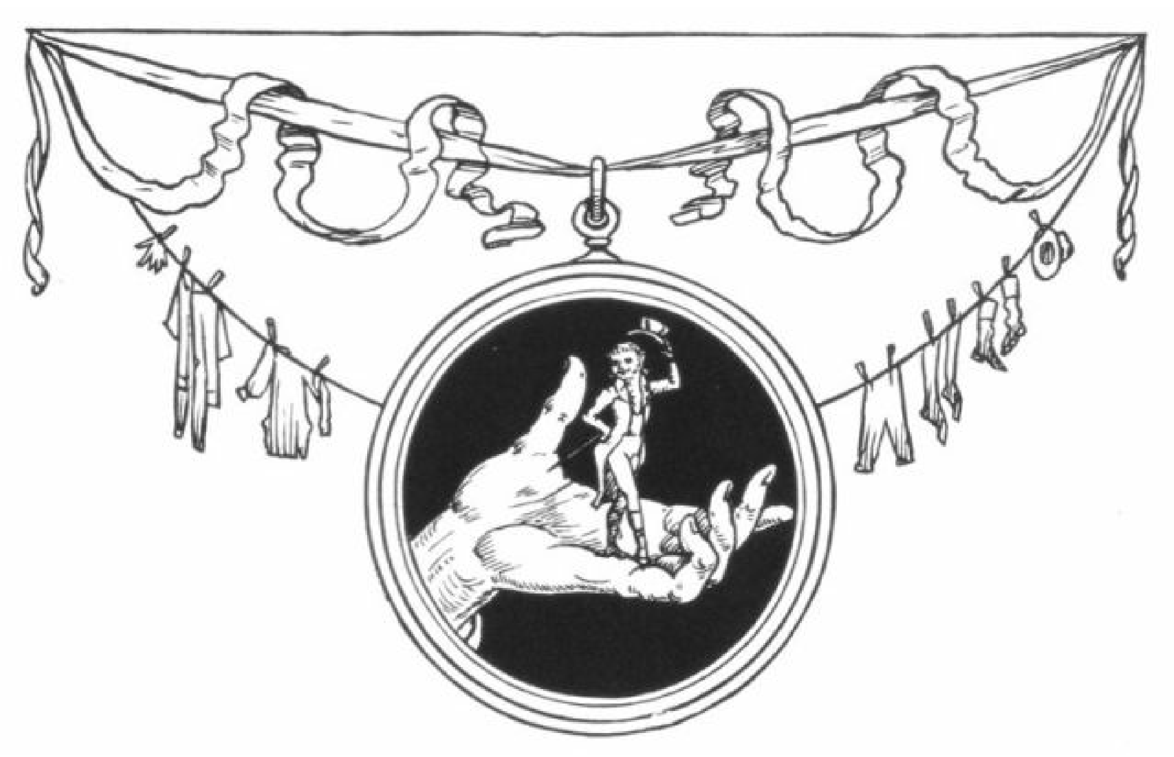
“Yes, father, I have seen a good deal of the world, and I am very glad to breathe fresh air again.”

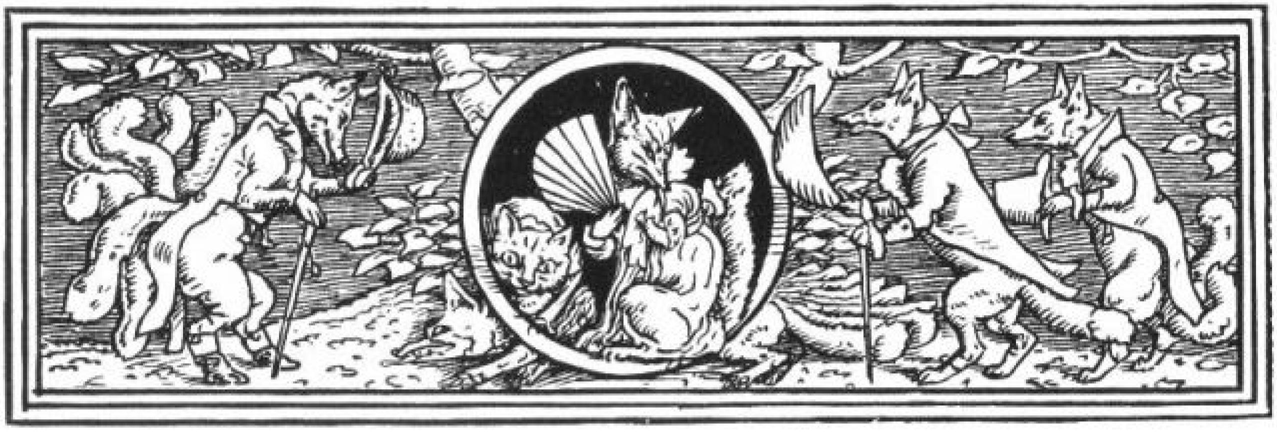
“And where have you been all this time?” asked his father.

“Oh, I have been in a mouse-hole and a snail’s shell, in a cow’s stomach and a wolf’s inside: now, I think, I will stay at home.”

“And we will not part with you for all the kingdoms of the world,” cried the parents, as they kissed and hugged their dear little Tom Thumb. And they gave him something to eat and drink, and a new suit of clothes, as his old ones were soiled with travel.

HOW MRS FOX MARRIED AGAIN





FIRST VERSION.

THERE was once an old fox with nine tails, who wished to put his wife's affection to proof, pretended to be dead, and stretched himself under the bench quite stiff, and never moved a joint, on which Mrs. Fox retired to her room and locked herself in, while her maid, the cat, stayed by the kitchen fire and attended to the cooking.

When it became known that the old fox was dead, some suitors prepared to come forward, and presently the maid heard some one knocking at the

house door; she went and opened it, and there was a young fox, who said,
“What is she doing, Miss Cat?
Is she sleeping, or waking, or what is she at?”

And the cat answered,

“I am not asleep, I am quite wide awake,
Perhaps you would know what I’m going to make;
I’m melting some butter, and warming some beer,
Will it please you sit down, and partake of my cheer?”

“Thank you, miss,” said the fox. “What is Mrs. Fox doing?”

The maid answered,

“She is sitting upstairs in her grief,
And her eyes with her weeping are sore;
From her sorrow she gets no relief,
Now poor old Mr. Fox is no more!”

“But just tell her, miss, that a young fox has come to woo her.”

“Very well, young master,” answered the cat.

Up went the cat pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
She knocks at the door, rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat!

“Mrs. Fox, are you there?”
“Yes, yes, pussy dear!”
“There’s a suitor below,
Shall I tell him to go?”

“But what is he like?” asked Mrs. Fox. “Has he nine beautiful tails, like dear Mr. Fox?”

“Oh no,” answered the cat; “he has only one.”

“Then I won’t have him,” said Mrs. Fox.

So the cat went down-stairs, and sent the suitor away. Soon there was another knock at the door. It was another fox come to woo. He had two tails, but he met with no better success than the first. Then there arrived more foxes, one after another, each with one more tail than the last, but they were all dismissed, until there came one with nine tails like old Mr. Fox. When the widow heard that she cried, full of joy, to the cat,

“Now, open door and window wide,
And turn old Mr. Fox outside.”

But before they could do so, up jumped old Mr. Fox from under the bench, and cudgelled the whole pack, driving them, with Mrs. Fox, out of the house.

SECOND VERSION.

WHEN old Mr. Fox died there came a wolf to woo, and he knocked at the door, and the cat opened to him; and he made her a bow, and said,
“Good day, Miss Cat, so brisk and gay,
How is it that alone you stay?
And what is it you cook to-day?”

The cat answered,

“Bread so white, and milk so sweet,
Will it please you sit and eat?”

“Thank you very much, Miss Cat,” answered the wolf; “but is Mrs. Fox at home?”

Then the cat said,

“She is sitting upstairs in her grief,
And her eyes with her weeping are sore,
From her sorrow she gets no relief,
Now poor old Mr. Fox is no more!”

The wolf answered,

“Won’t she take another spouse,
To protect her and her house?”

Up went the cat, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
She knocks at the door, rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat!

“Mrs. Fox, are you there?”
“Yes, yes, pussy dear!”
“There’s a suitor below,
Shall I tell him to go?”

But Mrs. Fox asked, “Has the gentleman red breeches and a sharp nose?”

“No,” answered the cat.

“Then I won’t have him,” said Mrs. Fox.

After the wolf was sent away, there came a dog, a stag, a hare, a bear, a lion, and several other wild animals. But they all of them lacked the good endowments possessed by the late Mr. Fox, so that the cat had to send them all away. At last came a young fox. And Mrs. Fox inquired whether he had red breeches and a sharp nose.

“Yes, he has,” said the cat.

“Then I will have him,” said Mrs. Fox, and bade the cat make ready the wedding-feast.

“Now, cat, sweep the parlours and bustle about,
And open the window, turn Mr. Fox out;
Then, if you’ve a fancy for anything nice,
Just manage to catch for yourself a few mice,
You may eat them alone,
I do not want one.”

So she was married to young Master Fox with much dancing and rejoicing, and for anything I have heard to the contrary, they may be dancing still.

THE ELVES

THERE was once a shoemaker, who, through no fault of his own, became so poor that at last he had nothing left but just enough leather to make one pair of shoes. He cut out the shoes at night, so as to set to work upon them next morning; and as he had a good conscience, he laid himself quietly down in his bed, committed himself to heaven, and fell asleep. In the morning, after he had said his prayers, and was going to get to work, he found the pair of shoes made and finished, and standing on his table. He was very much astonished, and could not tell what to think, and he took the shoes in his hand to examine them more nearly; and they were so well made that every stitch was in its right place, just as if they had come from the hand of a master-workman.

Soon after a purchaser entered, and as the shoes fitted him very well, he gave more than the usual price for them, so that the shoemaker had enough money to buy leather for two more pairs of shoes. He cut them out at night, and intended to set to work the next morning with fresh spirit; but that was not to be, for when he got up they were already finished, and a customer even was not lacking, who gave him so much money that he was able to buy leather enough for four new pairs. Early next morning he found the four pairs also finished, and so it always happened; whatever he cut out in the evening was worked up by the morning, so that he was soon in the way of making a good living, and in the end became very well to do.

One night, not long before Christmas, when the shoemaker had finished cutting out, and before he went to bed, he said to his wife,

"How would it be if we were to sit up to-night and see who it is that does us this service?"

His wife agreed, and set a light to burn. Then they both hid in a corner of the room, behind some coats that were hanging up, and then they began to watch. As soon as it was midnight they saw come in two neatly-formed naked little men, who seated themselves before the shoemaker's table, and took up the work that was already prepared, and began to stitch, to pierce, and to hammer so cleverly and quickly with their little fingers that the shoemaker's eyes could scarcely follow them, so full of wonder was he. And they never left off until everything was finished and was standing ready on the table, and then they jumped up and ran off.

The next morning the shoemaker's wife said to her husband, "Those little men have made us rich, and we ought to show ourselves grateful. With all their running about, and having nothing to cover them, they must be very cold. I'll tell you what; I will make little shirts, coats, waistcoats, and breeches for them, and knit each of them a pair of stockings, and you shall make each of them a pair of shoes."

The husband consented willingly, and at night, when everything was finished, they laid the gifts together on the table, instead of the cut-out work, and placed themselves so that they could observe how the little men would behave. When midnight came, they rushed in, ready to set to work, but when they found, instead of the pieces of prepared leather, the neat little garments put ready for them, they stood a moment in surprise, and then they testified the greatest delight. With the greatest swiftness they took up the pretty garments and slipped them on, singing,

“What spruce and dandy boys are we!
No longer cobblers we will be.”

Then they hopped and danced about, jumping over the chairs and tables, and at last they danced out at the door.

From that time they were never seen again; but it always went well with the shoemaker as long as he lived, and whatever he took in hand prospered.

(II.)

THERE was once a poor servant maid, who was very cleanly and industrious; she swept down the house every day, and put the sweepings on a great heap by the door. One morning, before she began her work, she found a letter, and as she could not read, she laid her broom in the corner, and took the letter to her master and mistress, to see what it was about; and it was an invitation from the elves, who wished the maid to come and stand godmother to one of their children. The maid did not know what to do; and as she was told that no one ought to refuse the elves anything, she made up her mind to go. So there came three little elves, who conducted her into the middle of a high mountain, where the little people lived. Here everything was of a very small size, but more fine and elegant than can be told. The mother of the child lay in a bed made of ebony, studded with pearls, the counterpane was embroidered with gold, the cradle was of ivory, and the bathing-tub of gold. So the maid stood godmother, and was then for going home, but the elves begged her to stay at least three more days with them; and so she consented, and spent the time in mirth and jollity, and the elves seemed very fond of her. At last, when she was ready to go away, they filled her pockets full of gold, and led her back again out of the mountain. When she got back to the house, she was going to begin working again, and took her broom in her hand; it was still standing in the corner where she had left it, and began to sweep. Then came up some strangers and asked her who she was, and what she was doing. And she found that instead of three days, she had been seven years with the elves in the mountain, and that during that time her master and mistress had died.

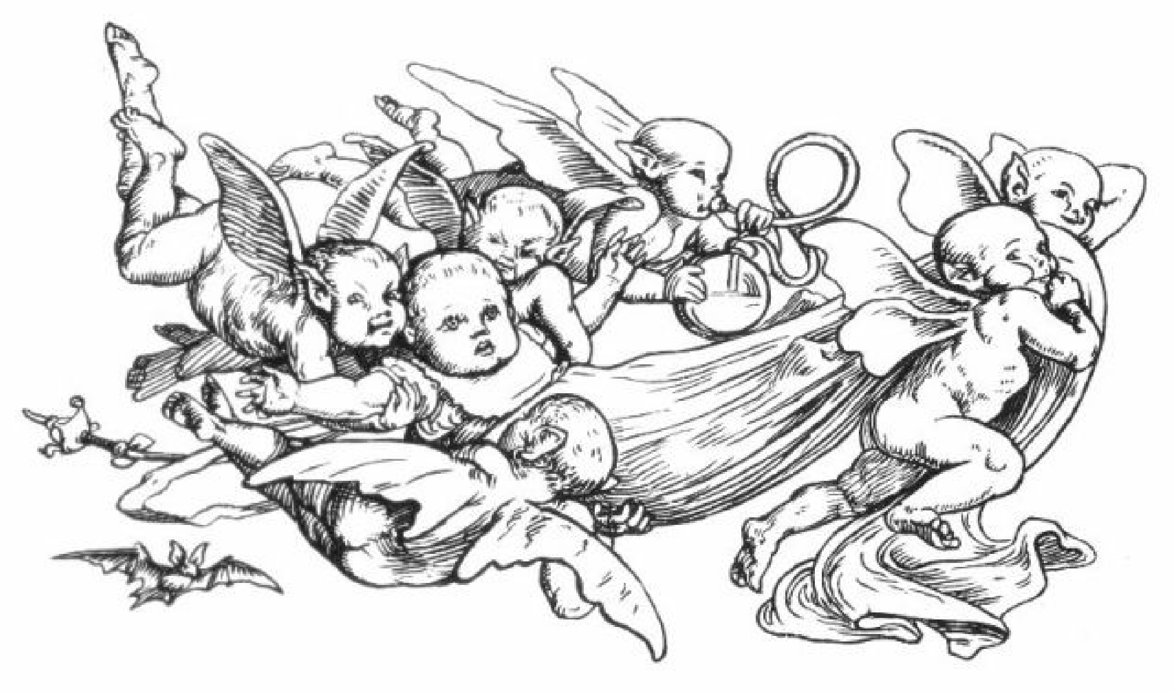
(III.)

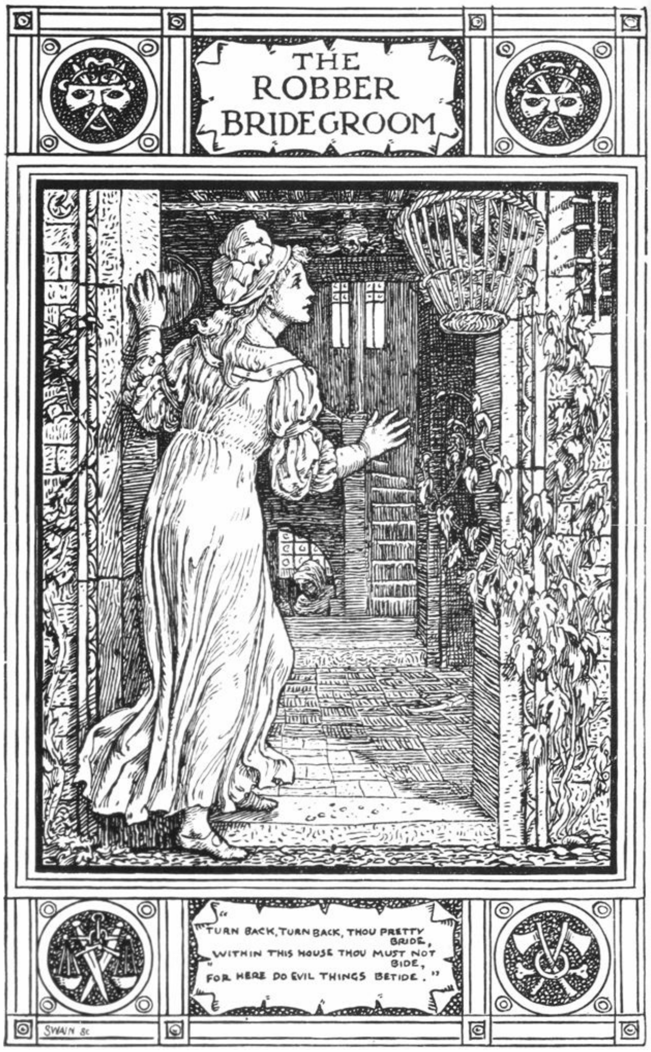
The elves once took a child away from its mother, and left in its place a changeling with a big head and staring eyes, who did nothing but eat and drink. The mother in her trouble went to her neighbours and asked their advice. The neighbours told her to take the changeling into the kitchen and put it near the hearth, and then to make up the fire, and boil water in two egg-shells; that would make the changeling laugh, and if he laughed, it would be all over with him. So the woman did as her neighbours advised.

And when she set the egg-shells of water on the fire, the changeling said,

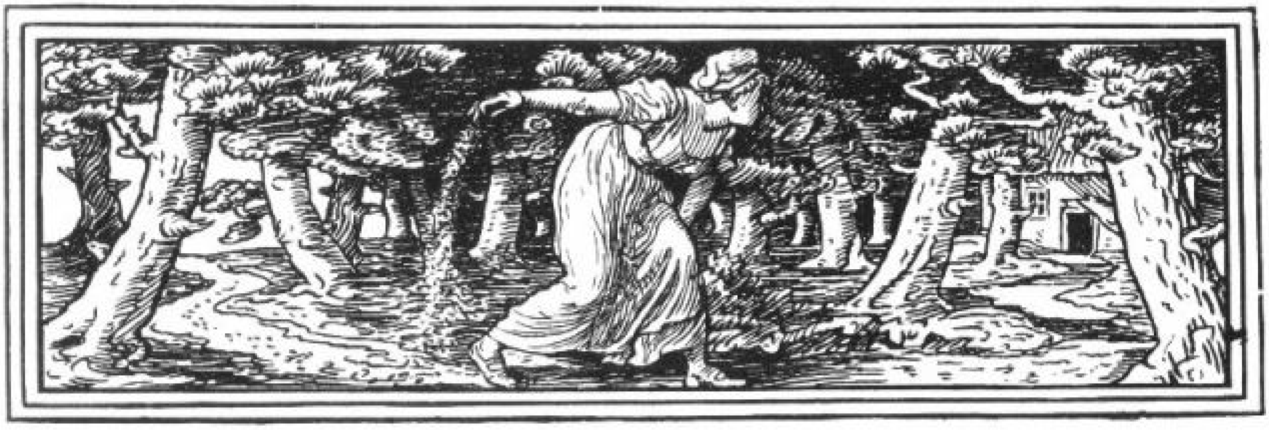
“Though old I be
As forest tree,
Cooking in an egg-shell never did I see!”

and began to laugh. And directly there came in a crowd of elves bringing in the right child; and they laid it near the hearth, and carried the changeling away with them.




THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM
"TURN BACK, TURN BACK, THOU PRETTY BRIDE,
WITHIN THIS HOUSE THOU MUST NOT BIDE,
FOR HERE DO EVIL THINGS BETIDE."
SWAIN SC

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM



THERE was once a miller who had a beautiful daughter, and when she was grown up he became anxious that she should be well married and taken care of; so he thought,

"If a decent sort of man comes and asks her in marriage, I will give her to him."

Soon after a suitor came forward who seemed very well to do, and as the miller knew nothing to his disadvantage, he promised him his daughter. But the girl did not seem to love him as a bride should love her bridegroom; she had no confidence in him; as often as she saw him or thought about him, she felt a chill at her heart. One day he said to her,

"You are to be my bride, and yet you have never been to see me."

The girl answered,

"I do not know where your house is."

Then he said,

"My house is a long way in the wood."

She began to make excuses, and said she could not find the way to it; but the bridegroom said,

"You must come and pay me a visit next Sunday; I have already invited company, and I will strew ashes on the path through the wood, so that you will be sure to find it."

When Sunday came, and the girl set out on her way, she felt very uneasy without knowing exactly why; and she filled both pockets full of peas and lentils. There were ashes strewed on the path through the wood, but, nevertheless, at each step she cast to the right and left a few peas on the ground. So she went on the whole day until she came to the middle of the wood, where it was the darkest, and there stood a lonely house, not pleasant in her eyes, for it was dismal and unhomelike. She walked in, but there was no one there, and the greatest stillness reigned. Suddenly she heard a voice cry,

"Turn back, turn back, thou pretty bride,
Within this house thou must not bide,

For here do evil things betide.”

The girl glanced round, and perceived that the voice came from a bird who was hanging in a cage by the wall. And again it cried,
“Turn back, turn back, thou pretty bride,
Within this house thou must not bide,
For here do evil things betide.”

Then the pretty bride went on from one room into another through the whole house, but it was quite empty, and no soul to be found in it.

At last she reached the cellar, and there sat a very old woman nodding her head.

“Can you tell me,” said the bride, “if my bridegroom lives here?”

“Oh, poor child,” answered the old woman, “do you know what has happened to you? You are in a place of cut-throats. You thought you were a bride, and soon to be married, but death will be your spouse. Look here, I have a great kettle of water to set on, and when once they have you in their power they will cut you in pieces without mercy, cook you, and eat you, for they are cannibals. Unless I have pity on you, and save you, all is over with you!”

Then the old woman hid her behind a great cask, where she could not be seen.

“Be as still as a mouse,” said she; “do not move or go away, or else you are lost. At night, when the robbers are asleep, we will escape. I have been waiting a long time for an opportunity.”

No sooner was it settled than the wicked gang entered the house. They brought another young woman with them, dragging her along, and they were drunk, and would not listen to her cries and groans. They gave her wine to drink, three glasses full, one of white wine, one of red, and one of yellow, and then they cut her in pieces. The poor bride all the while shaking and trembling when she saw what a fate the robbers had intended for her. One of them noticed on the little finger of their victim a golden ring, and as he could not draw it off easily, he took an axe and chopped it off, but the finger jumped away, and fell behind the cask on the bride’s lap. The robber took up a light to look for it, but he could not find it. Then said one of the others,

“Have you looked behind the great cask?”

But the old woman cried,

“Come to supper, and leave off looking till to-morrow; the finger cannot run away.”

Then the robbers said the old woman was right, and they left off searching, and sat down to eat, and the old woman dropped some sleeping stuff into their wine, so that before long they stretched themselves on the cellar floor, sleeping and snoring. When the bride heard that, she came from behind the cask, and had to make her way among the sleepers lying all about on the ground, and she felt very much afraid lest she might awaken any of them. But by good luck she passed through, and the old woman with her, and they opened the door, and they made all haste to leave that house of murderers. The wind had carried away the ashes from the path, but the peas and lentils had budded and sprung up, and the moonshine upon them showed the way. And they went on through the night, till in the morning they reached the mill. Then the girl related to her father all that had happened to her.

When the wedding-day came, the friends and neighbours assembled, the miller having invited them, and the bridegroom also appeared. When they were all seated at table, each one had to tell a story. But the bride sat still, and said nothing, till at last the bridegroom said to her,

“Now, sweetheart, do you know no story? Tell us something.”

She answered,

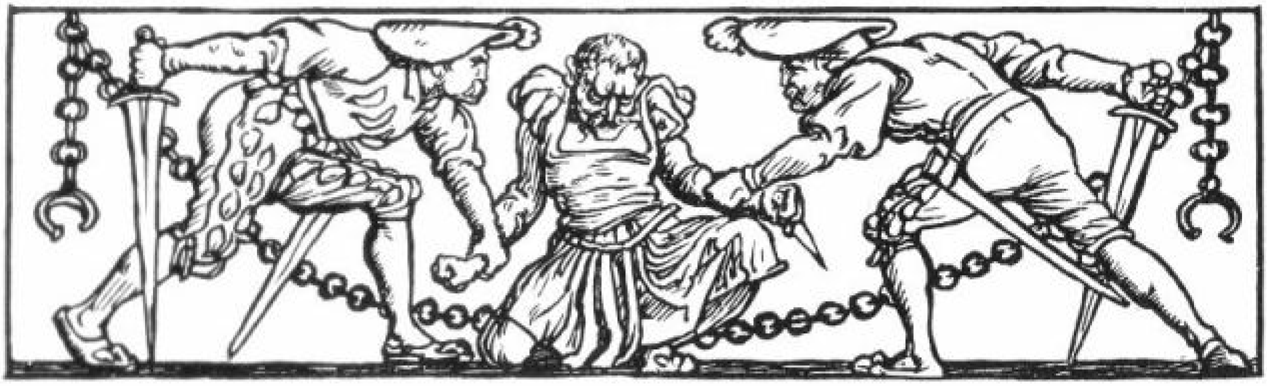
“I will tell you my dream. I was going alone through a wood, and I came at last to a house in which there was no living soul, but by the wall was a bird in a cage, who cried,

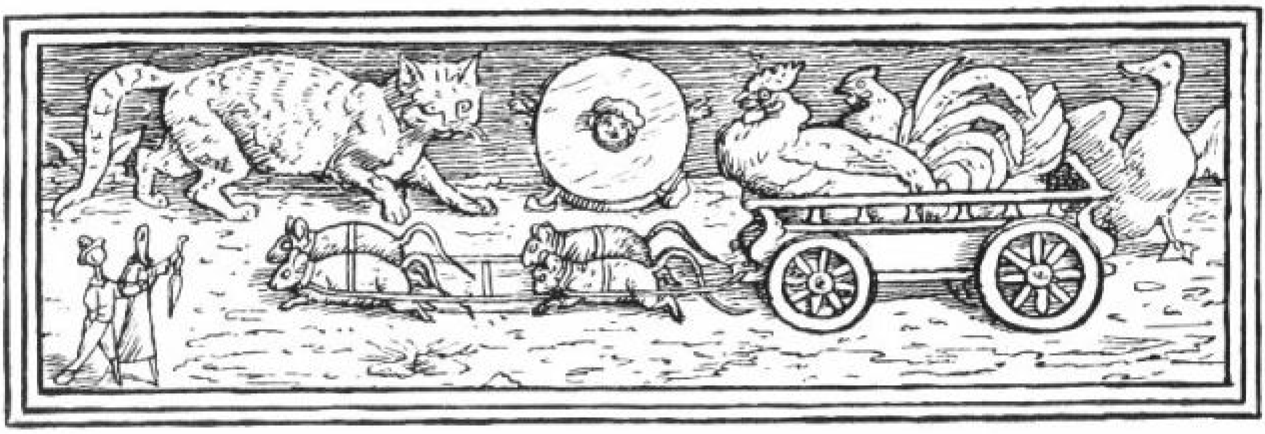
‘Turn back, turn back, thou pretty bride,
Within this house thou must not bide,
For evil things do here betide.’

“And then again it said it. Sweetheart, the dream is not ended. Then I went through all the rooms, and they were all empty, and it was so lonely and wretched. At last I went down into the cellar, and there sat an old old woman, nodding her head. I asked her if my bridegroom lived in that house, and she answered, ‘Ah, poor child, you have come into a place of cut-throats; your bridegroom does live here, but he will kill you and cut you in pieces, and then cook and eat you.’ Sweetheart, the dream is not ended. But the old woman hid me behind a great cask, and no sooner had she done so than the robbers came home, dragging with them a young woman, and they gave her to drink wine thrice, white, red, and yellow. Sweetheart, the dream is not yet ended. And then they killed her, and cut her in pieces. Sweetheart, my dream is not yet ended. And one of the robbers saw a gold ring on the finger of the young woman, and as it was difficult to get off, he took an axe and chopped off the finger, which jumped upwards, and then fell behind the great cask on my lap. And here is the finger with the ring!”

At these words she drew it forth, and showed it to the company.

The robber, who during the story had grown deadly white, sprang up, and would have escaped, but the folks held him fast, and delivered him up to justice. And he and his whole gang were, for their evil deeds, condemned and executed.





MR KORBES

A COCK and a hen once wanted to go a journey together. So the cock built a beautiful carriage with four red wheels, and he harnessed four little mice to it. And the cock and the hen got into it, and were driven off. Very soon they met a cat, who asked where they were going. The cock answered,

“On Mr. Korbes a call to pay,
And that is where we go to-day!”

“Take me with you,” said the cat.

The cock answered,

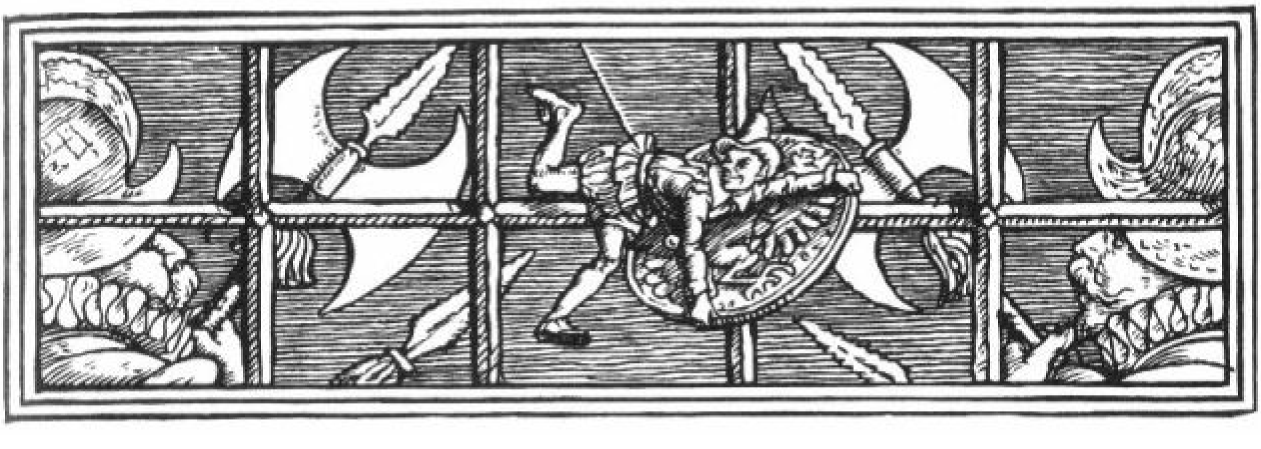
“Very well, only you must sit well back, and then you will not fall forward.”

“And pray take care
Of my red wheels there;
And wheels be steady,
And mice be ready
On Mr. Korbes a call to pay,
For that is where we go to-day!”

Then there came up a millstone, then an egg, then a duck, then a pin, and lastly a needle, who all got up on the carriage, and were driven along. But when they came to Mr. Korbes’s house he was not at home. So the mice drew the carriage into the barn, the cock and the hen flew up and perched on a beam, the cat sat by the fireside, the duck settled on the water; but the egg wrapped itself in the towel, the pin stuck itself in the chair cushion, the needle jumped into the bed among the pillows, and the millstone laid itself by the door. Then Mr. Korbes came home, and went to the hearth to make a fire, but the cat threw ashes in his eyes. Then he ran quickly into the kitchen to wash himself, but the duck splashed water in his face. Then he was going to wipe it with the towel, but the egg broke in it, and stuck his eyelids together. In order to get a little peace he sat down in his chair, but the pin ran into him, and, starting up, in his vexation he threw himself on the bed, but as his head fell on the pillow, in went the needle, so that he called out with the pain, and madly rushed out. But when he reached the housedoor the millstone jumped up and struck him dead.

What a bad man Mr. Korbes must have been!

TOM THUMB'S TRAVELS



THERE was once a tailor who had a son no higher than a thumb, so he was called Tom Thumb. Notwithstanding his small size, he had plenty of spirit, and one day he said to his father,

"Father, go out into the world I must and will."

"Very well, my son," said the old man, and taking a long darning needle, he put a knob of sealing-wax on the end, saying,

"Here is a sword to take with you on your journey."

Now the little tailor wanted to have one more meal first, and so he trotted into the kitchen to see what sort of a farewell feast his mother had cooked for him. It was all ready, and the dish was standing on the hearth. Then said he,

"Mother, what is the fare to-day?"

"You can see for yourself," said the mother. Then Tom Thumb ran to the hearth and peeped into the dish, but as he stretched his neck too far over it, the steam caught him and carried him up the chimney. For a time he floated with the steam about in the air, but at last he sank down to the ground. Then the little tailor found himself out in the wide world, and he wandered about, and finally engaged himself to a master tailor, but the food was not good enough for him.

"Mistress," said Tom Thumb, "if you do not give us better victuals, I shall go out early in the morning and write with a piece of chalk on the house-door, 'Plenty of potatoes to eat, and but little meat; so good-bye, Mr. Potato.'"

"What are you after, grasshopper?" said the mistress, and growing angry she seized a piece of rag to beat him off; but he crept underneath her thimble, and then peeped at her, and put his tongue out at her. She took up the thimble, and would have seized him, but he hopped among the rags, and as the mistress turned them over to find him, he stepped into a crack in the table. "He-hee! Mistress!" cried he, sticking out his head, and when she was just going to grasp him, he jumped into the table-drawer. But in the end she caught him, and drove him out of the house.

So he wandered on until he came to a great wood; and there he met a gang of robbers that were going to rob the king's treasury. When they saw the little tailor, they thought to themselves,

"Such a little fellow might easily creep through a key-hole, and serve instead of a pick-lock."

"Holloa!" cried one, "you giant Goliath, will you come with us to the treasure-chamber? you can slip in, and then throw us out the money."

Tom Thumb considered a little, but at last he consented and went with them to the treasure-chamber. Then he looked all over the doors above and below, but there was no crack to be seen; at last he found one broad enough to let him pass, and he was getting through, when one of the sentinels that stood before the door saw him, and said to the other,

"See what an ugly spider is crawling there! I will put an end to him."

"Let the poor creature alone," said the other, "it has done you no harm."

So Tom Thumb got safely through the crack into the treasure-chamber, and he opened the window beneath which the thieves were standing, and he threw them out one dollar after another. Just as he had well settled to the work, he heard the king coming to take a look at his treasure, and so Tom

Thumb had to creep away. The king presently remarked that many good dollars were wanting, but could not imagine how they could have been stolen, as the locks and bolts were in good order, and everything seemed secure. And he went away, saying to the two sentinels,

"Keep good guard; there is some one after the money."

When Tom Thumb had set to work anew, they heard the chink, chink of the money, and hastily rushed in to catch the thief. But the little tailor, as he heard them coming, was too quick for them, and, hiding in a corner, he covered himself up with a dollar, so that nothing of him was to be seen, and then he mocked the sentinels, crying, "Here I am!" They ran about, and when they came near him, he was soon in another corner under a dollar, crying, "Here I am!" Then the sentinels ran towards him, and in a moment he was in a third corner, crying, "Here I am!" In this way he made fools of them, and dodged them so long about the treasure-chamber, that they got tired and went away. Then he set to work, and threw the dollars out of the window, one after the other, till they were all gone; and when it came to the last, as he flung it with all his might, he jumped nimbly on it, and flew with it out of the window. The robbers gave him great praise, saying,

"You are a most valiant hero; will you be our captain?"

But Tom Thumb thanked them, and said he would like to see the world first. Then they divided the spoil; but the little tailor's share was only one farthing, which was all he was able to carry.

Then binding his sword to his side, he bid the robbers good day, and started on his way. He applied to several master tailors, but they would not have anything to do with him; and at last he hired himself as indoor servant at an inn. The maid servants took a great dislike to him, for he used to see everything they did without being seen by them, and he told the master and mistress about what they took from the plates, and what they carried away out of the cellar. And they said, "Wait a little, we will pay you out," and took counsel together to play him some mischievous trick. Once when one of the maids was mowing the grass in the garden she saw Tom Thumb jumping about and creeping among the cabbages, and she mowed him with the grass, tied all together in a bundle, and threw it to the cows. Among the cows was a big black one, who swallowed him down, without doing him any harm. But he did not like his lodging, it was so dark, and there was no candle to be had. When the cow was being milked, he cried out,

"Strip, strap, strull,
Will the pail soon be full?"

But he was not understood because of the noise of the milk. Presently the landlord came into the stable and said,

"To-morrow this cow is to be slaughtered."

At that Tom Thumb felt very terrified; and with his shrillest voice he cried,

"Let me out first; I am sitting inside here!"

The master heard him quite plainly, but could not tell where the voice came from.

“Where are you?” asked he.

“Inside the black one,” answered Tom Thumb, but the master, not understanding the meaning of it all, went away.

The next morning the cow was slaughtered. Happily, in all the cutting and slashing he escaped all harm, and he slipped among the sausage-meat. When the butcher came near to set to work, he cried with all his might,

“Don’t cut so deep, don’t cut so deep, I am underneath!”

But for the sound of the butcher’s knife his voice was not heard. Now, poor Tom Thumb was in great straits, and he had to jump nimbly out of the way of the knife, and finally he came through with a whole skin. But he could not get quite away, and he had to let himself remain with the lumps of fat to be put in a black pudding. His quarters were rather narrow, and he had to be hung up in the chimney in the smoke, and to remain there a very long while. At last, when winter came he was taken down, for the black pudding was to be set before a guest. And when the landlady cut the black pudding in slices, he had to take great care not to lift up his head too much, or it might be shaved off at the neck. At last he saw his opportunity, took courage, and jumped out.

But as things had gone so badly with him in that house, Tom Thumb did not mean to stay there, but betook himself again to his wanderings. His freedom, however, did not last long. In the open fields there came a fox who snapped him up without thinking.

“Oh, Mr. Fox,” cries Tom Thumb, “here I am sticking in your throat; let me out again.”

“Very well,” answered the fox. “It is true you are no better than nothing; promise me the hens in your father’s yard, then I will let you go.”

“With all my heart,” answered Tom Thumb, “you shall have them all, I promise you.”

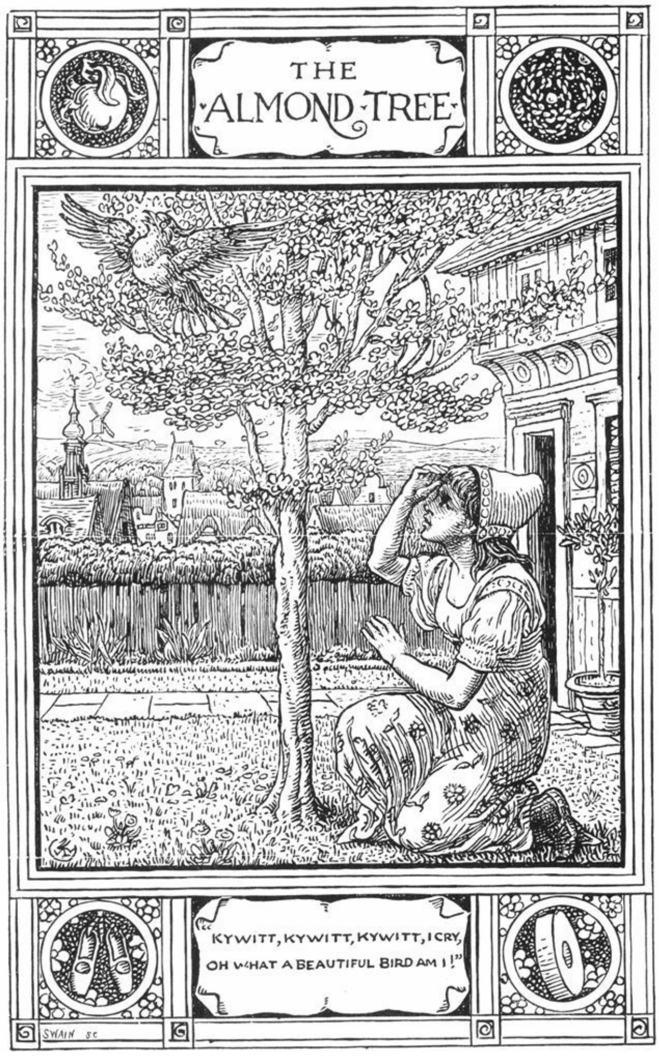
Then the fox let him go, and he ran home. When the father saw his dear little son again, he gave the fox willingly all the hens that he had.

“And look, besides, what a fine piece of money I’ve got for you!” said Tom Thumb, and handed over the farthing which he had earned in his wanderings.

But how, you ask, could they let the fox devour all the poor chicks?

Why, you silly child, you know that your father would rather have you than the hens in his yard!

THE ALMOND TREE


THE ALMOND-TREE
"KYWITT, KYWITT, KYWITT, I CRY,
OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BIRD AM I!"
SWAIN SC

A LONG time ago, perhaps as much as two thousand years, there was a rich man, and he had a beautiful and pious wife, and they loved each other very much, and they had no children, though they wished greatly for some, and the wife prayed for one day and night. Now, in the courtyard in front of their house stood an almond tree; and one day in winter the wife was standing beneath it, and paring an apple, and as she pared it she cut her finger, and the blood fell upon the snow.

“Ah,” said the woman, sighing deeply, and looking down at the blood, “if only I could have a child as red as blood, and as white as snow!”

And as she said these words, her heart suddenly grew light, and she felt sure she should have her wish. So she went back to the house, and when a month had passed the snow was gone; in two months everything was green; in three months the flowers sprang out of the earth; in four months the trees were in full leaf, and the branches were thickly entwined; the little birds began to sing, so that the woods echoed, and the blossoms fell from the trees; when the fifth month had passed the wife stood under the almond tree, and it smelt so sweet that her heart leaped within her, and she fell on her knees for joy; and when the sixth month had gone, the fruit was thick and fine, and she remained still; and the seventh month she gathered the almonds, and ate them eagerly, and was sick and sorrowful; and when the eighth month had passed she called to her husband, and said, weeping,

"If I die, bury me under the almond tree."

Then she was comforted and happy until the ninth month had passed, and then she bore a child as white as snow and as red as blood, and when she saw it her joy was so great that she died.

Her husband buried her under the almond tree, and he wept sore; time passed, and he became less sad; and after he had grieved a little more he left off, and then he took another wife.

His second wife bore him a daughter, and his first wife's child was a son, as red as blood and as white as snow. Whenever the wife looked at her daughter she felt great love for her, but whenever she looked at the little boy, evil thoughts came into her heart, of how she could get all her husband's money for her daughter, and how the boy stood in the way; and so she took great hatred to him, and drove him from one corner to another, and gave him a buffet here and a cuff there, so that the poor child was always in disgrace; when he came back after school hours there was no peace for him.

Once, when the wife went into the room upstairs, her little daughter followed her, and said,

"Mother, give me an apple."

"Yes, my child," said the mother, and gave her a fine apple out of the chest, and the chest had a great heavy lid with a strong iron lock.

"Mother," said the little girl, "shall not my brother have one too?"

That was what the mother expected, and she said,

"Yes, when he comes back from school."

And when she saw from the window that he was coming, an evil thought crossed her mind, and she snatched the apple, and took it from her little daughter, saying,

"You shall not have it before your brother."

Then she threw the apple into the chest, and shut to the lid. Then the little boy came in at the door, and she said to him in a kind tone, but with evil looks,

"My son, will you have an apple?"

"Mother," said the boy, "how terrible you look! yes, give me an apple!"

Then she spoke as kindly as before, holding up the cover of the chest,

"Come here and take out one for yourself."

And as the boy was stooping over the open chest, crash went the lid down, so that his head flew off among the red apples. But then the woman felt great terror, and wondered how she could escape the blame. And she went to the chest of drawers in her bedroom and took a white handkerchief out of the nearest drawer, and fitting the head to the neck, she bound them with the handkerchief, so that nothing should be seen, and set him on a chair before the door with the apple in his hand.

Then came little Marjory into the kitchen to her mother, who was standing before the fire stirring a pot of hot water.

"Mother," said Marjory, "my brother is sitting before the door and he has an apple in his hand, and looks very pale; I asked him to give me the apple, but he did not answer me; it seems very strange."

"Go again to him," said the mother, "and if he will not answer you, give him a box on the ear."

So Marjory went again and said,

"Brother, give me the apple."

But as he took no notice, she gave him a box on the ear, and his head fell off, at which she was greatly terrified, and began to cry and scream, and ran to her mother, and said,

"O mother! I have knocked my brother's head off!" and cried and screamed, and would not cease.

"O Marjory!" said her mother, "what have you done? but keep quiet, that no one may see there is anything the matter; it can't be helped now; we will put him out of the way safely."

When the father came home and sat down to table, he said,

"Where is my son?"

But the mother was filling a great dish full of black broth, and Marjory was crying bitterly, for she could not refrain. Then the father said again,

"Where is my son?"

"Oh," said the mother, "he is gone into the country to his great-uncle's to stay for a little while."

"What should he go for?" said the father, "and without bidding me good-bye, too!"

"Oh, he wanted to go so much, and he asked me to let him stay there six weeks; he will be well taken care of."

"Dear me," said the father, "I am quite sad about it; it was not right of him to go without bidding me good-bye."

With that he began to eat, saying,

"Marjory, what are you crying for? Your brother will come back some time."

After a while he said,

"Well, wife, the food is very good; give me some more."

And the more he ate the more he wanted, until he had eaten it all up, and he threw the bones under the table. Then Marjory went to her chest of drawers, and took one of her best handkerchiefs from the bottom drawer, and picked up all the bones from under the table and tied them up in her handkerchief, and went out at the door crying bitterly. She laid them in the green grass under the almond tree, and immediately her heart grew light again, and she wept no more. Then the almond tree began to wave to and fro, and the boughs drew together and then parted, just like a clapping of hands for joy; then a cloud rose from the tree, and in the midst of the cloud there burned a fire, and out of the fire a beautiful bird arose, and, singing most sweetly, soared high into the air; and when he had flown away, the almond tree remained as it was before, but the handkerchief full of bones was gone. Marjory felt quite glad and light-hearted, just as if her brother were still alive. So she went back merrily into the house and had her dinner.

The bird, when it flew away, perched on the roof of a goldsmith's house, and began to sing,

"It was my mother who murdered me;
It was my father who ate of me;
It was my sister Marjory
Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

The goldsmith was sitting in his shop making a golden chain, and when he heard the bird, who was sitting on his roof and singing, he started up to go and look, and as he passed over his threshold he lost one of his slippers; and he went into the middle of the street with a slipper on one foot and only a sock on the other; with his apron on, and the gold chain in one hand and the pincers in the other; and so he stood in the sunshine looking up at the bird.

"Bird," said he, "how beautifully you sing; do sing that piece over again."

"No," said the bird, "I do not sing for nothing twice; if you will give me that gold chain I will sing again."

"Very well," said the goldsmith, "here is the gold chain; now do as you said."

Down came the bird and took the gold chain in his right claw, perched in front of the goldsmith, and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;
It was my father who ate of me;
It was my sister Marjory
Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

Then the bird flew to a shoemaker's, and perched on his roof, and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;
It was my father who ate of me;
It was my sister Marjory
Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.

Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

When the shoemaker heard, he ran out of his door in his shirt sleeves and looked up at the roof of his house, holding his hand to shade his eyes from the sun.

"Bird," said he, "how beautifully you sing!"

Then he called in at his door,

"Wife, come out directly; here is a bird singing beautifully; only listen."

Then he called his daughter, all his children, and acquaintance, both young men and maidens, and they came up the street and gazed on the bird, and saw how beautiful it was with red and green feathers, and round its throat was as it were gold, and its eyes twinkled in its head like stars.

"Bird," said the shoemaker, "do sing that piece over again."

"No," said the bird, "I may not sing for nothing twice; you must give me something."

"Wife," said the man, "go into the shop; on the top shelf stands a pair of red shoes; bring them here."

So the wife went and brought the shoes.

"Now bird," said the man, "sing us that piece again."

And the bird came down and took the shoes in his left claw, and flew up again to the roof, and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;
It was my father who ate of me;
It was my sister Marjory
Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

And when he had finished he flew away, with the chain in his right claw and the shoes in his left claw, and he flew till he reached a mill, and the mill went "clip-clap, clip-clap, clip-clap." And in the mill sat twenty millers-men hewing a millstone— "hick-hack, hick-hack, hick-hack," while the mill was going "clip-clap, clip-clap, clip-clap." And the bird perched on a linden tree that stood in front of the mill, and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;"

Here one of the men looked up.

"It was my father who ate of me;"

Then two more looked up and listened.

"It was my sister Marjory"

Here four more looked up.

"Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,"

Now there were only eight left hewing.

"And laid them under the almond tree."

Now only five.

"Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,"

Now only one.

"Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

At length the last one left off, and he only heard the end.

"Bird," said he, "how beautifully you sing; let me hear it all; sing that again!"

"No," said the bird, "I may not sing it twice for nothing; if you will give me the millstone I will sing it again."

"Indeed," said the man, "if it belonged to me alone you should have it."

"All right," said the others, "if he sings again he shall have it."

Then the bird came down, and all the twenty millers heaved up the stone with poles— "yo! heave-ho! yo! heave-ho!" and the bird stuck his head through the hole in the middle, and with the millstone round his neck he flew up to the tree and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;
It was my father who ate of me;
It was my sister Marjory
Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!"

And when he had finished, he spread his wings, having in the right claw the chain, and in the left claw the shoes, and round his neck the millstone, and he flew away to his father's house.

In the parlour sat the father, the mother, and Marjory at the table; the father said,

"How light-hearted and cheerful I feel."

"Nay," said the mother, "I feel very low, just as if a great storm were coming."

But Marjory sat weeping; and the bird came flying, and perched on the roof.

"Oh," said the father, "I feel so joyful, and the sun is shining so bright; it is as if I were going to meet with an old friend."

"Nay," said the wife, "I am terrified, my teeth chatter, and there is fire in my veins," and she tore open her dress to get air; and Marjory sat in a corner and wept, with her plate before her, until it was quite full of tears. Then the bird perched on the almond tree, and sang,

"It was my mother who murdered me;"

And the mother stopped her ears and hid her eyes, and would neither see nor hear; nevertheless, the noise of a fearful storm was in her ears, and in her eyes a quivering and burning as of lightning.

“It was my father who ate of me;”

“O mother!” said the father, “there is a beautiful bird singing so finely, and the sun shines, and everything smells as sweet as cinnamon.

“It was my sister Marjory”

Marjory hid her face in her lap and wept, and the father said,

“I must go out to see the bird.”

“Oh do not go!” said the wife, “I feel as if the house were on fire.”

But the man went out and looked at the bird.

“Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,
And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!”

With that the bird let fall the gold chain upon his father’s neck, and it fitted him exactly. So he went indoors and said,

“Look what a beautiful chain the bird has given me.”

Then his wife was so terrified that she fell all along on the floor, and her cap came off. Then the bird began again to sing,

“It was my mother who murdered me;”

“Oh,” groaned the mother, “that I were a thousand fathoms under ground, so as not to be obliged to hear it.”

“It was my father who ate of me;”

Then the woman lay as if she were dead.

“It was my sister Marjory”

“Oh,” said Marjory, “I will go out, too, and see if the bird will give me anything.” And so she went.

“Who all my bones in pieces found;
Them in a handkerchief she bound,”

Then he threw the shoes down to her.

“And laid them under the almond tree.
Kywitt, kywitt, kywitt, I cry,
Oh what a beautiful bird am I!”

And poor Marjory all at once felt happy and joyful, and put on her red shoes, and danced and jumped for joy.

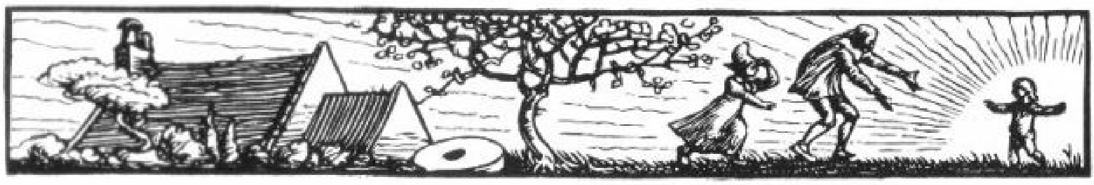
“Oh dear,” said she, “I felt so sad before I went outside, and now my heart is so light! He is a charming bird to have given me a pair of red shoes.”

But the mother’s hair stood on end, and looked like flame, and she said,

“Even if the world is coming to an end, I must go out for a little relief.”

Just as she came outside the door, crash went the millstone on her head, and crushed her flat. The father and daughter rushed out, and saw smoke and flames of fire rise up; but when that had gone by, there stood the little brother; and he took his father and Marjory by the hand, and they felt very happy and content, and went indoors, and sat to the table, and had their dinner.

OLD SULTAN



THERE was once a peasant who owned a faithful dog called Sultan, now grown so old that he had lost all his teeth, and could lay hold of nothing. One day the man was standing at the door of his house with his wife, and he said,

"I shall kill old Sultan to-morrow; he is of no good any longer."

His wife felt sorry for the poor dog, and answered, "He has served us for so many years, and has kept with us so faithfully, he deserves food and shelter in his old age."

"Dear me, you do not seem to understand the matter," said the husband; "he has never a tooth, and no thief would mind him in the least, so I do not see why he should not be made away with. If he has served us well, we have given him plenty of good food."

The poor dog, who was lying stretched out in the sun not far off, heard all they said, and was very sad to think that the next day would be his last. He bethought him of his great friend the wolf, and slipped out in the evening to the wood to see him, and related to him the fate that was awaiting him.

"Listen to me, old fellow," said the wolf; "be of good courage, I will help you in your need. I have thought of a way. Early to-morrow morning your master is going hay-making with his wife, and they will take their child with them, so that no one will be left at home. They will be sure to lay the child in the shade behind the hedge while they are at work; you must lie by its side, just as if you were watching it. Then I will come out of the wood and steal away the child; you must rush after me, as if to save it from me. Then I must let it fall, and you must bring it back again to its parents, who will think that you have saved it, and will be much too grateful to do you any harm; on the contrary, you will be received into full favour, and they will never let you want for anything again."

The dog was pleased with the plan, which was carried out accordingly. When the father saw the wolf running away with his child he cried out, and when old Sultan brought it back again, he was much pleased with him, and patted him, saying,

"Not a hair of him shall be touched; he shall have food and shelter as long as he lives." And he said to his wife,

"Go home directly and make some good stew for old Sultan, something that does not need biting; and get the pillow from my bed for him to lie on."

From that time old Sultan was made so comfortable that he had nothing left to wish for. Before long the wolf paid him a visit, to congratulate him that all had gone so well.

"But, old fellow," said he, "you must wink at my making off by chance with a fat sheep of your master's; perhaps one will escape some fine day."

"Don't reckon on that," answered the dog; "I cannot consent to it; I must remain true to my master."

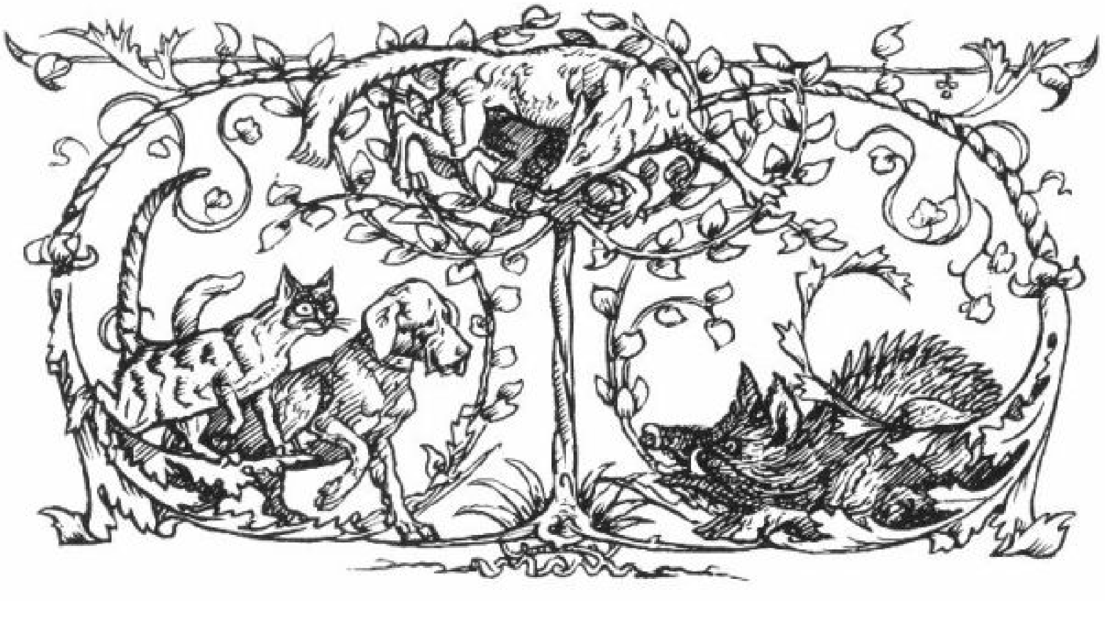
But the wolf, not supposing it was said in earnest, came sneaking in the night to carry off the sheep. But the master, who had been warned by the faithful Sultan of the wolf's intention, was waiting for him, and gave him a fine hiding with the threshing-flail. So the wolf had to make his escape, calling out to the dog,

"You shall pay for this, you traitor!"

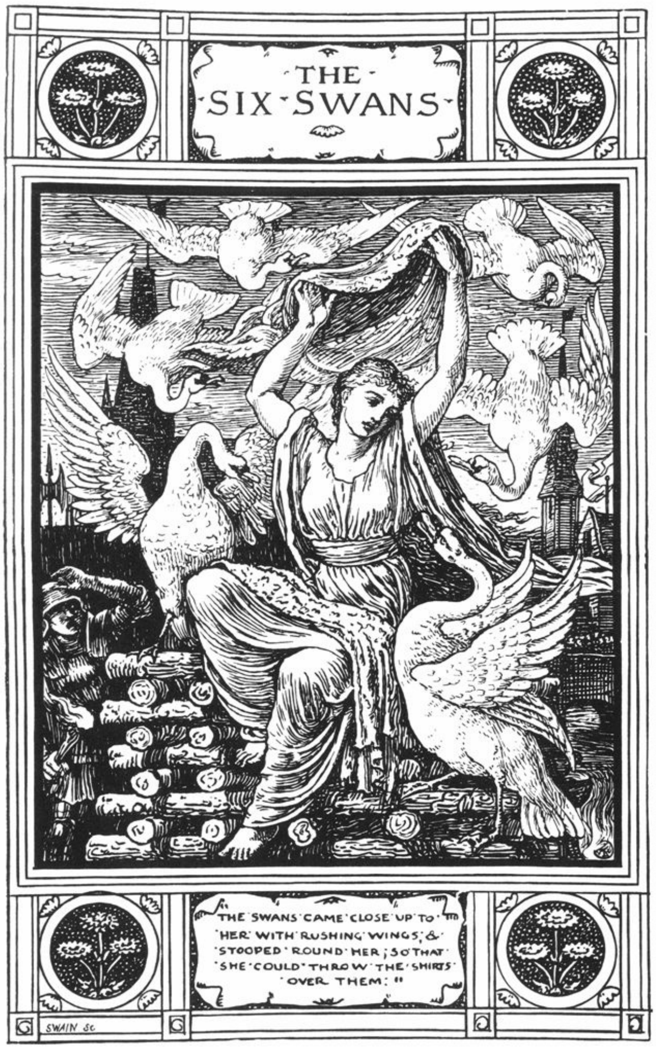
The next morning the wolf sent the wild boar to call out the dog; and to appoint a meeting in the wood to receive satisfaction from him. Old Sultan could find no second but a cat with three legs; and as they set off together, the poor thing went limping along, holding her tail up in the air. The wolf and his second were already on the spot; when they saw their antagonists coming, and caught sight of the elevated tail of the cat, they thought it was a sabre they were bringing with them. And as the poor thing came limping on three legs, they supposed it was lifting a big stone to throw at them. This frightened them very much; the wild boar crept among the leaves, and the wolf clambered up into a tree. And when the dog and cat came up, they were surprised not to see any one there. However, the wild boar was not perfectly hidden in the leaves, and the tips of his ears peeped out. And when the cat caught sight of one, she thought it was a mouse, and sprang upon it, seizing it with her teeth. Out leaped the wild boar with a dreadful cry, and ran away shouting,

"There is the culprit in the tree!"

And the dog and the cat looking up caught sight of the wolf, who came down, quite ashamed of his timidity, and made peace with the dog once more.



THE SIX SWANS


THE SIX SWANS
"THE SWANS CAME CLOSE UP TO HER WITH RUSHING WINGS; & STOOPED ROUND HER; SO THAT SHE COULD THROW THE SHIRTS OVER THEM:"
SWAIN Sc

ONCE on a time a king was hunting in a great wood, and he pursued a wild animal so eagerly that none of his people could follow him. When evening came he stood still, and looking round him he found that he had lost his way; and seeking a path, he found none. Then all at once he saw an old woman with a nodding head coming up to him; and it was a witch.

“My good woman,” said he, “can you show me the way out of the wood?”

“Oh yes, my lord king,” answered she, “certainly I can; but I must make a condition, and if you do not fulfil it, you will never get out of the wood again, but die there of hunger.”

“What is the condition?” asked the king.

“I have a daughter,” said the old woman, “who is as fair as any in the world, and if you will take her for your bride, and make her queen, I will show you the way out of the wood.”

The king consented, because of the difficulty he was in, and the old woman led him into her little house, and there her daughter was sitting by the fire.

She received the king just as if she had been expecting him, and though he saw that she was very beautiful, she did not please him, and he could not look at her without an inward shudder. Nevertheless, he took the maiden before him on his horse, and the old woman showed him the way, and soon he was in his royal castle again, where the wedding was held.

The king had been married before, and his first wife had left seven children, six boys and one girl, whom he loved better than all the world, and as he was afraid the step-mother might not behave well to them, and perhaps would do them some mischief, he took them to a lonely castle standing in the middle of a wood. There they remained hidden, for the road to it was so hard to find that the king himself could not have found it, had it not been for a clew of yarn, possessing wonderful properties, that a wise woman had given him; when he threw it down before him, it unrolled itself and showed him the way. And the king went so often to see his dear children, that the queen was displeased at his absence; and she became curious and wanted to know what he went out into the wood for so often alone. She bribed his servants with much money, and they showed her the secret, and told her of the clew of yarn, which alone could point out the way; then she gave herself no rest until she had found out where the king kept the clew, and then she made some little white silk shirts, and sewed a charm in each, as she had learned witchcraft of her mother. And once when the king had ridden to the hunt, she took the little shirts and went into the wood, and the clew of yarn showed her the way. The children seeing some one in the distance, thought it was their dear father coming to see them, and came jumping for joy to meet him. Then the wicked queen threw over each one of the little shirts, and as soon as the shirts touched their bodies, they were changed into swans, and flew away through the wood. So the queen went home very pleased to think she had got rid of her step-children; but the maiden had not run out with her brothers, and so the queen knew nothing about her. The next day the king went to see his children, but he found nobody but his daughter.

“Where are thy brothers?” asked the king.

“Ah, dear father,” answered she, “they are gone away and have left me behind,” and then she told him how she had seen from her window her brothers in the guise of swans fly away through the wood, and she showed him the feathers which they had let fall in the courtyard, and which she had picked up. The king was grieved, but he never dreamt that it was the queen who had done this wicked deed, and as he feared lest the maiden also should be stolen away from him, he wished to take her away with him. But she was afraid of the step-mother, and begged the king to let her remain one more night in the castle in the wood.

Then she said to herself,

“I must stay here no longer, but go and seek for my brothers.”

And when the night came, she fled away and went straight into the wood. She went on all that night and the next day, until she could go no longer for weariness. At last she saw a rude hut, and she went in and found a room with six little beds in it; she did not dare to lie down in one, but she crept under one and lay on the hard boards and wished for night. When it was near the time of sun-setting she heard a rustling sound, and saw six swans come flying in at the window. They alighted on the ground, and blew at one another until they had blown all their feathers off, and then they stripped off their swan-skin as if it had been a shirt. And the maiden looked at them and knew them for her brothers, and was very glad, and crept from under the bed. The brothers were not less glad when their sister appeared, but their joy did not last long.

"You must not stay here," said they to her; "this is a robbers' haunt, and if they were to come and find you here, they would kill you."

"And cannot you defend me?" asked the little sister.

"No," answered they, "for we can only get rid of our swan-skins and keep our human shape every evening for a quarter of an hour, but after that we must be changed again into swans."

Their sister wept at hearing this, and said,

"Can nothing be done to set you free?"

"Oh no," answered they, "the work would be too hard for you. For six whole years you would be obliged never to speak or laugh, and make during that time six little shirts out of aster-flowers. If you were to let fall a single word before the work was ended, all would be of no good."

And just as the brothers had finished telling her this, the quarter of an hour came to an end, and they changed into swans and flew out of the window.

But the maiden made up her mind to set her brothers free, even though it should cost her her life. She left the hut, and going into the middle of the wood, she climbed a tree, and there passed the night. The next morning she set to work and gathered asters and began sewing them together: as for speaking, there was no one to speak to, and as for laughing, she had no mind to it; so she sat on and looked at nothing but her work. When she had been going on like this for a long time, it happened that the king of that country went a-hunting in the wood, and some of his huntsmen came up to the tree in which the maiden sat. They called out to her, saying, "Who art thou?" But she gave no answer. "Come down," cried they; "we will do thee no harm." But she only shook her head. And when they tormented her further with questions she threw down to them her gold necklace, hoping they would be content with that. But they would not leave off, so she threw down to them her girdle, and when that was no good, her garters, and one after another everything she had on and could possibly spare, until she had nothing left but her smock. But all was no good, the huntsmen would not be put off any longer, and they climbed the tree, carried the maiden off, and brought her to the king. The king asked, "Who art thou? What wert thou doing in the tree?" But she answered nothing. He spoke to her in all the languages he knew, but she remained dumb: but, being very beautiful, the king inclined to her, and he felt a great love rise up in his heart towards her; and casting his mantle round her, he put her before him on his horse and brought her to his castle.

Then he caused rich clothing to be put upon her, and her beauty shone as bright as the morning, but no word would she utter. He seated her by his side at table, and her modesty and gentle mien so pleased him, that he said,

“This maiden I choose for wife, and no other in all the world,” and accordingly after a few days they were married.

But the king had a wicked mother, who was displeased with the marriage, and spoke ill of the young queen.

“Who knows where the maid can have come from?” said she, “and not able to speak a word! She is not worthy of a king!”

After a year had passed, and the queen brought her first child into the world, the old woman carried it away, and marked the queen’s mouth with blood as she lay sleeping. Then she went to the king and declared that his wife was an eater of human flesh. The king would not believe such a thing, and ordered that no one should do her any harm. And the queen went on quietly sewing the shirts and caring for nothing else. The next time that a fine boy was born, the wicked step-mother used the same deceit, but the king would give no credence to her words, for he said,

“She is too tender and good to do any such thing, and if she were only not dumb, and could justify herself, then her innocence would be as clear as day.”

When for the third time the old woman stole away the new-born child and accused the queen, who was unable to say a word in her defence, the king could do no other but give her up to justice, and she was sentenced to suffer death by fire.

The day on which her sentence was to be carried out was the very last one of the sixth year of the years during which she had neither spoken nor laughed, to free her dear brothers from the evil spell. The six shirts were ready, all except one which wanted the left sleeve. And when she was led to the pile of wood, she carried the six shirts on her arm, and when she mounted the pile and the fire was about to be kindled, all at once she cried out aloud, for there were six swans coming flying through the air; and she saw that her deliverance was near, and her heart beat for joy. The swans came close up to her with rushing wings, and stooped round her, so that she could throw the shirts over them; and when that had been done the swan-skins fell off them, and her brothers stood before her in their own bodies quite safe and sound; but as one shirt wanted the left sleeve, so the youngest brother had a swan’s wing instead of a left arm. They embraced and kissed each other, and the queen went up to the king, who looked on full of astonishment, and began to speak to him and to say,

“Dearest husband, now I may dare to speak and tell you that I am innocent, and have been falsely accused,” and she related to him the treachery of the step-mother, who had taken away the three children and hidden them. And she was reconciled to the king with great joy, and the wicked step-mother was bound to the stake on the pile of wood and burnt to ashes.

And the king and queen lived many years with their six brothers in peace and joy.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

IN times past there lived a king and queen, who said to each other every day of their lives, “Would that we had a child!” and yet they had none. But it happened once that when the queen was bathing, there came a frog out of the water, and he squatted on the ground, and said to her,

“Thy wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has gone by, thou shalt bring a daughter into the world.”

And as the frog foretold, so it happened; and the queen bore a daughter so beautiful that the king could not contain himself for joy, and he ordained a great feast. Not only did he bid to it his relations, friends, and acquaintances, but also the wise women, that they might be kind and favourable to the child. There were thirteen of them in his kingdom, but as he had only provided twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of them had to be left out. However, the feast was celebrated with all splendour; and as it drew to an end, the wise women stood forward to present to the child their wonderful gifts: one bestowed virtue, one beauty, a third riches, and so on, whatever there is in the world to wish for. And when eleven of them had said their say, in came the uninvited thirteenth, burning to revenge herself, and without greeting or respect, she cried with a loud voice,

“In the fifteenth year of her age the princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead.”

And without speaking one more word she turned away and left the hall. Every one was terrified at her saying, when the twelfth came forward, for she had not yet bestowed her gift, and though she could not do away with the evil prophecy, yet she could soften it, so she said,

“The princess shall not die, but fall into a deep sleep for a hundred years.”

Now the king, being desirous of saving his child even from this misfortune, gave commandment that all the spindles in his kingdom should be burnt up.

The maiden grew up, adorned with all the gifts of the wise women; and she was so lovely, modest, sweet, and kind and clever, that no one who saw her could help loving her.

It happened one day, she being already fifteen years old, that the king and queen rode abroad, and the maiden was left behind alone in the castle. She wandered about into all the nooks and corners, and into all the chambers and parlours, as the fancy took her, till at last she came to an old tower. She climbed the narrow winding stair which led to a little door, with a rusty key sticking out of the lock; she turned the key, and the door opened, and there in the little room sat an old woman with a spindle, diligently spinning her flax.

"Good day, mother," said the princess, "what are you doing?"

"I am spinning," answered the old woman, nodding her head.

"What thing is that that twists round so briskly?" asked the maiden, and taking the spindle into her hand she began to spin; but no sooner had she touched it than the evil prophecy was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with it. In that very moment she fell back upon the bed that stood there, and lay in a deep sleep. And this sleep fell upon the whole castle; the king and queen, who had returned and were in the great hall, fell fast asleep, and with them the whole court. The horses in their stalls, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons on the roof, the flies on the wall, the very fire that flickered on the hearth, became still, and slept like the rest; and the meat on the spit ceased roasting, and the cook, who was going to pull the scullion's hair for some mistake he had made, let him go, and went to sleep. And the wind ceased, and not a leaf fell from the trees about the castle.

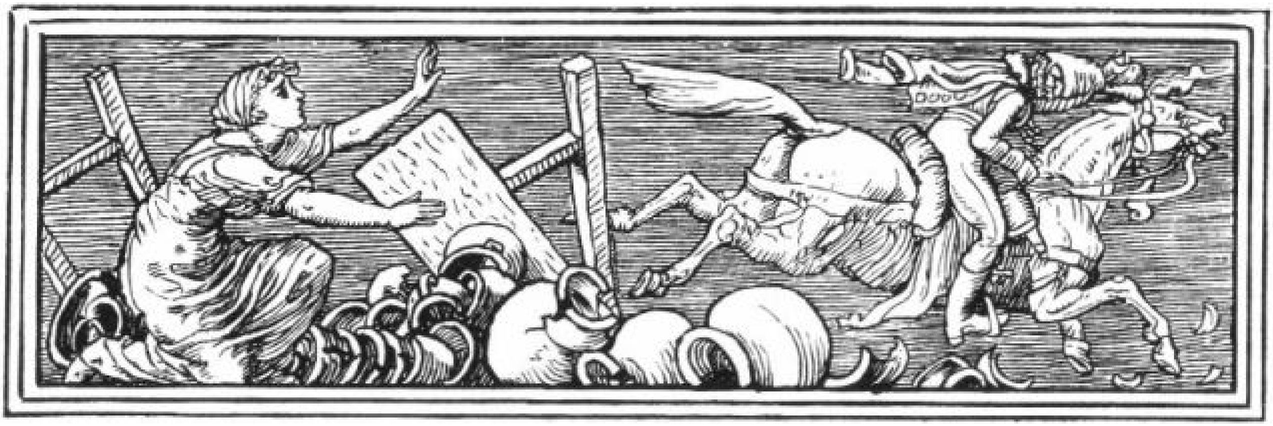
Then round about that place there grew a hedge of thorns thicker every year, until at last the whole castle was hidden from view, and nothing of it could be seen but the vane on the roof. And a rumour went abroad in all that country of the beautiful sleeping Rosamond, for so was the princess called; and from time to time many kings' sons came and tried to force their way through the hedge; but it was impossible for them to do so, for the thorns held fast together like strong hands, and the young men were caught by them, and not being able to get free, there died a lamentable death.

Many a long year afterwards there came a king's son into that country, and heard an old man tell how there should be a castle standing behind the hedge of thorns, and that there a beautiful enchanted princess named Rosamond had slept for a hundred years, and with her the king and queen, and the whole court. The old man had been told by his grandfather that many king's sons had sought to pass the thorn-hedge, but had been caught and pierced by the thorns, and had died a miserable death. Then said the young man, "Nevertheless, I do not fear to try; I shall win through and see the lovely Rosamond." The good old man tried to dissuade him, but he would not listen to his words.

For now the hundred years were at an end, and the day had come when Rosamond should be awakened. When the prince drew near the hedge of thorns, it was changed into a hedge of beautiful large flowers, which parted and bent aside to let him pass, and then closed behind him in a thick hedge. When he reached the castle-yard, he saw the horses and brindled hunting-dogs lying asleep, and on the roof the pigeons were sitting with their heads under their wings. And when he came indoors, the flies on the wall were asleep, the cook in the kitchen had his hand uplifted to strike the scullion, and the kitchen-maid had the black fowl on her lap ready to pluck. Then he mounted higher, and saw in the hall the whole court lying asleep, and above them, on their thrones, slept the king and the queen. And still he went farther, and all was so quiet that he could hear his own breathing; and at last he came to the tower, and went up the winding stair, and opened the door of the little room where Rosamond lay. And when he saw her looking so lovely in her sleep, he could not turn away his eyes; and presently he stooped and kissed her, and she awaked, and opened her eyes, and looked very kindly on him. And she rose, and they went forth together, and the king and the queen and whole court waked up, and gazed on each other with great eyes of wonderment. And the horses in the yard got up and shook themselves, the hounds sprang up and wagged their tails, the pigeons on the roof drew their heads from under their wings, looked round, and flew into the field, the flies on the wall crept on a little farther, the kitchen fire leapt up and blazed, and cooked the meat, the joint on the spit began to roast, the cook gave the scullion such a box on the ear that he roared out, and the maid went on plucking the fowl.

Then the wedding of the Prince and Rosamond was held with all splendour, and they lived very happily together until their lives' end.

KING THRUSHBEARD



A KING had a daughter who was beautiful beyond measure, but so proud and overbearing that none of her suitors were good enough for her; she not only refused one after the other, but made a laughing-stock of them. Once the king appointed a great feast, and bade all the marriageable men to it from far and near. And they were all put in rows, according to their rank and station; first came the kings, then the princes, the dukes, the earls, the barons, and lastly the noblemen. The princess was led in front of the rows, but she had a mocking epithet for each. One was too fat, “What a tub!” said she. Another too tall, “Long and lean is ill to be seen,” said she. A third too short, “Fat and short, not fit to court,” said she. A fourth was too pale, “A regular death’s-head;” a fifth too red-faced, “A game-cock,” she called him. The sixth was not well-made enough, “Green wood ill dried!” cried she. So every one had something against him, and she made especially merry over a good king who was very tall, and whose chin had grown a little peaked.

“Only look,” cried she, laughing, “he has a chin like a thrush’s beak.”

And from that time they called him King Thrushbeard. But the old king, when he saw that his daughter mocked every one, and scorned all the assembled suitors, swore in his anger that she should have the first beggar that came to the door for a husband.

A few days afterwards came a travelling ballad-singer, and sang under the window in hopes of a small alms. When the king heard of it, he said that he must come in. And so the ballad-singer entered in his dirty tattered garments, and sang before the king and his daughter; when he had done, he asked for a small reward. But the king said,

“Thy song has so well pleased me, that I will give thee my daughter to wife.”

The princess was horrified; but the king said,

“I took an oath to give you to the first beggar that came, and so it must be done.”

There was no remedy. The priest was fetched, and she had to be married to the ballad-singer out of hand. When all was done, the king said, "Now, as you are a beggar-wife, you can stay no longer in my castle, so off with you and your husband."

The beggar-man led her away, and she was obliged to go forth with him on foot. On the way they came to a great wood, and she asked,

"Oh, whose is this forest, so thick and so fine?"

He answered,

"It is King Thrushbeard's, and might have been thine."

And she cried,

"Oh, I was a silly young thing, I'm afeared,
Would I had taken that good King Thrushbeard!"

Then they passed through a meadow, and she asked,

"Oh, whose is this meadow, so green and so fine?"

He answered,

"It is King Thrushbeard's, and might have been thine."

And she cried,

"I was a silly young thing, I'm afeared,
Would I had taken that good King Thrushbeard!"

Then they passed through a great town, and she asked,

"Whose is this city, so great and so fine?"

He answered,

"Oh, it is King Thrushbeard's, and might have been thine."

And she cried,

"I was a silly young thing, I'm afeared,
Would I had taken that good King Thrushbeard!"

Then said the beggar-man,

"It does not please me to hear you always wishing for another husband; am I not good enough for you?"

At last they came to a very small house, and she said,

"Oh dear me! what poor little house do I see?
And whose, I would know, may the wretched hole be?"

The man answered,

"That is my house and thine, where we must live together."

She had to stoop before she could go in at the door.

"Where are the servants?" asked the king's daughter.

"What servants?" answered the beggar-man, "what you want to have done you must do yourself. Make a fire quick, and put on water, and cook me some food; I am very tired."

But the king's daughter understood nothing about fire-making and cooking, and the beggar-man had to lend a hand himself in order to manage it at all. And when they had eaten their poor fare, they went to bed; but the man called up his wife very early in the morning, in order to clean the house. For a few days they lived in this indifferent manner, until they came to the end of their store.

“Wife,” said the man, “this will not do, stopping here and earning nothing; you must make baskets.”

So he went out and cut willows, and brought them home; and she began to weave them, but the hard twigs wounded her tender hands.

“I see this will not do,” said the man, “you had better try spinning.”

So she sat her down and tried to spin, but the harsh thread cut her soft fingers, so that the blood flowed.

“Look now!” said the man, “you are no good at any sort of work; I made a bad bargain when I took you. I must see what I can do to make a trade of pots and earthen vessels; you can sit in the market and offer them for sale.”

“Oh dear!” thought she, “suppose while I am selling in the market people belonging to my father’s kingdom should see me, how they would mock at me!”

But there was no help for it; she had to submit, or else die of hunger.

The first day all went well; the people bought her wares eagerly, because she was so beautiful, and gave her whatever she asked, and some of them gave her the money and left the pots after all behind them. And they lived on these earnings as long as they lasted; and then the man bought a number of new pots. So she seated herself in a corner of the market, and stood the wares before her for sale. All at once a drunken horse-soldier came plunging by, and rode straight into the midst of her pots, breaking them into a thousand pieces. She could do nothing for weeping.

“Oh dear, what will become of me,” cried she; “what will my husband say?” and she hastened home and told him her misfortune.

“Who ever heard of such a thing as sitting in the corner of the market with earthenware pots!” said the man; “now leave off crying; I see you are not fit for any regular work. I have been asking at your father’s castle if they want a kitchen-maid, and they say they don’t mind taking you; at any rate you will get your victuals free.”

And the king’s daughter became a kitchen-maid, to be at the cook’s beck and call, and to do the hardest work. In each of her pockets she fastened a little pot, and brought home in them whatever was left, and upon that she and her husband were fed. It happened one day, when the wedding of the eldest prince was celebrated, the poor woman went upstairs, and stood by the parlour door to see what was going on. And when the place was lighted up, and the company arrived, each person handsomer than the one before, and all was brilliancy and splendour, she thought on her own fate with a sad heart, and bewailed her former pride and haughtiness which had brought her so low, and plunged her in so great poverty. And as the rich and delicate dishes smelling so good were carried to and fro every now and then, the servants would throw her a few fragments, which she put in her pockets, intending to take home. And then the prince himself passed in clothed in silk and velvet, with a gold chain round his neck. And when he saw the beautiful woman standing in the doorway, he seized her hand and urged her to dance with him, but she refused, all trembling, for she saw it was King Thrushbeard, who had come to court her, whom she had turned away with mocking. It was of no use her resisting, he drew her into the room; and all at once the band to which her pockets were fastened broke, and the pots fell out, and the soup ran about, and the fragments were scattered all round. And when the people saw that, there was great laughter and mocking, and she felt so ashamed, that she wished herself a thousand fathoms underground. She rushed to the door to fly from the place, when a man caught her just on the steps, and when she looked at him, it was King Thrushbeard again. He said to her in a kind tone,

“Do not be afraid, I and the beggar-man with whom you lived in the wretched little hut are one. For love of you I disguised myself, and it was I who broke your pots in the guise of a horse-soldier. I did all that to bring down your proud heart, and to punish your haughtiness, which caused you to mock at me.” Then she wept bitterly, and said,

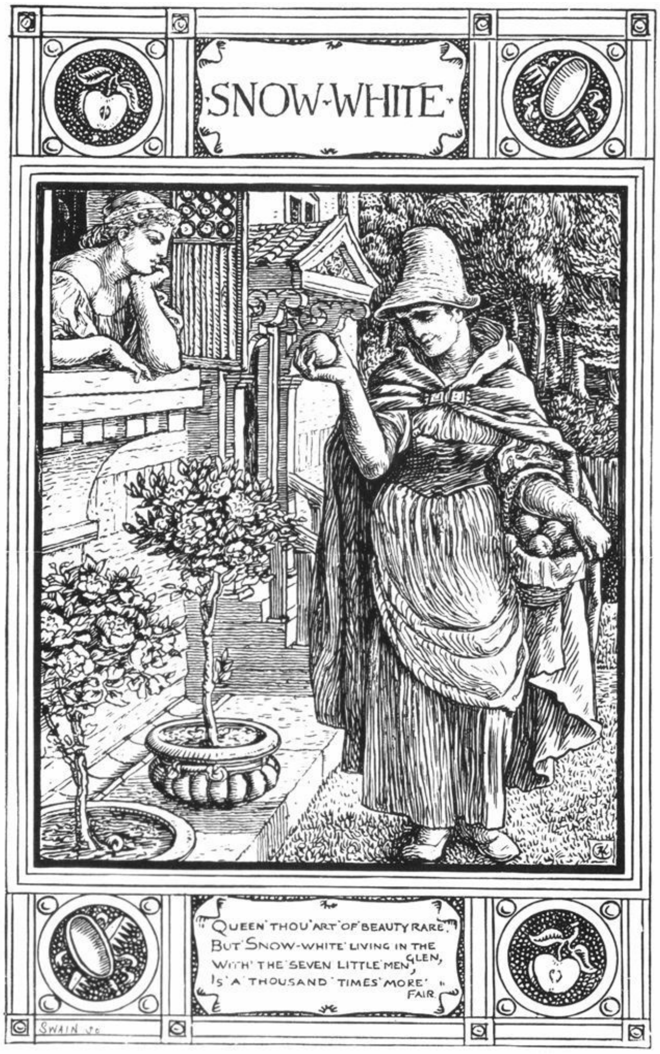
“I have done great wrong, and am not worthy to be your wife.”

But he said,

“Take courage, the evil days are gone over; now let us keep our wedding-day.”

Then came the ladies-in-waiting and put on her splendid clothing; and her father came, and the whole court, and wished her joy on her marriage with King Thrushbeard; and then the merry-making began in good earnest. I cannot help wishing that you and I could have been there too.

SNOW-WHITE


SNOW-WHITE
QUEEN THOU ART OF BEAUTY RARE,
BUT SNOW-WHITE LIVING IN THE GLEN,
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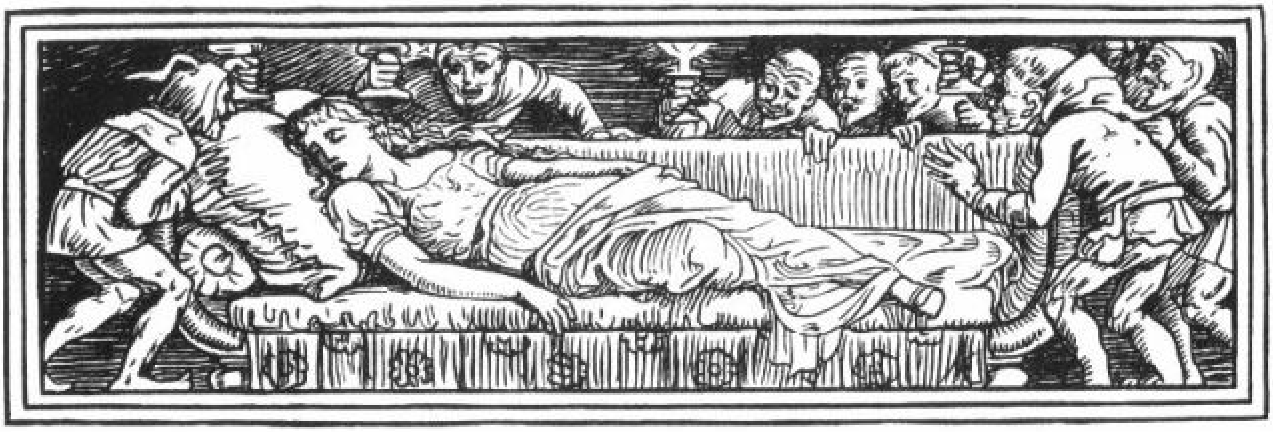
IS A THOUSAND TIMES MORE FAIR
SWAIN SC



SNOW-WHITE

IT was the middle of winter, and the snow-flakes were falling like feathers from the sky, and a queen sat at her window working, and her embroidery-frame was of ebony. And as she worked, gazing at times out on the snow, she pricked her finger, and there fell from it three drops of blood on the snow. And when she saw how bright and red it looked, she said to herself, “Oh that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery frame!”

Not very long after she had a daughter, with a skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony, and she was named Snow-white. And when she was born the queen died.

After a year had gone by the king took another wife, a beautiful woman, but proud and overbearing, and she could not bear to be surpassed in beauty by any one. She had a magic looking-glass, and she used to stand before it, and look in it, and say,

“Looking-glass upon the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

And the looking-glass would answer,

“You are fairest of them all.”

And she was contented, for she knew that the looking-glass spoke the truth.

Now, Snow-white was growing prettier and prettier, and when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as day, far more so than the queen herself. So one day when the queen went to her mirror and said,

“Looking-glass upon the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

It answered,

“Queen, you are full fair, ’tis true,
But Snow-white fairer is than you.”

This gave the queen a great shock, and she became yellow and green with envy, and from that hour her heart turned against Snow-white, and she hated her. And envy and pride like ill weeds grew in her heart higher every day, until she had no peace day or night. At last she sent for a huntsman, and said,

“Take the child out into the woods, so that I may set eyes on her no more. You must put her to death, and bring me her heart for a token.”

The huntsman consented, and led her away; but when he drew his cutlass to pierce Snow-white’s innocent heart, she began to weep, and to say,

“Oh, dear huntsman, do not take my life; I will go away into the wild wood, and never come home again.”

And as she was so lovely the huntsman had pity on her, and said, "Away with you then, poor child;" for he thought the wild animals would be sure to devour her, and it was as if a stone had been rolled away from his heart when he spared to put her to death. Just at that moment a young wild boar came running by, so he caught and killed it, and taking out its heart, he brought it to the queen for a token. And it was salted and cooked, and the wicked woman ate it up, thinking that there was an end of Snow-white.

Now, when the poor child found herself quite alone in the wild woods, she felt full of terror, even of the very leaves on the trees, and she did not know what to do for fright. Then she began to run over the sharp stones and through the thorn bushes, and the wild beasts after her, but they did her no harm. She ran as long as her feet would carry her; and when the evening drew near she came to a little house, and she went inside to rest. Everything there was very small, but as pretty and clean as possible. There stood the little table ready laid, and covered with a white cloth, and seven little plates, and seven knives and forks, and drinking-cups. By the wall stood seven little beds, side by side, covered with clean white quilts. Snow-white, being very hungry and thirsty, ate from each plate a little porridge and bread, and drank out of each little cup a drop of wine, so as not to finish up one portion alone. After that she felt so tired that she lay down on one of the beds, but it did not seem to suit her; one was too long, another too short, but at last the seventh was quite right; and so she lay down upon it, committed herself to heaven, and fell asleep.

When it was quite dark, the masters of the house came home. They were seven dwarfs, whose occupation was to dig underground among the mountains. When they had lighted their seven candles, and it was quite light in the little house, they saw that some one must have been in, as everything was not in the same order in which they left it. The first said,

"Who has been sitting in my little chair?"

The second said,

"Who has been eating from my little plate?"

The third said,

"Who has been taking my little loaf?"

The fourth said,

"Who has been tasting my porridge?"

The fifth said,

"Who has been using my little fork?"

The sixth said,

"Who has been cutting with my little knife?"

The seventh said,

"Who has been drinking from my little cup?"

Then the first one, looking round, saw a hollow in his bed, and cried,

"Who has been lying on my bed?"

And the others came running, and cried,

"Some one has been on our beds too!"

But when the seventh looked at his bed, he saw little Snow-white lying there asleep. Then he told the others, who came running up, crying out in their astonishment, and holding up their seven little candles to throw a light upon Snow-white.

"O goodness! O gracious!" cried they, "what beautiful child is this?" and were so full of joy to see her that they did not wake her, but let her sleep on. And the seventh dwarf slept with his comrades, an hour at a time with each, until the night had passed.

When it was morning, and Snow-white awoke and saw the seven dwarfs, she was very frightened; but they seemed quite friendly, and asked her what her name was, and she told them; and then they asked how she came to be in their house. And she related to them how her step-mother had wished her to be put to death, and how the huntsman had spared her life, and how she had run the whole day long, until at last she had found their little house. Then the dwarfs said,

"If you will keep our house for us, and cook, and wash, and make the beds, and sew and knit, and keep everything tidy and clean, you may stay with us, and you shall lack nothing."

"With all my heart," said Snow-white; and so she stayed, and kept the house in good order. In the morning the dwarfs went to the mountain to dig for gold; in the evening they came home, and their supper had to be ready for them. All the day long the maiden was left alone, and the good little dwarfs warned her, saying,

"Beware of your step-mother, she will soon know you are here. Let no one into the house."

Now the queen, having eaten Snow-white's heart, as she supposed, felt quite sure that now she was the first and fairest, and so she came to her mirror, and said,

"Looking-glass upon the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

And the glass answered,

"Queen, thou art of beauty rare,
But Snow-white living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair."

Then she was very angry, for the glass always spoke the truth, and she knew that the huntsman must have deceived her, and that Snow-white must still be living. And she thought and thought how she could manage to make an end of her, for as long as she was not the fairest in the land, envy left her no rest. At last she thought of a plan; she painted her face and dressed herself like an old pedlar woman, so that no one would have known her. In this disguise she went across the seven mountains, until she came to the house of the seven little dwarfs, and she knocked at the door and cried,

"Fine wares to sell! fine wares to sell!"

Snow-white peeped out of the window and cried, “Good-day, good woman, what have you to sell?”

“Good wares, fine wares,” answered she, “laces of all colours;” and she held up a piece that was woven of variegated silk.

“I need not be afraid of letting in this good woman,” thought Snow-white, and she unbarred the door and bought the pretty lace.

“What a figure you are, child!” said the old woman, “come and let me lace you properly for once.”

Snow-white, suspecting nothing, stood up before her, and let her lace her with the new lace; but the old woman laced so quick and tight that it took Snow-white’s breath away, and she fell down as dead.

“Now you have done with being the fairest,” said the old woman as she hastened away.

Not long after that, towards evening, the seven dwarfs came home, and were terrified to see their dear Snow-white lying on the ground, without life or motion; they raised her up, and when they saw how tightly she was laced they cut the lace in two; then she began to draw breath, and little by little she returned to life. When the dwarfs heard what had happened they said,

“The old pedlar woman was no other than the wicked queen; you must beware of letting any one in when we are not here!”

And when the wicked woman got home she went to her glass and said,

“Looking-glass against the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

And it answered as before,

“Queen, thou art of beauty rare,
But Snow-white living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair.”

When she heard that she was so struck with surprise that all the blood left her heart, for she knew that Snow-white must still be living.

“But now,” said she, “I will think of something that will be her ruin.” And by witchcraft she made a poisoned comb. Then she dressed herself up to look like another different sort of old woman. So she went across the seven mountains and came to the house of the seven dwarfs, and knocked at the door and cried,

“Good wares to sell! good wares to sell!”

Snow-white looked out and said,

“Go away, I must not let anybody in.”

“But you are not forbidden to look,” said the old woman, taking out the poisoned comb and holding it up. It pleased the poor child so much that she was tempted to open the door; and when the bargain was made the old woman said,

“Now, for once your hair shall be properly combed.”

Poor Snow-white, thinking no harm, let the old woman do as she would, but no sooner was the comb put in her hair than the poison began to work, and the poor girl fell down senseless.

“Now, you paragon of beauty,” said the wicked woman, “this is the end of you,” and went off. By good luck it was now near evening, and the seven little dwarfs came home. When they saw Snow-white lying on the ground as dead, they thought directly that it was the step-mother’s doing, and looked about, found the poisoned comb, and no sooner had they drawn it out of her hair than Snow-white came to herself, and related all that had passed. Then they warned her once more to be on her guard, and never again to let any one in at the door.

And the queen went home and stood before the looking-glass and said,

“Looking-glass against the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

And the looking-glass answered as before,

“Queen, thou art of beauty rare,
But Snow-white living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair.”

When she heard the looking-glass speak thus she trembled and shook with anger.

“Snow-white shall die,” cried she, “though it should cost me my own life!” And then she went to a secret lonely chamber, where no one was likely to come, and there she made a poisonous apple. It was beautiful to look upon, being white with red cheeks, so that any one who should see it must long for it, but whoever ate even a little bit of it must die. When the apple was ready she painted her face and clothed herself like a peasant woman, and went across the seven mountains to where the seven dwarfs lived. And when she knocked at the door Snow-white put her head out of the window and said,

“I dare not let anybody in; the seven dwarfs told me not.”

“All right,” answered the woman; “I can easily get rid of my apples elsewhere. There, I will give you one.”

“No,” answered Snow-white, “I dare not take anything.”

“Are you afraid of poison?” said the woman, “look here, I will cut the apple in two pieces; you shall have the red side, I will have the white one.”

For the apple was so cunningly made, that all the poison was in the rosy half of it. Snow-white longed for the beautiful apple, and as she saw the peasant woman eating a piece of it she could no longer refrain, but stretched out her hand and took the poisoned half. But no sooner had she taken a morsel of it into her mouth than she fell to the earth as dead. And the queen, casting on her a terrible glance, laughed aloud and cried, “As white as snow, as red as blood, as black as ebony! this time the dwarfs will not be able to bring you to life again.”

And when she went home and asked the looking-glass,

“Looking-glass against the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

at last it answered,

“You are the fairest now of all.”

Then her envious heart had peace, as much as an envious heart can have.

The dwarfs, when they came home in the evening, found Snow-white lying on the ground, and there came no breath out of her mouth, and she was dead. They lifted her up, sought if anything poisonous was to be found, cut her laces, combed her hair, washed her with water and wine, but all was of no avail, the poor child was dead, and remained dead. Then they laid her on a bier, and sat all seven of them round it, and wept and lamented three whole days. And then they would have buried her, but that she looked still as if she were living, with her beautiful blooming cheeks. So they said,

“We cannot hide her away in the black ground.” And they had made a coffin of clear glass, so as to be looked into from all sides, and they laid her in it, and wrote in golden letters upon it her name, and that she was a king’s daughter. Then they set the coffin out upon the mountain, and one of them always remained by it to watch. And the birds came too, and mourned for Snow-white, first an owl, then a raven, and lastly, a dove.

Now, for a long while Snow-white lay in the coffin and never changed, but looked as if she were asleep, for she was still as white as snow, as red as blood, and her hair was as black as ebony. It happened, however, that one day a king’s son rode through the wood and up to the dwarfs’ house, which was near it. He saw on the mountain the coffin, and beautiful Snow-white within it, and he read what was written in golden letters upon it. Then he said to the dwarfs,

“Let me have the coffin, and I will give you whatever you like to ask for it.”

But the dwarfs told him that they could not part with it for all the gold in the world. But he said,

“I beseech you to give it me, for I cannot live without looking upon Snow-white; if you consent I will bring you to great honour, and care for you as if you were my brethren.”

When he so spoke the good little dwarfs had pity upon him and gave him the coffin, and the king’s son called his servants and bid them carry it away on their shoulders. Now it happened that as they were going along they stumbled over a bush, and with the shaking the bit of poisoned apple flew out of her throat. It was not long before she opened her eyes, threw up the cover of the coffin, and sat up, alive and well.

“Oh dear! where am I?” cried she. The king’s son answered, full of joy, “You are near me,” and, relating all that had happened, he said, "I would rather have you than anything in the world; come with me to my father's castle and you shall be my bride."

And Snow-white was kind, and went with him, and their wedding was held with pomp and great splendour.

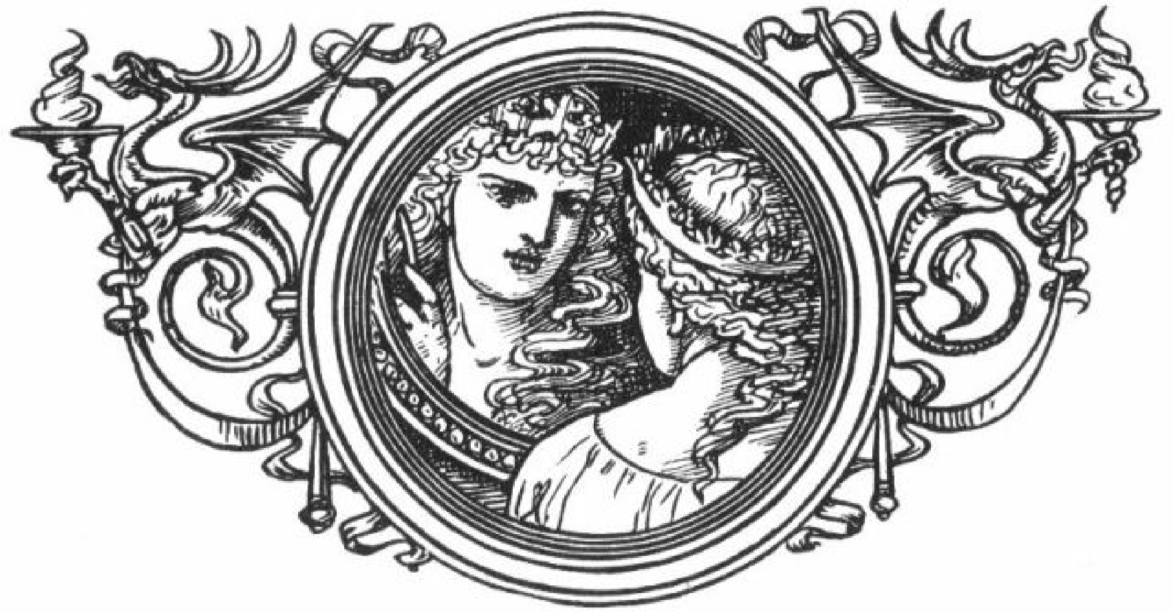
But Snow-white's wicked step-mother was also bidden to the feast, and when she had dressed herself in beautiful clothes she went to her looking-glass and said,

"Looking-glass upon the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

The looking-glass answered,

"O Queen, although you are of beauty rare,
The young bride is a thousand times more fair."

Then she railed and cursed, and was beside herself with disappointment and anger. First she thought she would not go to the wedding; but then she felt she should have no peace until she went and saw the bride. And when she saw her she knew her for Snow-white, and could not stir from the place for anger and terror. For they had ready red-hot iron shoes, in which she had to dance until she fell down dead.



THE KNAPSACK, THE HAT, AND THE HORN

ONCE there were three brothers, and they grew poorer and poorer, until at last their need was so great that they had nothing left to bite or to break. Then they said, “This will not do; we had better go out into the world and seek our fortune.”

So they set out, and went some distance through many green fields, but they met with no good fortune. One day they came to a great wood, in the midst of which was a hill, and when they came near to it, they saw that it was all of silver. Then said the eldest,

“Now here is good fortune enough for me, and I desire no better.”

And he took of the silver as much as he could carry, turned round, and went back home. But the other two said,

“We must have something better than mere silver,” and they would not touch it, but went on farther. After they had gone on a few days longer, they came to a hill that was all of gold. The second brother stood still and considered, and was uncertain.

“What shall I do?” said he; “shall I take of the gold enough to last me my life, or shall I go farther?”

At last, coming to a conclusion, he filled his pockets as full as they would hold, bid good-bye to his brother, and went home. But the third brother said to himself,

“Silver and gold do not tempt me; I will not gainsay fortune, who has better things in store for me.”

So he went on, and when he had journeyed for three days, he came to a wood still greater than the former ones, so that there was no end to it; and in it he found nothing to eat or to drink, so that he was nearly starving. He got up into a high tree, so as to see how far the wood reached, but as far as his eyes could see, there was nothing but the tops of the trees. And as he got down from the tree, hunger pressed him sore, and he thought,

“Oh that for once I could have a good meal!”

And when he reached the ground he saw to his surprise a table beneath the tree richly spread with food, and that smoked before him.

“This time at least,” said he, “I have my wish,” and without stopping to ask who had brought the meal there, and who had cooked it, he came close to the table and ate with relish, until his hunger was appeased. When he had finished, he thought,

“It would be a pity to leave such a good table-cloth behind in the wood,” so he folded it up neatly and pocketed it. Then he walked on, and in the evening, when hunger again seized him, he thought he would put the table-cloth to the proof, and he brought it out and said,

“Now I desire that thou shouldst be spread with a good meal,” and no sooner were the words out of his mouth, than there stood on it as many dishes of delicious food as there was room for.

"Now that I see," said he, "what sort of a cook thou art, I hold thee dearer than the mountains of silver and of gold," for he perceived that it was a wishing-cloth. Still he was not satisfied to settle down at home with only a wishing-cloth, so he determined to wander farther through the world and seek his fortune. One evening, in a lonely wood, he came upon a begrimed charcoal-burner at his furnace, who had put some potatoes to roast for his supper.

"Good evening, my black fellow," said he, "how do you get on in this lonely spot?"

"One day is like another," answered the charcoal-burner: "every evening I have potatoes; have you a mind to be my guest?"

"Many thanks," answered the traveller, "I will not deprive you; you did not expect a guest; but if you do not object, you shall be the one to be invited."

"How can that be managed?" said the charcoal-burner; "I see that you have nothing with you, and if you were to walk two hours in any direction, you would meet with no one to give you anything."

"For all that," answered he, "there shall be a feast so good, that you have never tasted the like."

Then he took out the table-cloth from his knapsack, and spreading it on the ground, said,

"Cloth, be covered," and immediately there appeared boiled and roast meat, quite hot, as if it had just come from the kitchen. The charcoal-burner stared, but did not stay to be asked twice, and fell to, filling his black mouth with ever bigger and bigger pieces. When they had finished eating, the charcoal-burner smiled, and said,

"Look here, I approve of your table-cloth; it would not be a bad thing for me to have here in the wood, where the cooking is not first-rate. I will strike a bargain with you. There hangs a soldier's knapsack in the corner, which looks old and unsightly, but it has wonderful qualities; as I have no further occasion for it, I will give it to you in exchange for the table-cloth."

"First, I must know what these wonderful qualities are," returned the other.

"I will tell you," answered the charcoal-burner; "if you strike it with your hand, there will appear a corporal and six men with swords and muskets, and whatever you wish to have done, that will they do."

"Well, for my part," said the other, "I am quite willing to make the exchange." And he gave the table-cloth to the charcoal-burner, took down the knapsack from its hook, slung it over his shoulder, and took his leave. Before he had gone far he began to want to make a trial of his wonderful knapsack, so he struck it a blow. At once seven soldiers appeared before him, and the corporal said,

"What does my lord and master please to want?"

"March in haste to the charcoal-burner and demand my wishing-cloth back," said the man. They wheeled round to the left, and were not long before they had accomplished his desire, and taken away, without wasting many words, the wishing-cloth from the charcoal-burner. Having dismissed them, he wandered on, expecting still more wonderful luck. About sunset he fell in with another charcoal-burner, who was getting his supper ready at the fire.

"Will you join me?" said this black fellow; "potatoes and salt, without butter; sit down to it with me."

"No," answered he, "this time you shall be my guest." And he spread out his table-cloth, and it was directly covered with the most delicious victuals. So they ate and drank together and were merry. After the meal was over the charcoal-burner said,

"Over there, on the bench, lies an old worn-out hat, which has wonderful properties: if you put it on and draw it well over your head it is as if a dozen field-pieces went off, one after the other, shooting everything down, so that no one can stand against them. This hat is of no use to me, and I will give it to you in exchange for the table-cloth."

"All right," answered the other, taking the hat and carrying it off, and leaving the table-cloth behind him. Before he had gone far he struck upon the knapsack, and summoned his soldiers to fetch back the table-cloth again.

"First one thing, and then another," thought he, "just as if my luck were never to end." And so it seemed, for at the end of another day's journey he came up to another charcoal-burner, who was roasting his potatoes just like the others. He invited him to eat with him off his wishing-cloth, to which the charcoal-burner took such a fancy, that he gave him for it a horn, which had different properties still from the hat. If a man blew on it down fell all walls and fortresses, and finally towns and villages in heaps. So the man gave the table-cloth in exchange for it to the charcoal-burner, afterwards sending his men to fetch it back, so that at last he had in his possession knapsack, hat, and horn, all at one time.

"Now," said he, "I am a made man, and it is time to go home again and see how my brothers are faring."

When he reached home he found that his brothers had built themselves a fine house with their silver and gold, and lived in clover. He went to see them, but because he wore a half-worn-out coat, a shabby hat, and the old knapsack on his back, they would not recognise him as their brother. They mocked him and said,

"It is of no use your giving yourself out to be our brother; he who scorned silver and gold, seeking for better fortune, will return in great splendour, as a mighty king, not as a beggar-man." And they drove him from their door. Then he flew into a great rage, and struck upon his knapsack until a hundred and fifty men stood before him, rank and file. He ordered them to surround his brothers' house, and that two of them should take hazel-rods, and should beat the brothers until they knew who he was. And there arose a terrible noise; the people ran together and wished to rescue the brothers in their extremity, but they could do nothing against the soldiers. It happened at last that the king of the country heard of it, and he was indignant, and sent a captain with his troops to drive the disturber of the peace out of the town:

but the man with his knapsack soon assembled a greater company, who beat back the captain and his people, sending them off with bleeding noses. Then the king said,

"This vagabond fellow must be put down," and he sent the next day a larger company against him, but they could do nothing: for he assembled more men than ever, and in order to bring them more quickly, he pulled his hat twice lower over his brows; then the heavy guns came into play, and the king's people were beaten and put to flight.

"Now," said he, "I shall not make peace until the king gives me his daughter to wife, and lets me rule the whole kingdom in his name."

This he caused to be told to the king, who said to his daughter,

"This is a hard nut to crack; there is no choice but for me to do as he asks; if I wish to have peace and keep the crown on my head, I must give in to him."

So the wedding took place, but the king's daughter was angry that the bridegroom should be a common man, who wore a shabby hat, and carried an old knapsack. She wished very much to get rid of him, and thought day and night how to manage it. Then it struck her that perhaps all his wonder-working power lay in the knapsack, and she pretended to be very fond of him, and when she had brought him into a good humour she said,— "Pray lay aside that ugly knapsack; it misbecomes you so much that I feel ashamed of you."

"My dear child," answered he, "this knapsack is my greatest treasure; so long as I keep it I need not fear anything in the whole world," and then he showed her with what wonderful qualities it was endowed. Then she fell on his neck as if she would have kissed him, but, by a clever trick, she slipped the knapsack over his shoulder and ran away with it. As soon as she was alone she struck upon it and summoned the soldiers, and bade them seize her husband and bring him to the king's palace. They obeyed, and the false woman had many more to follow behind, so as to be ready to drive him out of the country. He would have been quite done for if he had not still kept the hat. As soon as he could get his hands free he pulled it twice forward on his head; and then the cannon began to thunder and beat all down, till at last the king's daughter had to come and to beg pardon. And as she so movingly prayed and promised to behave better, he raised her up and made peace with her. Then she grew very kind to him, and seemed to love him very much, and he grew so deluded, that one day he confided to her that even if he were deprived of his knapsack nothing could be done against him as long as he should keep the old hat. And when she knew the secret she waited until he had gone to sleep; then she carried off the hat, and had him driven out into the streets. Still the horn remained to him, and in great wrath he blew a great blast upon it, and down came walls and fortresses, towns and villages, and buried the king and his daughter among their ruins. If he had not set down the horn when he did, and if he had blown a little longer, all the houses would have tumbled down, and there would not have been left one stone upon another. After this no one dared to withstand him, and he made himself king over the whole country.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

THERE was once a miller who was poor, but he had one beautiful daughter. It happened one day that he came to speak with the king, and, to give himself consequence, he told him that he had a daughter who could spin gold out of straw. The king said to the miller,

"That is an art that pleases me well; if thy daughter is as clever as you say, bring her to my castle to-morrow, that I may put her to the proof."

When the girl was brought to him, he led her into a room that was quite full of straw, and gave her a wheel and spindle, and said,

"Now set to work, and if by the early morning thou hast not spun this straw to gold thou shalt die." And he shut the door himself, and left her there alone.

And so the poor miller's daughter was left there sitting, and could not think what to do for her life; she had no notion how to set to work to spin gold from straw, and her distress grew so great that she began to weep. Then all at once the door opened, and in came a little man, who said,

"Good evening, miller's daughter; why are you crying?"

"Oh!" answered the girl, "I have got to spin gold out of straw, and I don't understand the business."

Then the little man said,

"What will you give me if I spin it for you?"

"My necklace," said the girl.

The little man took the necklace, seated himself before the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr! three times round and the bobbin was full; then he took up another, and whirr, whirr, whirr! three times round, and that was full; and so he went on till the morning, when all the straw had been spun, and all the bobbins were full of gold. At sunrise came the king, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and very much rejoiced, for he was very avaricious. He had the miller's daughter taken into another room filled with straw, much bigger than the last, and told her that as she valued her life she must spin it all in one night. The girl did not know what to do, so she began to cry, and then the door opened, and the little man appeared and said,

"What will you give me if I spin all this straw into gold?"

"The ring from my finger," answered the girl.

So the little man took the ring, and began again to send the wheel whirring round, and by the next morning all the straw was spun into glistening gold. The king was rejoiced beyond measure at the sight, but as he could never have enough of gold, he had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and said,

“This, too, must be spun in one night, and if you accomplish it you shall be my wife.” For he thought, “Although she is but a miller’s daughter, I am not likely to find any one richer in the whole world.”

As soon as the girl was left alone, the little man appeared for the third time and said,

“What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time?”

“I have nothing left to give,” answered the girl.

“Then you must promise me the first child you have after you are queen,” said the little man.

“But who knows whether that will happen?” thought the girl; but as she did not know what else to do in her necessity, she promised the little man what he desired, upon which he began to spin, until all the straw was gold. And when in the morning the king came and found all done according to his wish, he caused the wedding to be held at once, and the miller’s pretty daughter became a queen.

In a year’s time she brought a fine child into the world, and thought no more of the little man; but one day he came suddenly into her room, and said,

“Now give me what you promised me.”

The queen was terrified greatly, and offered the little man all the riches of the kingdom if he would only leave the child; but the little man said,

“No, I would rather have something living than all the treasures of the world.”

Then the queen began to lament and to weep, so that the little man had pity upon her.

“I will give you three days,” said he, “and if at the end of that time you cannot tell my name, you must give up the child to me.”

Then the queen spent the whole night in thinking over all the names that she had ever heard, and sent a messenger through the land to ask far and wide for all the names that could be found. And when the little man came next day, (beginning with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar) she repeated all she knew, and went through the whole list, but after each the little man said,

“That is not my name.”

The second day the queen sent to inquire of all the neighbours what the servants were called, and told the little man all the most unusual and singular names, saying,

“Perhaps you are called Roast-ribs, or Sheepshanks, or Spindleshanks?” But he answered nothing but

“That is not my name.”

The third day the messenger came back again, and said,

“I have not been able to find one single new name; but as I passed through the woods I came to a high hill, and near it was a little house, and before the house burned a fire, and round the fire danced a comical little man, and he hopped on one leg and cried,

“To-day do I bake, to-morrow I brew,
The day after that the queen’s child comes in;
And oh! I am glad that nobody knew
That the name I am called is Rumpelstiltskin!”

You cannot think how pleased the queen was to hear that name, and soon afterwards, when the little man walked in and said, “Now, Mrs. Queen, what is my name?” she said at first,

“Are you called Jack?”

“No,” answered he.

“Are you called Harry?” she asked again.

“No,” answered he. And then she said,

“Then perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin!”

“The devil told you that! the devil told you that!” cried the little man, and in his anger he stamped with his right foot so hard that it went into the ground above his knee; then he seized his left foot with both his hands in such a fury that he split in two, and there was an end of him.

ROLAND

THERE was once a woman who was a witch, and she had two daughters, one ugly and wicked, whom she loved the best, because she was her very own daughter, and one pretty and good, whom she hated because she was her step-daughter. One day the step-daughter put on a pretty apron, which the other daughter liked so much that she became envious, and said to her mother that she must and should have the apron.

“Be content, my child,” said the old woman, “thou shalt have it. Thy step-sister has long deserved death, and to-night, while she is asleep, I shall come and cut off her head. Take care to lie at the farthest side of the bed, and push her to the outside.”

And it would have been all over with the poor girl, if she had not been standing in a corner near and heard it all. She did not dare to go outside the door the whole day long, and when bed-time came the other one got into bed first, so as to lie on the farthest side; but when she had gone to sleep, the step-daughter pushed her towards the outside, and took the inside place next the wall. In the night the old woman came sneaking; in her right hand she held an axe, and with her left she felt for the one who was lying outside, and then she heaved up the axe with both hands, and hewed the head off her only daughter.

When she had gone away, the other girl got up and went to her sweetheart’s, who was called Roland, and knocked at his door. When he came to her, she said,

“Listen, dear Roland, we must flee away in all haste; my step-mother meant to put me to death, but she has killed her only child instead. When the day breaks, and she sees what she has done, we are lost.”

“But I advise you,” said Roland, “to bring away her magic wand with you; otherwise we cannot escape her when she comes after to overtake us.” So the maiden fetched the magic wand, and she took up the head of her step-sister and let drop three drops of blood on the ground, — one by the bed, one in the kitchen, and one on the steps. Then she hastened back to her sweetheart.

When the old witch got up in the morning, she called out to her daughter, to give her the apron, but no daughter came. Then she cried out, “Where art thou?”

“Here, at the steps, sweeping!” answered one of the drops of blood.

The old woman went out, but she saw nobody at the steps, and cried again, “Where art thou?”

“Here in the kitchen warming myself,” cried the second drop of blood.

So she went into the kitchen and found no one. Then she cried again, “Where art thou?”

“Oh, here in bed fast asleep!” cried the third drop of blood.

Then the mother went into the room, and up to the bed, and there lay her only child, whose head she had cut off herself. The witch fell into a great fury, rushed to the window, for from it she could see far and wide, and she caught sight of her step-daughter, hastening away with her dear Roland.

“It will be no good to you,” cried she, “if you get ever so far away, you cannot escape me.” Then she put on her boots, which took her an hour’s walk at every stride, and it was not long before she had overtaken them. But the maiden, when she saw the old woman striding up, changed, by means of the magic wand, her dear Roland into a lake, and herself into a duck swimming upon it. The witch stood on the bank and threw in crumbs of bread, and took great pains to decoy the duck towards her, but the duck would not be decoyed, and the old woman was obliged to go back in the evening disappointed. Then the maiden and her dear Roland took again their natural shapes, and travelled on the whole night through until daybreak. Then the maiden changed herself into a beautiful flower, standing in the middle of a hedge of thorns, and her dear Roland into a fiddle-player. It was not long before the witch came striding up, and she said to the musician,

“Dear musician, will you be so kind as to reach that pretty flower for me?”

“Oh yes,” said he, “I will strike up a tune to it.”

Then as she crept quickly up to the hedge to break off the flower, for she knew well who it was, he began to play, and whether she liked it or not, she was obliged to dance, for there was magic in the tune. The faster he played the higher she had to jump, and the thorns tore her clothes, and scratched and wounded her, and he did not cease playing until she was spent, and lay dead.

So now they were saved, and Roland said,

“I will go to my father and prepare for the wedding.”

“And I will stay here,” said the maiden, “and wait for you, and so that no one should know me, I will change myself into a red milestone.” So away went Roland, and the maiden in the likeness of a stone waited in the field for her beloved.

But when Roland went home he fell into the snares of another maiden, who wrought so, that he forgot his first love.

And the poor girl waited a long time, but at last, seeing that he did not come, she was filled with despair, and changed herself into a flower, thinking “Perhaps some one in passing will put his foot upon me and crush me.”

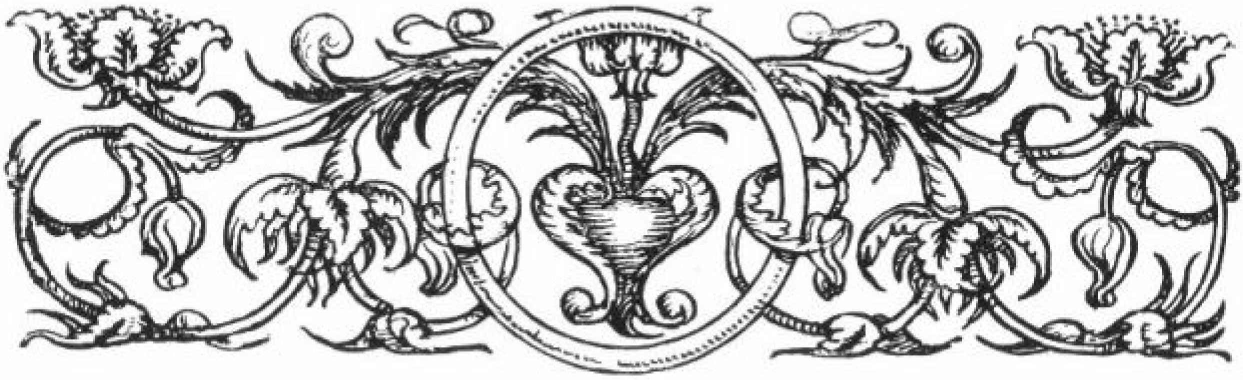
But it happened that a shepherd, tending his flock, saw the flower, and as it was so beautiful, he gathered it, took it home with him, and put it in his chest. From that time everything went wonderfully well in the shepherd’s house. When he got up in the morning, all the work was already done; the room was swept, the tables and benches rubbed, fire kindled on the hearth, and water ready drawn; and when he came home in the middle of the day, the table was laid, and a good meal spread upon it. He could not understand how it was done, for he never saw anybody in his house, and it was too little for anybody to hide in. The good serving pleased him well; but in the end he became uneasy, and went to a wise woman to take counsel of her. The wise woman said,

“There is magic in it: get up early some morning, and if you hear something moving in the room, be it what it may, throw a white cloth over it, and the charm will be broken.”

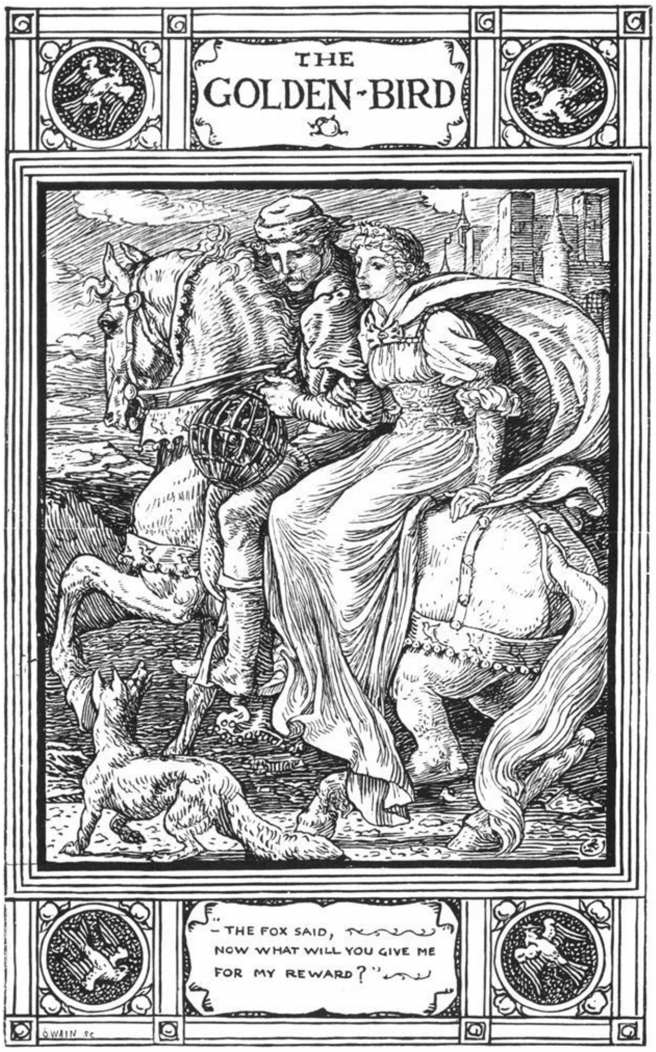
The shepherd did as she told him, and the next morning at daybreak he saw the chest open, and the flower come out. Then he jumped up quickly and threw a white cloth over it. So the spell was broken, and a lovely maiden stood before him; and she told him that she had been the flower, and had until now cared for his household matters. She told him all that had happened to her, and she pleased him so much that he asked her to marry him, but she answered “No,” because she still remained true to her dear Roland, though he had forsaken her; but she promised not to leave the shepherd, but to go on taking care of his house.

Now the time came when Roland’s wedding was to be held; and there was an old custom in that country that all the girls should be present, and should sing in honour of the bride and bridegroom. The faithful maiden, when she knew this, was so sorrowful that she felt as if her heart would break; and she would not go, until the others came and fetched her. And when her turn came to sing she slipped behind, so that she stood alone, and so began to sing: and as soon as her song reached Roland’s ear he sprang up and cried,

“I know that voice! that is the right bride, and no other will I have.” And everything that he had forgotten, and that had been swept out of his mind, came suddenly home to him in his heart. And the faithful maiden was married to her dear Roland; her sorrow came to an end and her joy began.



THE GOLDEN BIRD


THE GOLDEN-BIRD
"THE FOX SAID, NOW WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR MY REWARD?"
SWAIN SC

IN times gone by there was a king who had at the back of his castle a beautiful pleasure-garden, in which stood a tree that bore golden apples. As the apples ripened they were counted, but one morning one was missing. Then the king was angry, and he ordered that watch should be kept about the tree every night. Now the king had three sons, and he sent the eldest to spend the whole night in the garden; so he watched till midnight, and then he could keep off sleep no longer, and in the morning another apple was missing. The second son had to watch the following night; but it fared no better, for when twelve o'clock had struck he went to sleep, and in the morning another apple was missing. Now came the turn of the third son to watch, and he was ready to do so; but the king had less trust in him, and believed he would acquit himself still worse than his brothers, but in the end he consented to let him try. So the young man lay down under the tree to watch, and resolved that sleep should not be master. When it struck twelve something came rushing through the air, and he saw in the moonlight a bird flying towards him, whose feathers glittered like gold. The bird perched upon the tree, and had already pecked off an apple, when the young man let fly an arrow at it. The bird flew away, but the arrow had struck its plumage, and one of its golden feathers fell to the ground: the young man picked it up, and taking it next morning to the king, told him what had happened in the night. The king called his council together, and all declared that such a feather was worth more than the whole kingdom.

“Since the feather is so valuable,” said the king, “one is not enough for me; I must and will have the whole bird.”

So the eldest son set off, and relying on his own cleverness he thought he should soon find the golden bird. When he had gone some distance he saw a fox sitting at the edge of a wood, and he pointed his gun at him. The fox cried out,

“Do not shoot me, and I will give you good counsel. You are on your way to find the golden bird, and this evening you will come to a village, in which two taverns stand facing each other. One will be brightly lighted up, and there will be plenty of merriment going on inside; do not mind about that, but go into the other one, although it will look to you very uninviting.”

“How can a silly beast give one any rational advice?” thought the king’s son, and let fly at the fox, but missed him, and he stretched out his tail and ran quick into the wood. Then the young man went on his way, and towards evening he came to the village, and there stood the two taverns; in one singing and dancing was going on, the other looked quite dull and wretched. “I should be a fool,” said he, “to go into that dismal place, while there is anything so good close by.” So he went into the merry inn, and there lived in clover, quite forgetting the bird and his father, and all good counsel.

As time went on, and the eldest son never came home, the second son set out to seek the golden bird. He met with the fox, just as the eldest did, and received good advice from him without attending to it. And when he came to the two taverns, his brother was standing and calling to him at the window of one of them, out of which came sounds of merriment; so he could not resist, but went in and revelled to his heart’s content.

And then, as time went on, the youngest son wished to go forth, and to try his luck, but his father would not consent.

“It would be useless,” said he; “he is much less likely to find the bird than his brothers, and if any misfortune were to happen to him he would not know how to help himself; his wits are none of the best.”

But at last, as there was no peace to be had, he let him go. By the side of the wood sat the fox, begged him to spare his life, and gave him good counsel. The young man was kind, and said,

“Be easy, little fox, I will do you no harm.”

“You shall not repent of it,” answered the fox, “and that you may get there all the sooner, get up and sit on my tail.”

And no sooner had he done so than the fox began to run, and off they went over stock and stone, so that the wind whistled in their hair. When they reached the village the young man got down, and, following the fox’s advice, went into the mean-looking tavern, without hesitating, and there he passed a quiet night. The next morning, when he went out into the field, the fox, who was sitting there already, said,

"I will tell you further what you have to do. Go straight on until you come to a castle, before which a great band of soldiers lie, but do not trouble yourself about them, for they will be all asleep and snoring; pass through them and forward into the castle, and go through all the rooms, until you come to one where there is a golden bird hanging in a wooden cage. Near at hand will stand empty a golden cage of state, but you must beware of taking the bird out of his ugly cage and putting him into the fine one; if you do so you will come to harm."

After he had finished saying this the fox stretched out his tail again, and the king's son sat him down upon it; then away they went over stock and stone, so that the wind whistled through their hair. And when the king's son reached the castle he found everything as the fox had said: and he at last entered the room where the golden bird was hanging in a wooden cage, while a golden one was standing by; the three golden apples too were in the room. Then, thinking it foolish to let the beautiful bird stay in that mean and ugly cage, he opened the door of it, took hold of it, and put it in the golden one. In the same moment the bird uttered a piercing cry. The soldiers awaked, rushed in, seized the king's son and put him in prison. The next morning he was brought before a judge, and, as he confessed everything, condemned to death. But the king said he would spare his life on one condition, that he should bring him the golden horse whose paces were swifter than the wind, and that then he should also receive the golden bird as a reward.

So the king's son set off to find the golden horse, but he sighed, and was very sad, for how should it be accomplished? And then he saw his old friend the fox sitting by the roadside.

"Now, you see," said the fox, "all this has happened, because you would not listen to me. But be of good courage, I will bring you through, and will tell you how you are to get the golden horse. You must go straight on until you come to a castle, where the horse stands in his stable; before the stable-door the grooms will be lying, but they will all be asleep and snoring; and you can go and quietly lead out the horse. But one thing you must mind — take care to put upon him the plain saddle of wood and leather, and not the golden one, which will hang close by; otherwise it will go badly with you."

Then the fox stretched out his tail, and the king's son seated himself upon it, and away they went over stock and stone until the wind whistled through their hair. And everything happened just as the fox had said, and he came to the stall where the golden horse was: and as he was about to put on him the plain saddle, he thought to himself,

"Such a beautiful animal would be disgraced were I not to put on him the good saddle, which becomes him so well." However, no sooner did the horse feel the golden saddle touch him than he began to neigh. And the grooms all awoke, seized the king's son and threw him into prison. The next morning he was delivered up to justice and condemned to death, but the king promised him his life, and also to bestow upon him the golden horse, if he could convey thither the beautiful princess of the golden castle.

With a heavy heart the king’s son set out, but by great good luck he soon met with the faithful fox.

“I ought now to leave you to your own ill-luck,” said the fox, “but I am sorry for you, and will once more help you in your need. Your way lies straight up to the golden castle: you will arrive there in the evening, and at night, when all is quiet, the beautiful princess goes to the bath. And as she is entering the bathing-house, go up to her and give her a kiss, then she will follow you, and you can lead her away; but do not suffer her first to go and take leave of her parents, or it will go ill with you.”

Then the fox stretched out his tail; the king’s son seated himself upon it, and away they went over stock and stone, so that the wind whistled through their hair. And when he came to the golden castle, all was as the fox had said. He waited until midnight, when all lay in deep sleep, and then as the beautiful princess went to the bathing-house he went up to her and gave her a kiss, and she willingly promised to go with him, but she begged him earnestly, and with tears, that he would let her first go and take leave of her parents. At first he denied her prayer, but as she wept so much the more, and fell at his feet, he gave in at last. And no sooner had the princess reached her father’s bedside than he, and all who were in the castle, waked up, and the young man was seized and thrown into prison.

The next morning the king said to him,

“Thy life is forfeit, but thou shalt find grace if thou canst level that mountain that lies before my windows, and over which I am not able to see: and if this is done within eight days thou shalt have my daughter for a reward.”

So the king’s son set to work, and dug and shovelled away without ceasing, but when, on the seventh day, he saw how little he had accomplished, and that all his work was as nothing, he fell into great sadness, and gave up all hope. But on the evening of the seventh day the fox appeared, and said,

“You do not deserve that I should help you, but go now and lie down to sleep, and I will do the work for you.”

The next morning when he awoke, and looked out of the window, the mountain had disappeared. The young man hastened full of joy to the king, and told him that his behest was fulfilled, and, whether the king liked it or not, he had to keep to his word, and let his daughter go.

So they both went away together, and it was not long before the faithful fox came up to them.

“Well, you have got the best first,” said he; “but you must know the golden horse belongs to the princess of the golden castle.”

“But how shall I get it?” asked the young man.

“I am going to tell you,” answered the fox. “First, go to the king who sent you to the golden castle, and take to him the beautiful princess. There will then be very great rejoicing; he will willingly give you the golden horse, and they will lead him out to you; then mount him without delay, and stretch out your hand to each of them to take leave, and last of all to the princess, and when you have her by the hand swing her up on the horse behind you, and off you go! nobody will be able to overtake you, for that horse goes swifter than the wind."

And so it was all happily done, and the king's son carried off the beautiful princess on the golden horse. The fox did not stay behind, and he said to the young man,

"Now, I will help you to get the golden bird. When you draw near the castle where the bird is, let the lady alight, and I will take her under my care; then you must ride the golden horse into the castle-yard, and there will be great rejoicing to see it, and they will bring out to you the golden bird; as soon as you have the cage in your hand, you must start off back to us, and then you shall carry the lady away."

The plan was successfully carried out; and when the young man returned with the treasure, the fox said,

"Now, what will you give me for my reward?"

"What would you like?" asked the young man.

"When we are passing through the wood, I desire that you should slay me, and cut my head and feet off."

"That were a strange sign of gratitude," said the king's son, "and I could not possibly do such a thing."

Then said the fox,

"If you will not do it, I must leave you; but before I go let me give you some good advice. Beware of two things: buy no gallows-meat, and sit at no brook-side." With that the fox ran off into the wood.

The young man thought to himself, "That is a wonderful animal, with most singular ideas. How should any one buy gallows-meat? and I am sure I have no particular fancy for sitting by a brook-side."

So he rode on with the beautiful princess, and their way led them through the village where his two brothers had stayed. There they heard great outcry and noise, and when he asked what it was all about, they told him that two people were going to be hanged. And when he drew near he saw that it was his two brothers, who had done all sorts of evil tricks, and had wasted all their goods. He asked if there were no means of setting them free.

"Oh yes! if you will buy them off," answered the people; "but why should you spend your money in redeeming such worthless men?"

But he persisted in doing so; and when they were let go they all went on their journey together.

After a while they came to the wood where the fox had met them first, and there it seemed so cool and sheltered from the sun's burning rays that the two brothers said,

"Let us rest here for a little by the brook, and eat and drink to refresh ourselves."

The young man consented, quite forgetting the fox's warning, and he seated himself by the brook-side, suspecting no evil. But the two brothers thrust him backwards into the brook, seized the princess, the horse, and the bird, and went home to their father.

"Is not this the golden bird that we bring?" said they; "and we have also the golden horse, and the princess of the golden castle."

Then there was great rejoicing in the royal castle, but the horse did not feed, the bird did not chirp, and the princess sat still and wept.

The youngest brother, however, had not perished. The brook was, by good fortune, dry, and he fell on soft moss without receiving any hurt, but he could not get up again. But in his need the faithful fox was not lacking; he came up running, and reproached him for having forgotten his advice.

"But I cannot forsake you all the same," said he; "I will help you back again into daylight." So he told the young man to grasp his tail, and hold on to it fast, and so he drew him up again.

"Still you are not quite out of all danger," said the fox; "your brothers, not being certain of your death, have surrounded the wood with sentinels, who are to put you to death if you let yourself be seen."

A poor beggar-man was sitting by the path, and the young man changed clothes with him, and went clad in that wise into the king's courtyard. Nobody knew him, but the bird began to chirp, and the horse began to feed, and the beautiful princess ceased weeping.

"What does this mean?" said the king, astonished.

The princess answered,

"I cannot tell, except that I was sad, and now I am joyful; it is to me as if my rightful bridegroom had returned."

Then she told him all that happened, although the two brothers had threatened to put her to death if she let out anything. The king then ordered every person who was in the castle to be brought before him, and with the rest came the young man like a beggar in his wretched garments; but the princess knew him, and greeted him well, falling on his neck and kissing him. The wicked brothers were seized and put to death, and the youngest brother was married to the princess, and succeeded to the inheritance of his father.

But what became of the poor fox? Long afterwards the king's son was going through the wood, and the fox met him and said,

"Now, you have everything that you can wish for, but my misfortunes never come to an end, and it lies in your power to free me from them." And once more he prayed the king's son earnestly to slay him, and cut off his head and feet. So, at last, he consented, and no sooner was it done than the fox was changed into a man, and was no other than the brother of the beautiful princess; and thus he was set free from a spell that had bound him for a long, long time.

And now, indeed, there lacked nothing to their happiness as long as they lived.

THE DOG AND THE SPARROW

THERE was once a sheep-dog whose master behaved ill to him and did not give him enough to eat, and when for hunger he could bear it no longer, he left his service very sadly. In the street he was met by a sparrow, who said,

"Dog, my brother, why are you so sad?"

And the dog answered,

"I am hungry and have nothing to eat."

Then said the sparrow,

"Dear brother, come with me into the town; I will give you plenty."

Then they went together into the town, and soon they came to a butcher's stall, and the sparrow said to the dog,

"Stay here while I reach you down a piece of meat," and he perched on the stall, looked round to see that no one noticed him, and pecked, pulled, and dragged so long at a piece that lay near the edge of the board that at last it slid to the ground. The dog picked it up, ran with it into a corner, and ate it up. Then said the sparrow,

"Now come with me to another stall, and I will get you another piece, so that your hunger may be satisfied."

When the dog had devoured a second piece the sparrow asked,

"Dog, my brother, are you satisfied now?"

"Yes, as to meat I am," answered he, "but I have had no bread."

Then said the sparrow,

"That also shall you have; come with me." And he led him to a baker's stall and pecked at a few little rolls until they fell to the ground, and as the dog still wanted more, they went to another stall farther on and got more bread. When that was done the sparrow said,

"Dog, my brother, are you satisfied yet?"

"Yes," answered he, "and now we will walk a little outside the town."

And they went together along the high road. It was warm weather, and when they had gone a little way the dog said,

"I am tired, and would like to go to sleep."

"Well, do so," said the sparrow; "in the meanwhile I will sit near on a bough." The dog laid himself in the road and fell fast asleep, and as he lay there a waggoner came up with a waggon and three horses, laden with two casks of wine; the sparrow, seeing that he was not going to turn aside but kept in the beaten track, just where the dog lay, cried out,

"Waggoner, take care, or you shall suffer for it!"

But the waggoner, muttering, "What harm can you do to me?" cracked his whip and drove his waggon over the dog, and he was crushed to death by the wheels. Then the sparrow cried,

"Thou hast killed the dog my brother, and it shall cost thee horses and cart!"

"Oh! horses and cart!" said the waggoner, "what harm can you do me, I should like to know?" and drove on. The sparrow crept under the covering of the waggon and pecked at the bung-hole of one of the casks until the cork came out, and all the wine ran out without the waggoner noticing. After a while, looking round, he saw that something dripped from the waggon, and on examining the casks he found that one of them was empty, and he cried out,

"I am a ruined man!"

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and flying to one of the horses he perched on his head and pecked at his eyes. When the waggoner saw that he took out his axe to hit the sparrow, who at that moment flew aloft, and the waggoner missing him struck the horse on the head, so that he fell down dead.

"Oh, I am a ruined man!" cried he.

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and as the waggoner drove on with the two horses that were left the sparrow crept again under the waggon-covering and pecked the cork out of the second cask, so that all the wine leaked out. When the waggoner became aware of it, he cried out again,

"Oh! I am a ruined man!" But the sparrow answered, "Not ruined enough yet!" and perched on the second horse's head and began pecking at his eyes. Back ran the waggoner and raised his axe to strike, but the sparrow flying aloft, the stroke fell on the horse, so that he was killed.

"Oh! I am a ruined man!" cried the waggoner.

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and perching on the third horse began pecking at his eyes. The waggoner struck out in his anger at the sparrow without taking aim, and missing him, he laid his third horse dead.

"Oh! I am a ruined man!" he cried.

"Not ruined enough yet!" answered the sparrow, flying off; "I will see to that at home."

So the waggoner had to leave his waggon standing, and went home full of rage.

"Oh!" said he to his wife, "what ill-luck I have had! the wine is spilt, and the horses are all three dead."

"O husband!" answered she, "such a terrible bird has come to this house; he has brought with him all the birds of the air, and there they are in the midst of our wheat devouring it." And he looked and there were thousands upon thousands of birds sitting on the ground, having eaten up all the wheat, and the sparrow in the midst, and the waggoner cried,

"Oh! I am a ruined man!"

"Not ruined enough yet!" answered the sparrow; "Waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life!" and he flew away.

Now the waggoner, having lost everything he possessed, went in-doors and sat down angry and miserable behind the stove. The sparrow was perched outside on the window-sill, and cried, "Waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life!" Then the waggoner seized his axe and threw it at the sparrow, but it broke the window sash in two and did not touch the sparrow, who now hopped inside, perched on the stove, and cried.

"Waggoner it shall cost thee thy life!" and he, mad and blind with rage, beat in the stove, and as the sparrow flew from one spot to another, hacked everything in pieces, furniture, looking-glasses, benches, table, and the very walls of his house, and yet did not touch the sparrow.

At last he caught and held him in his hand.

"Now," said his wife, "shall I not kill him?"

"No!" cried he, "that were too easy a death; I will swallow him," and as the bird was fluttering in the man's mouth, it stretched out its head, saying,

"Waggoner, it shall cost thee thy life!"

Then the waggoner reached the axe to his wife saying,

"Wife, strike me this bird dead."

The wife struck, but missed her aim, and the blow fell on the waggoner's head, and he dropped down dead.

But the sparrow flew over the hills and away.

FRED AND KATE

THERE were once a young husband and wife, and their names were Fred and Kate. One day said Fred,

"I must go now to my work in the fields, Kate, and when I come back you must have on the table some roast meat to satisfy my hunger, and some cool drink to quench my thirst."

"All right, Fred," answered Kate; "be off with you, I will see to it."

When dinner-time began to draw near, she took down a sausage from the chimney, put it in a frying-pan with some butter, and stood it over the fire. The sausage began to frizzle and fry, and Kate stood holding the handle of the pan, and fell into deep thought; at last she said to herself,

"While the sausage is cooking I might as well be drawing the beer in the cellar."

So she saw that the frying-pan was standing firmly, and then took a can and went down into the cellar to draw the beer. Now, while Kate was watching the beer run into the can, a sudden thought came into her mind.

"Holloa! the dog is not fastened up; he may perhaps get at the sausage," and in a trice she was up the cellar steps: but already the dog had it in his mouth, and was making off with it. Then Kate, with all haste, followed after him and chased him a good way into the fields, but the dog was quicker than Kate, and, never letting slip the sausage, was soon at a great distance.

"Well, it can't be helped!" said Kate turning back, and as she had tired herself with running, she took her time about going home, and walked slowly to cool herself. All this time the beer was running out of the cask, for Kate had not turned off the tap, and as the can was soon full, it began to run over on the cellar floor, and ran, and ran, until the cask was empty. Kate stood on the steps and saw the misfortune.

"Dear me!" cried she, "what am I to do to prevent Fred from noticing it!"

She considered for a while, and then remembered that there was remaining in the loft from the last fair time a sack of fine wheat-flour; she determined to bring it down, and strew it over the beer.

"To be sure," said she, "those who know how to save have somewhat in time of necessity."

And going up to the loft, she dragged the sack down and threw it right upon the can full of beer, so that Fred's drink ran about the cellar with the rest.

"It is all right," said Kate; "where some goes the rest must follow," and she strewed the meal all over the cellar. When all was done, she was highly pleased, and thought how clean and neat it looked.

At dinner-time home came Fred.

"Now, wife, what have you got for me?" said he.

"O Fred," answered she, "I was going to cook a sausage for you, but while I was drawing the beer the dog got it out of the pan, and while I was running after the dog the beer all ran away, and as I was going to stop up the beer with the wheat-meal I knocked over the can: but it is all right now; the cellar is quite dry again.” But said Fred,

“O Kate, Kate! what have you been about, letting the sausage be carried off, and the beer run out of the cask, and then to waste all our good meal into the bargain?”

“Well, Fred, I did not know; you should have told me,” said Kate. So the husband thought to himself,

“If my wife is like this, I must look after things a little better.”

Now he had saved a very pretty sum of money, and he changed it all to gold, and said to Kate,

“Do you see these yellow counters? I am going to make a hole in the stable underneath the cows’ manger and bury them; see that you do not meddle with them, or it will be the worse for you.”

And she said, “Oh no, Fred, certainly I won’t.”

Now, one day when Fred was away, there came some pedlars to the village, with earthen pots and basins to sell, and they asked the young wife if she had nothing to give in exchange for them.

“O my good men,” said Kate, “I have no money to buy anything with, but if you had any use for yellow counters, I might do some business with you.”

“Yellow counters! why not? we might as well see them,” said they.

“Then go into the stable and dig under the cows’ manger, and you will find them; but I dare not go near the place.”

So those rogues went and dug, and found the gold accordingly. And they seized it quickly, and ran off with it, leaving the pots and pans behind them in the house. Kate thought she must make some use of her new possessions, so, as she had no need of them in the kitchen, she spread them out on the ground, and then stuck them, one after another, for ornament, on the fence which ran round the house. When Fred came home and saw the new decorations, he said, “Kate, what have you been doing?”

“I bought them every one, Fred, with those yellow counters that were buried under the manger, and I did not go there myself; the pedlars had to dig them up for themselves.”

“O wife!” cried Fred, “what have you done? they were not counters, but pure gold, and all our capital; you should not have done so.”

“Well, Fred, I did not know; you should have told me that before,” answered Kate.

Then Kate stood still a little while to consider, and at last she said, “Listen, Fred, we may be able to get the gold back again. Let us run after the thieves.”

“Very well,” said Fred, “we will try; only let us take some bread and cheese with us, that we may have something to eat on the way.”

“All right,” she answered. So they set out, and as Fred was a better walker than Kate, she was soon left behind.

“All the better for me,” said she, “for when we turn back I shall have so much the less distance to go.”

And they came to a mountain, where, on both sides of the road, there were deep cart-ruts. And Kate said to herself,

"How sad to see the poor earth torn, and vexed, and oppressed in this way! it will never be healed again in all its life."

And with a compassionate heart, she took out her butter and smeared the cart-ruts right and left, so that they might not be so cut by the wheels; and as she was stooping to perform this merciful act a cheese fell out of her pocket and rolled down the mountain. And Kate said,

"I have walked over the ground once, and I am not going to do it again, but another shall run after that cheese, and bring it back." So saying, she took another cheese, and rolled it after the first one: and as it did not seem to be coming back again, she sent a third racing after them, thinking, "Perhaps they are waiting for company, and are not used to travelling alone." But when they all three delayed coming, she said,

"I can't think what this means! perhaps it is that the third one has lost his way, so I will send a fourth that he may call out to him as he goes by." But it went no better with the fourth than with the third. And Kate lost all patience and threw down the fifth and sixth, and that was all. A long while she stood and waited for them to come up, but as still they did not come, she said,

"Oh, it's like sending good money after bad; there is no getting you back again. If you suppose I am going to wait for you any longer, you are very much mistaken: I shall go on my way and you may overtake me; your legs are younger than mine." Kate then went on until she overtook Fred, who was standing still and waiting, as he wanted something to eat.

"Now, be quick," he said, "and hand over what you have brought." And she handed him the dry bread.

"Now for the butter and the cheese," said the man.

"O Fred," said Kate, "I anointed the cart-ruts with the butter, and the cheeses will soon be here, they are upon the road; one of them ran away, and I sent the others to fetch it back."

Then said Fred,

"It was very wrong of you, Kate, to waste the butter, and roll the cheeses down the hill."

And Kate answered, "Well then, you should have told me so."

As they were eating the dry bread together, Fred said,

"Kate, did you lock up the house before leaving?"

"No, Fred; you ought to have told me that before."

And her husband answered,

"Well, you must go home at once and lock up the house before we go any farther, and you might as well bring something more to eat with you, and I will wait for you here."

So Kate went, and she thought to herself,

"As Fred wants something more to eat, and he does not care much about butter and cheese, I will bring some dried apples and a jug of vinegar back with me."

Then she bolted the front door, but the back door she took off its hinges, and lifted it on her shoulders, thinking that if she had the door all safe no harm could come to the house. And she took her time on the way back, and thought to herself, "Fred will have so much the longer to rest." So when she got back to him, she called out,

"Fred, if the house-door is safe, no harm can come to the house!"

"Oh dear!" cried he, "what a prudent wife have I! to carry away the back-door, so that any one may get in, and to bolt the front door! It is too late now to go home, but as you have brought the door so far, you may carry it on farther."

"All right, I will carry the door, Fred," said she, "but the dried apples and the vinegar will be too heavy for me; I will hang them on the door and make it carry them."

Now they went into the wood to look for the thieves, but they could not find them. When it grew dark they got up into a tree to pass the night there. No sooner had they settled down when up came the pedlars, some of those fellows who carry away what should not go with them, and who find things before they are lost. They laid themselves down directly under the tree where Fred and Kate were, and they made a fire, and began to divide their spoil. Then Fred got down on the farther side of the tree and gathered together some stones, and then got up again, intending to stone the robbers to death with them. The stones, however, did not hit them, and they said,

"It will soon be morning; the wind is rising and shaking down the fir-cones."

Now all the time Kate had the door on her shoulder, and as it weighed upon her heavily, she thought it must be the dried apples, and she said,

"Fred, I must throw down the dried apples."

"No, Kate, not now," answered he; "we might be discovered."

"Oh dear, Fred, but I must! they weigh me down so!" said she.

"Well then, do it, if you must, in the name of all that's tormenting!" cried he; and down rolled the apples between the boughs, and the robbers cried,

"There are birds in this tree!"

After a while, as the door still weighed her down heavily, Kate said, "O Fred, I must pour away the vinegar;" and he answered,

"No, Kate, you must not do that; we might be discovered."

"Oh dear me, Fred, but I must! it weighs me down so!"

"Then do it, if you must, in the name of all that's tormenting!"

And she poured out the vinegar, so that the men were all besprinkled.

And they said one to another,

"The morning dew is beginning to fall already."

At last Kate began to think that it must really be the door that weighed so heavy, and she said,

"Fred, I must throw down the door!" and he answered,

"No, Kate, not now; we might be discovered."

"Oh dear me, Fred, but I must! it weighs me down so."

"No, Kate, you must hold it fast."

“O Fred, it’s slipping, it’s falling!”

“Well then, let it fall in the name of torment!” cried Fred in a passion. And so it fell with a great crash, and the thieves below cried,

“There is something wrong about this tree!” and they got up in a great hurry and ran off, leaving their spoil behind them. And early in the morning when Fred and Kate came down from the tree they got all their gold again and carried it home.

And when they reached their house again Fred said,

“Now, Kate, you must fall to and be very industrious and work hard.”

“All right, Fred, I will go into the field and cut corn,” said she.

And when she came into the field she said to herself,

“Shall I eat before I cut, or shall I sleep before I cut? well, I will eat first.” And so she ate, and after that she felt sleepy, but she began to cut and went on half asleep cutting her own clothes, skirts, gown, and all, and when she at last woke up and found herself in rags, she said to herself,

“Is this really I or not? oh dear, it is not I!”

After a while night came on, and Kate ran into the village and knocked at her husband’s door calling out, “Fred!”

“What is it?” said he.

“I want to know if Kate is at home,” said she.

“Oh yes,” he answered, “she is lying here fast asleep.”

So she said to herself, “All right then, I am certainly at home,” and she ran on farther.

Soon she came upon some thieves who were looking about for something to steal, and she went up to them and offered to help them, and the thieves thought she knew of a good place and opportunity, and were glad of her offer. But Kate walked in front of the houses calling out,

“Good people, what have you for us to steal?”

So the thieves thought to themselves, “This will never do,” and wished themselves quit of her. At last they said to her,

“Just at the end of the village there are some turnips in the parson’s field; go and fetch us some.”

So Kate went into the field and began to pull some up, but very lazily, and never raised herself. Presently came by a man who saw her, and thought she was some evil thing grubbing for the turnips. So he ran quickly into the village and said to the parson,

“O parson, some evil creature is grubbing in your turnip-field!”

“Oh dear!” answered the parson, “I have a lame foot, I cannot go to drive it away.”

And the man at once offered to take him on his back, and he did so.

Just as they reached the field Kate got up and stood upright.

“Oh, the devil!” cried the parson, and both took to their heels, and the parson was able, out of his great fear, to run faster with his lame foot than the man who had carried him on his back with both legs sound.

THE LITTLE FARMER

THERE was a certain village where lived many rich farmers and only one poor one, whom they called the Little Farmer. He had not even a cow, and still less had he money to buy one; and he and his wife greatly wished for such a thing. One day he said to her,

"Listen, I have a good idea; it is that your godfather the joiner shall make us a calf of wood and paint it brown, so as to look just like any other; and then in time perhaps it will grow big and become a cow."

This notion pleased the wife, and godfather joiner set to work to saw and plane, and soon turned out a calf complete, with its head down and neck stretched out as if it were grazing.

The next morning, as the cows were driven to pasture, the Little Farmer called out to the drover,

"Look here, I have got a little calf to go, but it is still young and must be carried."

"All right!" said the drover, and tucked it under his arm, carried it into the meadows, and stood it in the grass. So the calf stayed where it was put, and seemed to be eating all the time, and the drover thought to himself,

"It will soon be able to run alone, if it grazes at that rate!"

In the evening, when the herds had to be driven home, he said to the calf, "If you can stand there eating like that, you can just walk off on your own four legs; I am not going to lug you under my arm again!"

But the Little Farmer was standing by his house-door, and waiting for his calf; and when he saw the cow-herd coming through the village without it, he asked what it meant. The cow-herd answered, "It is still out there eating away, and never attended to the call, and would not come with the rest."

Then the Little Farmer said,

"I will tell you what, I must have my beast brought home."

And they went together through the fields in quest of it, but some one had stolen it, and it was gone. And the drover said,

"Most likely it has run away."

But the Little Farmer said "Not it!" and brought the cow-herd before the bailiff, who ordered him for his carelessness to give the Little Farmer a cow for the missing calf.

So now the Little Farmer and his wife possessed their long-wished-for cow; they rejoiced with all their hearts, but unfortunately they had no fodder for it, and could give it nothing to eat, so that before long they had to kill it. Its flesh they salted down, and the Little Farmer went to the town to sell the skin and buy a new calf with what he got for it. On the way he came to a mill, where a raven was sitting with broken wings, and he took it up out of pity and wrapped it in the skin. The weather was very stormy, and it blew and rained, so he turned into the mill and asked for shelter. The miller's wife was alone in the house, and she said to the Little Farmer, "Well, come in and lay thee down in the straw," and she gave him a piece of bread and cheese. So the Little Farmer ate, and then lay down with his skin near him, and the miller's wife thought he was sleeping with fatigue. After a while in came another man, and the miller's wife received him very well, saying,

"My husband is out; we will make good cheer."

The Little Farmer listened to what they said, and when he heard good cheer spoken of, he grew angry to think he had been put off with bread and cheese. For the miller's wife presently brought out roast meat, salad, cakes, and wine.

Now as the pair were sitting down to their feast, there came a knock at the door.

"Oh dear," cried the woman, "it is my husband!" In a twinkling she popped the roast meat into the oven, the wine under the pillow, the salad in the bed, the cakes under the bed, and the man in the linen-closet. Then she opened the door to her husband, saying,

"Thank goodness, you are here! what weather it is, as if the world were coming to an end!"

When the miller saw the Little Farmer lying in the straw, he said,

"What fellow have you got there?"

"Oh!" said the wife, "the poor chap came in the midst of the wind and rain and asked for shelter, and I gave him some bread and cheese and spread some straw for him."

The husband answered, "Oh well, I have no objection, only get me something to eat at once."

But the wife said, "There is nothing but bread and cheese."

"Anything will do for me," answered the miller, "bread and cheese for ever!" and catching sight of the Little Farmer, he cried,

"Come along, and keep me company!" The Little Farmer did not wait to be asked twice, but sat down and ate. After a while the miller noticed the skin lying on the ground with the raven wrapped up in it, and he said, "What have you got there?"

The Little Farmer answered, "A fortune-teller."

And the miller asked "Can he tell my fortune?"

"Why not?" answered the Little Farmer. "He will tell four things, and the fifth he keeps to himself." Now the miller became very curious, and said, "Ask him to say something."

And the Little Farmer pinched the raven, so that it croaked, "Crr, crr." "What does he say?" asked the miller. And the Little Farmer answered,

"First he says that there is wine under the pillow."

"That would be jolly!" cried the miller, and he went to look, and found the wine, and then asked, "What next?"

So the Little Farmer made the raven croak again, and then said,

"He says, secondly, that there is roast meat in the oven."

"That would be jolly!" cried the miller, and he went and looked, and found the roast meat. The Little Farmer made the fortune-teller speak again, and then said,

"He says, thirdly, that there is salad in the bed."

"That would be jolly!" cried the miller, and went and looked, and found the salad. Once more the Little Farmer pinched the raven, so that he croaked, and said,

"He says, fourthly and lastly, that there are cakes under the bed."

"That would be jolly!" cried the miller, and he went and looked, and found the cakes.

And now the two sat down to table, and the miller's wife felt very uncomfortable, and she went to bed and took all the keys with her. The miller was eager to know what the fifth thing could be, but the Little Farmer said,

"Suppose we eat the four things in peace first, for the fifth thing is a great deal worse."

So they sat and ate, and while they ate, they bargained together as to how much the miller would give for knowing the fifth thing; and at last they agreed upon three hundred dollars. Then the Little Farmer pinched the raven, so that he croaked aloud. And the miller asked what he said, and the Little Farmer answered,

"He says that there is a demon in the linen-closet."

"Then," said the miller, "that demon must out of the linen-closet," and he unbarred the house-door, while the Little Farmer got the key of the linen-closet from the miller's wife, and opened it. Then the man rushed forth, and out of the house, and the miller said,

"I saw the black rogue with my own eyes; so that is a good riddance."

And the Little Farmer took himself off by daybreak next morning with the three hundred dollars.

And after this the Little Farmer by degrees got on in the world, and built himself a good house, and the other farmers said,

"Surely the Little Farmer has been where it rains gold pieces, and has brought home money by the bushel."

And he was summoned before the bailiff to say whence his riches came. And all he said was,

"I sold my calf's skin for three hundred dollars."

When the other farmers heard this they wished to share such good luck, and ran home, killed all their cows, skinned them in order to sell them also for the same high price as the Little Farmer. And the bailiff said, "I must be beforehand with them." So he sent his servant into the town to the skin-buyer, and he only gave her three dollars for the skin, and that was faring better than the others, for when they came, they did not get as much as that, for the skin-buyer said,

"What am I to do with all these skins?"

Now the other farmers were very angry with the Little Farmer for misleading them, and they vowed vengeance against him, and went to complain of his deceit to the bailiff. The poor Little Farmer was with one voice sentenced to death, and to be put into a cask with holes in it, and rolled into the water. So he was led to execution, and a priest was fetched to say a mass for him, and the rest of the people had to stand at a distance. As soon as the Little Farmer caught sight of the priest he knew him for the man who was hid in the linen-closet at the miller's. And he said to him,

"As I let you out of the cupboard, you must let me out of the cask."

At that moment a shepherd passed with a flock of sheep, and the Little Farmer knowing him to have a great wish to become bailiff himself, called out with all his might,

"No, I will not, and if all the world asked me, I would not!"

The shepherd, hearing him, came up and asked what it was he would not do. The Little Farmer answered,

"They want to make me bailiff, if I sit in this cask, but I will not do it!"

The shepherd said,

"If that is all there is to do in order to become bailiff I will sit in the cask and welcome." And the Little Farmer answered,

"Yes, that is all, just you get into the cask, and you will become bailiff." So the shepherd agreed, and got in, and the Little Farmer fastened on the top; then he collected the herd of sheep and drove them away. The priest went back to the parish-assembly, and told them the mass had been said. Then they came and began to roll the cask into the water, and as it went the shepherd inside called out, "I consent to be bailiff!"

They thought that it was the Little Farmer who spoke, and they answered,

"All right; but first you must go down below and look about you a little," and they rolled the cask into the water.

Upon that the farmers went home, and when they reached the village, there they met the Little Farmer driving a flock of sheep, and looking quite calm and contented. The farmers were astonished and cried,

"Little Farmer, whence come you? how did you get out of the water?"

"Oh, easily," answered he, "I sank and sank until I came to the bottom; then I broke through the cask and came out of it, and there were beautiful meadows and plenty of sheep feeding, so I brought away this flock with me."

Then said the farmers, "Are there any left?"

"Oh yes," answered the Little Farmer, "more than you can possibly need."

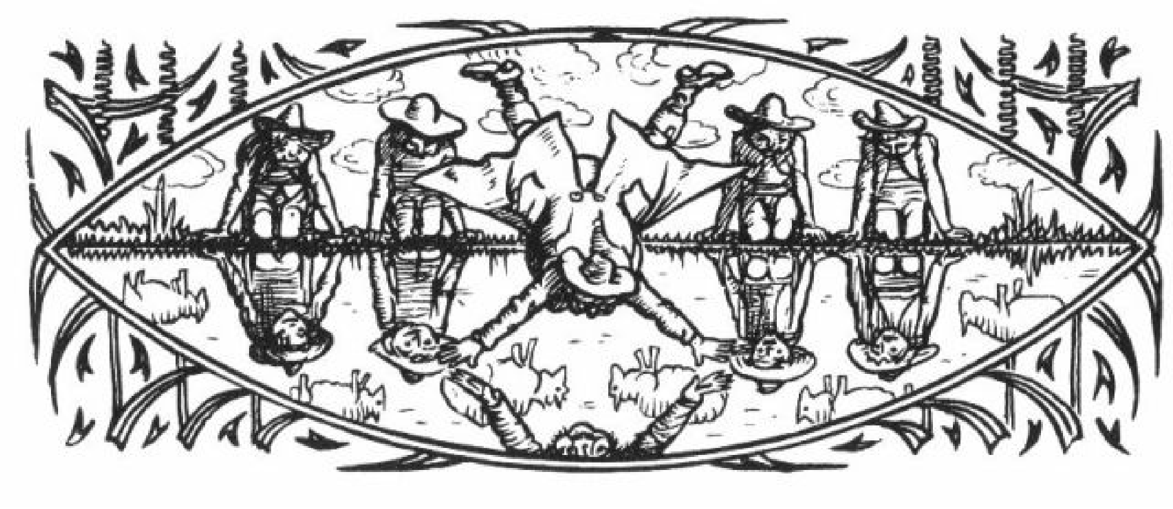
Then the farmers agreed that they would go and fetch some sheep also, each man a flock for himself; and the bailiff said, "Me first." And they all went together, and in the blue sky there were little fleecy clouds like lambkins, and they were reflected in the water; and the farmers cried out,

"There are the sheep down there at the bottom."

When the bailiff heard that he pressed forward and said,

"I will go first and look about me, and if things look well, I will call to you."

And he jumped plump into the water, and they all thought that the noise he made meant "Come," so the whole company jumped in one after the other. So perished all the proprietors of the village, and the Little Farmer, as sole heir, became a rich man.



THE QUEEN BEE

TWO king's sons once started to seek adventures, and fell into a wild, reckless way of living, and gave up all thoughts of going home again. Their third and youngest brother, who was called Witling, and had remained behind, started off to seek them; and when at last he found them, they jeered at his simplicity in thinking that he could make his way in the world, while they who were so much cleverer were unsuccessful. But they all three went on together until they came to an ant-hill, which the two eldest brothers wished to stir up, that they might see the little ants hurry about in their fright and carrying off their eggs, but Witling said,

"Leave the little creatures alone, I will not suffer them to be disturbed."

And they went on farther until they came to a lake, where a number of ducks were swimming about. The two eldest brothers wanted to catch a couple and cook them, but Witling would not allow it, and said, "Leave the creatures alone, I will not suffer them to be killed."

And then they came to a bee's-nest in a tree, and there was so much honey in it that it overflowed and ran down the trunk. The two eldest brothers then wanted to make a fire beneath the tree, that the bees might be stifled by the smoke, and then they could get at the honey. But Witling prevented them, saying,

"Leave the little creatures alone, I will not suffer them to be stifled."

At last the three brothers came to a castle where there were in the stables many horses standing, all of stone, and the brothers went through all the rooms until they came to a door at the end secured with three locks, and in the middle of the door a small opening through which they could look into the room. And they saw a little grey-haired man sitting at a table. They called out to him once, twice, and he did not hear, but at the third time he got up, undid the locks, and came out. Without speaking a word he led them to a table loaded with all sorts of good things, and when they had eaten and drunk he showed to each his bed-chamber. The next morning the little grey man came to the eldest brother, and beckoning him, brought him to a table of stone, on which were written three things directing by what means the castle could be delivered from its enchantment. The first thing was, that in the wood under the moss lay the pearls belonging to the princess — a thousand in number — and they were to be sought for and collected, and if he who should undertake the task had not finished it by sunset, — if but one pearl were missing, — he must be turned to stone. So the eldest brother went out, and searched all day, but at the end of it he had only found one hundred; just as was said on the table of stone came to pass and he was turned into stone. The second brother undertook the adventure next day, but it fared with him no better than with the first; he found two hundred pearls, and was turned into stone.

And so at last it was Witling's turn, and he began to search in the moss; but it was a very tedious business to find the pearls, and he grew so out of heart that he sat down on a stone and began to weep. As he was sitting thus, up came the ant-king with five thousand ants, whose lives had been saved through Witling’s pity, and it was not very long before the little insects had collected all the pearls and put them in a heap.

Now the second thing ordered by the table of stone was to get the key of the princess’s sleeping-chamber out of the lake.

And when Witling came to the lake, the ducks whose lives he had saved came swimming, and dived below, and brought up the key from the bottom. The third thing that had to be done was the most difficult, and that was to choose out the youngest and loveliest of the three princesses, as they lay sleeping. All bore a perfect resemblance each to the other, and only differed in this, that before they went to sleep each one had eaten a different sweetmeat, — the eldest a piece of sugar, the second a little syrup, and the third a spoonful of honey. Now the Queen-bee of those bees that Witling had protected from the fire came at this moment, and trying the lips of all three, settled on those of the one that had eaten honey, and so it was that the king’s son knew which to choose. Then the spell was broken; every one awoke from stony sleep, and took their right form again.

And Witling married the youngest and loveliest princess, and became king after her father’s death. But his two brothers had to put up with the two other sisters.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

THERE was a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was called the Simpleton, and was despised, laughed at, and neglected, on every occasion. It happened one day that the eldest son wished to go into the forest to cut wood, and before he went his mother gave him a delicious pancake and a flask of wine, that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst. When he came into the forest a little old grey man met him, who wished him good day, and said,

"Give me a bit of cake out of your pocket, and let me have a drink of your wine; I am so hungry and thirsty."

But the prudent youth answered,

"Give you my cake and my wine? I haven't got any; be off with you."

And leaving the little man standing there, he went off. Then he began to fell a tree, but he had not been at it long before he made a wrong stroke, and the hatchet hit him in the arm, so that he was obliged to go home and get it bound up. That was what came of the little grey man.

Afterwards the second son went into the wood, and the mother gave to him, as to the eldest, a pancake and a flask of wine. The little old grey man met him also, and begged for a little bit of cake and a drink of wine. But the second son spoke out plainly, saying,

"What I give you I lose myself, so be off with you."

And leaving the little man standing there, he went off. The punishment followed; as he was chopping away at the tree, he hit himself in the leg so severely that he had to be carried home.

Then said the Simpleton,

"Father, let me go for once into the forest to cut wood;" and the father answered, "Your brothers have hurt themselves by so doing; give it up, you understand nothing about it."

But the Simpleton went on begging so long, that the father said at last,

"Well, be off with you; you will only learn by experience."

The mother gave him a cake (it was only made with water, and baked in the ashes), and with it a flask of sour beer. When he came into the forest the little old grey man met him, and greeted him, saying,

"Give me a bit of your cake, and a drink from your flask; I am so hungry and thirsty."

And the Simpleton answered, "I have only a flour and water cake and sour beer; but if that is good enough for you, let us sit down together and eat." Then they sat down, and as the Simpleton took out his flour and water cake it became a rich pancake, and his sour beer became good wine; then they ate and drank, and afterwards the little man said,

"As you have such a kind heart, and share what you have so willingly, I will bestow good luck upon you. Yonder stands an old tree; cut it down, and at its roots you will find some thing," and thereupon the little man took his departure.

The Simpleton went there, and hewed away at the tree, and when it fell he saw, sitting among the roots, a goose with feathers of pure gold. He lifted it out and took it with him to an inn where he intended to stay the night. The landlord had three daughters who, when they saw the goose, were curious to know what wonderful kind of bird it was, and ended by longing for one of its golden feathers. The eldest thought, “I will wait for a good opportunity, and then I will pull out one of its feathers for myself;” and so, when the Simpleton was gone out, she seized the goose by its wing — but there her finger and hand had to stay, held fast. Soon after came the second sister with the same idea of plucking out one of the golden feathers for herself; but scarcely had she touched her sister, than she also was obliged to stay, held fast. Lastly came the third with the same intentions; but the others screamed out,

“Stay away! for heaven’s sake stay away!”

But she did not see why she should stay away, and thought, “If they do so, why should not I?” and went towards them. But when she reached her sisters there she stopped, hanging on with them. And so they had to stay, all night. The next morning the Simpleton took the goose under his arm and went away, unmindful of the three girls that hung on to it. The three had always to run after him, left and right, wherever his legs carried him. In the midst of the fields they met the parson, who, when he saw the procession, said,

“Shame on you, girls, running after a young fellow through the fields like this,” and forthwith he seized hold of the youngest by the hand to drag her away, but hardly had he touched her when he too was obliged to run after them himself. Not long after the sexton came that way, and seeing the respected parson following at the heels of the three girls, he called out,

“Ho, your reverence, whither away so quickly? You forget that we have another christening to-day;” and he seized hold of him by his gown; but no sooner had he touched him than he was obliged to follow on too. As the five tramped on, one after another, two peasants with their hoes came up from the fields, and the parson cried out to them, and begged them to come and set him and the sexton free, but no sooner had they touched the sexton than they had to follow on too; and now there were seven following the Simpleton and the goose.

By and by they came to a town where a king reigned, who had an only daughter who was so serious that no one could make her laugh; therefore the king had given out that whoever should make her laugh should have her in marriage. The Simpleton, when he heard this, went with his goose and his hangers-on into the presence of the king’s daughter, and as soon as she saw the seven people following always one after the other, she burst out laughing, and seemed as if she could never stop. And so the Simpleton earned a right to her as his bride; but the king did not like him for a son-in-law and made all kinds of objections, and said he must first bring a man who could drink up a whole cellar of wine. The Simpleton thought that the little grey man would be able to help him, and went out into the forest, and there, on the very spot where he felled the tree, he saw a man sitting with a very sad countenance. The Simpleton asked him what was the matter, and he answered,

“I have a great thirst, which I cannot quench: cold water does not agree with me; I have indeed drunk up a whole cask of wine, but what good is a drop like that?”

Then said the Simpleton,

“I can help you; only come with me, and you shall have enough.”

He took him straight to the king’s cellar, and the man sat himself down before the big vats, and drank, and drank, and before a day was over he had drunk up the whole cellar-full. The Simpleton again asked for his bride, but the king was annoyed that a wretched fellow, called the Simpleton by everybody, should carry off his daughter, and so he made new conditions. He was to produce a man who could eat up a mountain of bread. The Simpleton did not hesitate long, but ran quickly off to the forest, and there in the same place sat a man who had fastened a strap round his body, making a very piteous face, and saying,

“I have eaten a whole bakehouse full of rolls, but what is the use of that when one is so hungry as I am? My stomach feels quite empty, and I am obliged to strap myself together, that I may not die of hunger.”

The Simpleton was quite glad of this, and said,

“Get up quickly, and come along with me, and you shall have enough to eat.”

He led him straight to the king’s courtyard, where all the meal in the kingdom had been collected and baked into a mountain of bread. The man out of the forest settled himself down before it and hastened to eat, and in one day the whole mountain had disappeared.

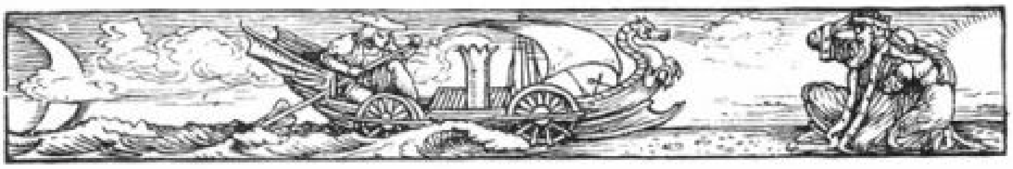
Then the Simpleton asked for his bride the third time. The king, however, found one more excuse, and said he must have a ship that should be able to sail on land or on water.

“So soon,” said he, “as you come sailing along with it, you shall have my daughter for your wife.”

The Simpleton went straight to the forest, and there sat the little old grey man with whom he had shared his cake, and he said,

“I have eaten for you, and I have drunk for you, I will also give you the ship; and all because you were kind to me at the first.”

Then he gave him the ship that could sail on land and on water, and when the king saw it he knew he could no longer withhold his daughter. The marriage took place immediately, and at the death of the king the Simpleton possessed the kingdom, and lived long and happily with his wife.



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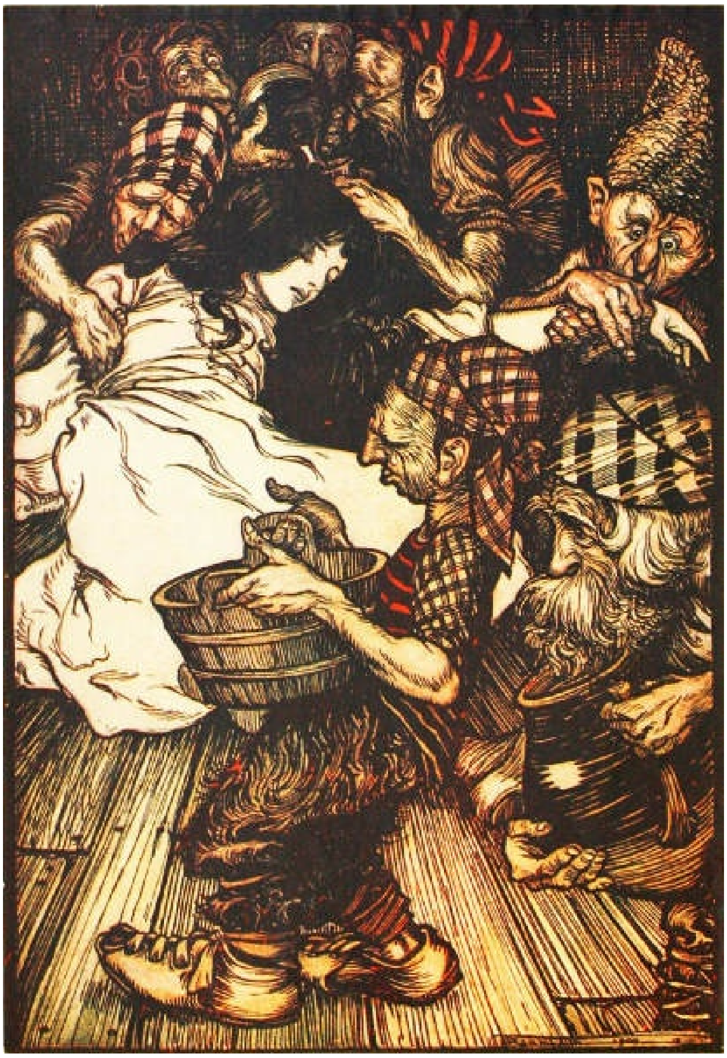


Snowdrop

IT was the middle of winter, and the snowflakes were falling from the sky like feathers. Now, a Queen sat sewing at a window framed in black ebony, and as she sewed she looked out upon the snow. Suddenly she pricked her finger and three drops of blood fell on to the snow. And the red looked so lovely on the white that she thought to herself: 'If only I had a child as white as snow and as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the window frame!' Soon after, she had a daughter, whose hair was black as ebony, while her cheeks were red as blood, and her skin as white as snow; so she was called Snowdrop. But when the child was born the Queen died. A year after the King took another wife. She was a handsome woman, but proud and overbearing, and could not endure that any one should surpass her in beauty. She had a magic looking-glass, and when she stood before it and looked at herself she used to say:

'Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?'

then the Glass answered,

'Queen, thou'rt fairest of them all.'

Then she was content, for she knew that the Looking-glass spoke the truth.

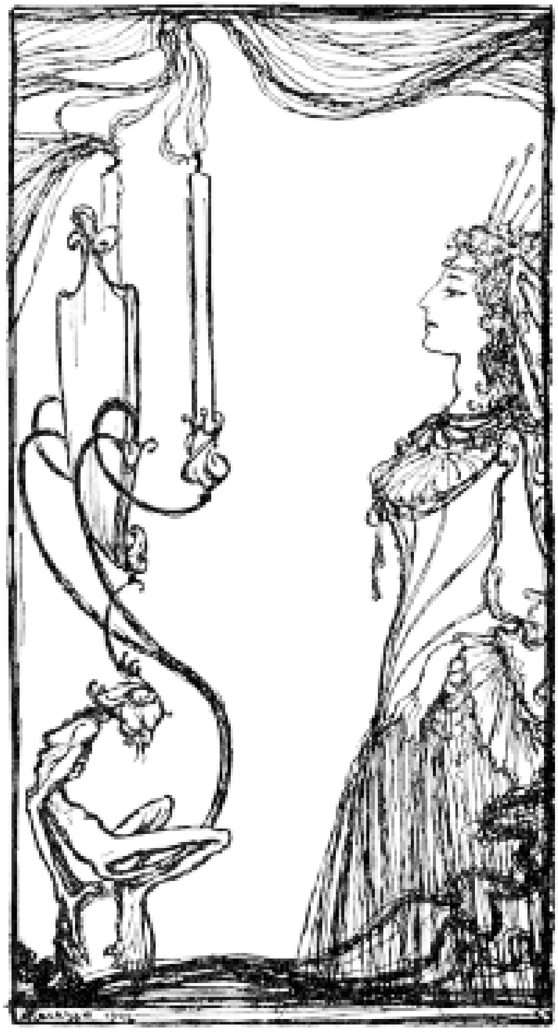
But Snowdrop grew up and became more and more beautiful, so that when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as the day, and far surpassed the Queen. Once, when she asked her Glass,

'Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?'

it answered —

'Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold, But Snowdrop is fairer a thousandfold.'

Then the Queen was horror-struck, and turned green and yellow with jealousy. From the hour that she saw Snowdrop her heart sank, and she hated the little girl.



'Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?'

The pride and envy of her heart grew like a weed, so that she had no rest day nor night. At last she called a Huntsman, and said: 'Take the child out into the wood; I will not set eyes on her again; you must kill her and bring me her lungs and liver as tokens.'

The Huntsman obeyed, and took Snowdrop out into the forest, but when he drew his hunting-knife and was preparing to plunge it into her innocent heart, she began to cry:

'Alas! dear Huntsman, spare my life, and I will run away into the wild forest and never come back again.'

And because of her beauty the Huntsman had pity on her and said, 'Well, run away, poor child.' Wild beasts will soon devour you, he thought, but still he felt as though a weight were lifted from his heart because he had not been obliged to kill her. And as just at that moment a young fawn came leaping by, he pierced it and took the lungs and liver as tokens to the Queen. The Cook was ordered to serve them up in pickle, and the wicked Queen ate them thinking that they were Snowdrop's.

Now the poor child was alone in the great wood, with no living soul near, and she was so frightened that she knew not what to do. Then she began to run, and ran over the sharp stones and through the brambles, while the animals passed her by without harming her. She ran as far as her feet could carry her till it was nearly evening, when she saw a little house and went in to rest. Inside, everything was small, but as neat and clean as could be. A small table covered with a white cloth stood ready with seven small plates, and by every plate was a spoon, knife, fork, and cup. Seven little beds were ranged against the walls, covered with snow-white coverlets. As Snowdrop was very hungry and thirsty she ate a little bread and vegetable from each plate, and drank a little wine from each cup, for she did not want to eat up the whole of one portion. Then, being very tired, she lay down in one of the beds. She tried them all but none suited her; one was too short, another too long, all except the seventh, which was just right. She remained in it, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

When it was quite dark the masters of the house came in. They were seven Dwarfs, who used to dig in the mountains for ore. They kindled their lights, and as soon as they could see they noticed that some one had been there, for everything was not in the order in which they had left it.

The first said, ‘Who has been sitting in my chair?’

The second said, ‘Who has been eating off my plate?’

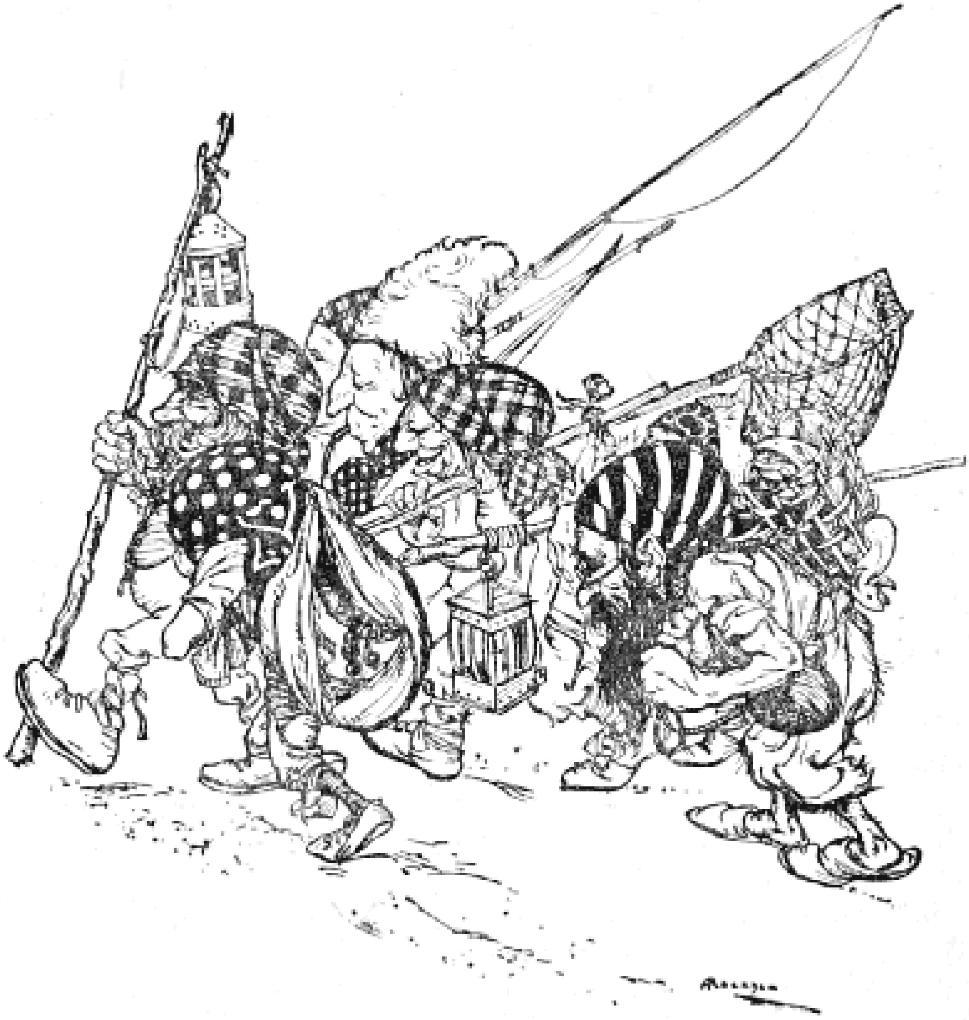
The third said, ‘Who has been nibbling my bread?’

The fourth said, ‘Who has been eating my vegetables?’

The fifth said, ‘Who has been using my fork?’

The sixth said, ‘Who has been cutting with my knife?’

The seventh said, ‘Who has been drinking out of my cup?’



In the evening the seven Dwarfs came back.

Then the first looked and saw a slight impression on his bed, and said, ‘Who has been treading on my bed?’ The others came running up and said, ‘And mine, and mine.’ But the seventh, when he looked into his bed, saw Snowdrop, who lay there asleep. He called the others, who came up and cried out with astonishment, as they held their lights and gazed at Snowdrop. ‘Heavens! what a beautiful child,’ they said, and they were so delighted that they did not wake her up but left her asleep in bed. And the seventh Dwarf slept with his comrades, an hour with each all through the night.

When morning came Snowdrop woke up, and when she saw the seven Dwarfs she was frightened.

But they were very kind and asked her name.

‘I am called Snowdrop,’ she answered.

‘How did you get into our house?’ they asked.

Then she told them how her stepmother had wished to get rid of her, how the Huntsman had spared her life, and how she had run all day till she had found the house.

Then the Dwarfs said, ‘Will you look after our household, cook, make the beds, wash, sew and knit, and keep everything neat and clean? If so you shall stay with us and want for nothing.’

‘Yes,’ said Snowdrop, ‘with all my heart’; and she stayed with them and kept the house in order.

In the morning they went to the mountain and searched for copper and gold, and in the evening they came back and then their meal had to be ready. All day the maiden was alone, and the good Dwarfs warned her and said, ‘Beware of your stepmother, who will soon learn that you are here. Don’t let any one in.’

But the Queen, having, as she imagined, eaten Snowdrop’s liver and lungs, and feeling certain that she was the fairest of all, stepped in front of her Glass, and asked —

‘Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?’

the Glass answered as usual —

‘Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold, But Snowdrop over the fells, Who with the seven Dwarfs dwells, Is fairer still a thousandfold.’

She was dismayed, for she knew that the Glass told no lies, and she saw that the Hunter had deceived her and that Snowdrop still lived. Accordingly she began to wonder afresh how she might compass her death; for as long as she was not the fairest in the land her jealous heart left her no rest. At last she thought of a plan. She dyed her face and dressed up like an old Pedlar, so that she was quite unrecognisable. In this guise she crossed over the seven mountains to the home of the seven Dwarfs and called out, ‘Wares for sale.’

Snowdrop peeped out of the window and said, ‘Good-day, mother, what have you got to sell?’

‘Good wares, fine wares,’ she answered, ‘laces of every colour’; and she held out one which was made of gay plaited silk.

‘I may let the honest woman in,’ thought Snowdrop, and she unbolted the door and bought the pretty lace.

‘Child,’ said the Old Woman, ‘what a sight you are, I will lace you properly for once.’

Snowdrop made no objection, and placed herself before the Old Woman to let her lace her with the new lace. But the Old Woman laced so quickly and tightly that she took away Snowdrop’s breath and she fell down as though dead.

‘Now I am the fairest,’ she said to herself, and hurried away.

Not long after the seven Dwarfs came home, and were horror-struck when they saw their dear little Snowdrop lying on the floor without stirring, like one dead. When they saw she was laced too tight they cut the lace, whereupon she began to breathe and soon came back to life again. When the Dwarfs heard what had happened, they said that the old Pedlar was no other than the wicked Queen. ‘Take care not to let any one in when we are not here,’ they said.

Now the wicked Queen, as soon as she got home, went to the Glass and asked —

‘Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?’

and it answered as usual —

‘Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold, But Snowdrop over the fells, Who with the seven Dwarfs dwells, Is fairer still a thousandfold.’

When she heard it all her blood flew to her heart, so enraged was she, for she knew that Snowdrop had come back to life again. Then she thought to herself, ‘I must plan something which will put an end to her.’ By means of witchcraft, in which she was skilled, she made a poisoned comb. Next she disguised herself and took the form of a different Old Woman. She crossed the mountains and came to the home of the seven Dwarfs, and knocked at the door calling out, ‘Good wares to sell.’

Snowdrop looked out of the window and said, ‘Go away, I must not let any one in.’

‘At least you may look,’ answered the Old Woman, and she took the poisoned comb and held it up.

The child was so pleased with it that she let herself be beguiled, and opened the door.

When she had made a bargain the Old Woman said, ‘Now I will comb your hair properly for once.’

Poor Snowdrop, suspecting no evil, let the Old Woman have her way, but scarcely was the poisoned comb fixed in her hair than the poison took effect, and the maiden fell down unconscious.

‘You paragon of beauty,’ said the wicked woman, ‘now it is all over with you,’ and she went away.

Happily it was near the time when the seven Dwarfs came home. When they saw Snowdrop lying on the ground as though dead, they immediately suspected her stepmother, and searched till they found the poisoned comb. No sooner had they removed it than Snowdrop came to herself again and related what had happened. They warned her again to be on her guard, and to open the door to no one.

When she got home the Queen stood before her Glass and said —

‘Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?’

and it answered as usual —

‘Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold, But Snowdrop over the fells, Who with the seven Dwarfs dwells, Is fairer still a thousandfold.’

When she heard the Glass speak these words she trembled and quivered with rage. ‘Snowdrop shall die,’ she said, ‘even if it cost me my own life.’ Thereupon she went into a secret room, which no one ever entered but herself, and made a poisonous apple. Outwardly it was beautiful to look upon, with rosy cheeks, and every one who saw it longed for it, but whoever ate of it was certain to die. When the apple was ready she dyed her face and dressed herself like an old Peasant Woman and so crossed the seven hills to the Dwarfs’ home. There she knocked.

Snowdrop put her head out of the window and said, ‘I must not let any one in, the seven Dwarfs have forbidden me.’

‘It is all the same to me,’ said the Peasant Woman. ‘I shall soon get rid of my apples. There, I will give you one.’

‘No; I must not take anything.’

‘Are you afraid of poison?’ said the woman. ‘See, I will cut the apple in half: you eat the red side and I will keep the other.’

Now the apple was so cunningly painted that the red half alone was poisoned. Snowdrop longed for the apple, and when she saw the Peasant Woman eating she could hold out no longer, stretched out her hand and took the poisoned half. Scarcely had she put a bit into her mouth than she fell dead to the ground.

The Queen looked with a fiendish glance, and laughed aloud and said, ‘White as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony, this time the Dwarfs cannot wake you up again.’ And when she got home and asked the Looking-glass —

‘Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?’

it answered at last —

‘Queen, thou’rt fairest of them all.’

Then her jealous heart was at rest, as much at rest as a jealous heart can be. The Dwarfs, when they came at evening, found Snowdrop lying on the ground and not a breath escaped her lips, and she was quite dead. They lifted her up and looked to see whether any poison was to be found, unlaced her dress, combed her hair, washed her with wine and water, but it was no use; their dear child was dead. They laid her on a bier, and all seven sat down and bewailed her and lamented over her for three whole days. Then they prepared to bury her, but she looked so fresh and living, and still had such beautiful rosy cheeks, that they said, ‘We cannot bury her in the dark earth.’ And so they had a transparent glass coffin made, so that she could be seen from every side, laid her inside and wrote on it in letters of gold her name and how she was a King’s daughter. Then they set the coffin out on the mountain, and one of them always stayed by and watched it. And the birds came too and mourned for Snowdrop, first an owl, then a raven, and lastly a dove.

Now Snowdrop lay a long, long time in her coffin, looking as though she were asleep. It happened that a Prince was wandering in the wood, and came to the home of the seven Dwarfs to pass the night. He saw the coffin on the mountain and lovely Snowdrop inside, and read what was written in golden letters. Then he said to the Dwarfs, ‘Let me have the coffin; I will give you whatever you like for it.’

But they said, ‘We will not give it up for all the gold of the world.’

Then he said, ‘Then give it to me as a gift, for I cannot live without Snowdrop to gaze upon; and I will honour and reverence it as my dearest treasure.’

When he had said these words the good Dwarfs pitied him and gave him the coffin.

The Prince bade his servants carry it on their shoulders. Now it happened that they stumbled over some brushwood, and the shock dislodged the piece of apple from Snowdrop’s throat. In a short time she opened her eyes, lifted the lid of the coffin, sat up and came back to life again completely.

‘O Heaven! where am I?’ she asked.

The Prince, full of joy, said, ‘You are with me,’ and he related what had happened, and then said, ‘I love you better than all the world; come with me to my father’s castle and be my wife.’

Snowdrop agreed and went with him, and their wedding was celebrated with great magnificence. Snowdrop’s wicked stepmother was invited to the feast; and when she had put on her fine clothes she stepped to her Glass and asked —

‘Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is fairest of us all?’

The Glass answered —

‘Queen, thou art fairest here, I hold, The young Queen fairer a thousandfold.’

Then the wicked woman uttered a curse, and was so terribly frightened that she didn’t know what to do. Yet she had no rest: she felt obliged to go and see the young Queen. And when she came in she recognised Snowdrop, and stood stock still with fear and terror. But iron slippers were heated over the fire, and were soon brought in with tongs and put before her. And she had to step into the red-hot shoes and dance till she fell down dead.

The Pink

THERE was once a Queen, who had not been blessed with children. As she walked in her garden, she prayed every morning that a son or daughter might be given to her. Then one day an Angel came, and said to her: ‘Be content: you shall have a son, and he shall be endowed with the power of wishing, so that whatsoever he wishes for shall be granted to him.’ She hurried to the King, and told him the joyful news; and when the time came a son was born to them, and they were filled with delight.

Every morning the Queen used to take her little son into the gardens, where the wild animals were kept, to bathe him in a clear, sparkling fountain. It happened one day, when the child was a little older, that as she sat with him on her lap she fell asleep.

The old Cook, who knew that the child had the power of wishing, came by and stole it; he also killed a Chicken, and dropped some of its blood on the Queen’s garments. Then he took the child away to a secret place, where he placed it out to be nursed. Then he ran back to the King, and accused the Queen of having allowed her child to be carried off by a wild animal.

When the King saw the blood on the Queen’s garments he believed the story, and was overwhelmed with anger. He caused a high tower to be built, into which neither the sun nor the moon could penetrate. Then he ordered his wife to be shut up in it, and the door walled up. She was to stay there for seven years, without eating or drinking, so as gradually to pine away. But two Angels from heaven, in the shape of white doves, came to her, bringing food twice a day till the seven years were ended.

Meanwhile the Cook thought, ‘If the child really has the power of wishing, and I stay here, I might easily fall into disgrace.’ So he left the palace, and went to the boy, who was then old enough to talk, and said to him, ‘Wish for a beautiful castle, with a garden, and everything belonging to it.’ Hardly had the words passed the boy’s lips than all that he had asked for was there.

After a time the Cook said, ‘It is not good for you to be so much alone; wish for a beautiful Maiden to be your companion.’

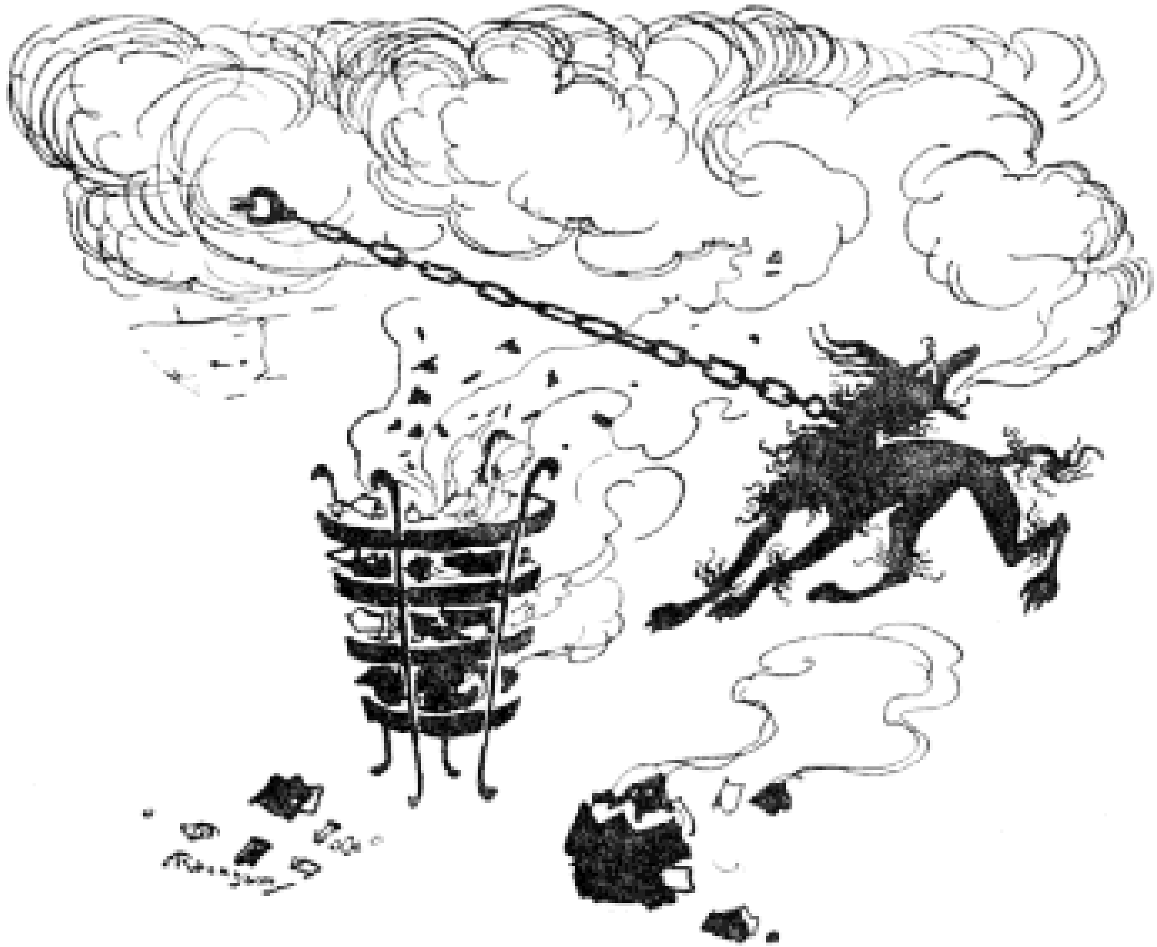
The Prince uttered the wish, and immediately a Maiden stood before them, more beautiful than any painter could paint. So they grew very fond of each other, and played together, while the old Cook went out hunting like any grand gentleman. But the idea came to him one day that the Prince might wish to go to his father some time, and he would thereby be placed in a very awkward position. So he took the Maiden aside, and said to her, ‘To-night, when the boy is asleep, go and drive this knife into his heart. Then bring me his heart and his tongue. If you fail to do it, you will lose your own life.’

Then he went away; but when the next day came the Maiden had not yet obeyed his command, and she said, ‘Why should I shed his innocent blood, when he has never done harm to any creature in his life?’

The Cook again said, ‘If you do not obey me, you will lose your own life.’

When he had gone away, she ordered a young hind to be brought and killed; then she cut out its heart and its tongue, and put them on a dish. When she saw the old man coming she said to the boy, ‘Get into bed, and cover yourself right over.’

The old scoundrel came in and said, ‘Where are the tongue and the heart of the boy?’



The scullions brought live coals, which he had to eat till the flames poured out of his mouth.

The Maiden gave him the dish; but the Prince threw off the coverings, and said, ‘You old sinner, why did you want to kill me? Now hear your sentence. You shall be turned into a black Poodle, with a gold chain round your neck, and you shall be made to eat live coals, so that flames of fire may come out of your mouth.’

As he said the words, the old man was changed into a black Poodle, with a gold chain round his neck; and the scullions brought live coals, which he had to eat till the flames poured out of his mouth.

The Prince stayed on at the castle for a time, thinking of his mother, and wondering if she were still alive. At last he said to the Maiden, ‘I am going into my own country. If you like you can go with me; I will take you.’

She answered: ‘Alas! it is so far off, and what should I do in a strange country where I know no one?’

As she did not wish to go, and yet they could not bear to be parted, he changed her into a beautiful Pink, which he took with him.

Then he set out on his journey, and the Poodle was made to run alongside till the Prince reached his own country.

Arrived there, he went straight to the tower where his mother was imprisoned, and as the tower was so high he wished for a ladder to reach the top. Then he climbed up, looked in, and cried, ‘Dearest mother, lady Queen, are you still alive?’

She, thinking it was the Angels who brought her food come back, said, ‘I have just eaten; I do not want anything more.’

Then he said, ‘I am your own dear son whom the wild animals were supposed to have devoured; but I am still alive, and I shall soon come and rescue you.’

Then he got down and went to his father. He had himself announced as a strange Huntsman, anxious to take service with the King, who said, ‘Yes; if he was skilled in game preserving, and could procure plenty of venison, he would engage him. But there had never before been any game in the whole district.’

The Huntsman promised to procure as much game as the King could possibly require for the royal table.

Then he called the whole Hunt together, and ordered them all to come into the forest with him. He caused a great circle to be enclosed, with only one outlet; then he took his place in the middle, and began to wish as hard as he could. Immediately over two hundred head of game came running into the enclosure; these the Huntsmen had to shoot, and then they were piled on to sixty country wagons, and driven home to the King. So for once he was able to load his board with game, after having had none for many years.

The King was much pleased, and commanded his whole court to a banquet on the following day. When they were all assembled, he said to the Huntsman, ‘You shall sit by me as you are so clever.’

He answered, ‘My lord and King, may it please your Majesty, I am only a poor Huntsman!’

The King, however, insisted, and said, ‘I command you to sit by me.’

As he sat there, his thoughts wandered to his dear mother, and he wished one of the courtiers would speak of her. Hardly had he wished it than the Lord High Marshal said —

‘Your Majesty, we are all rejoicing here, how fares it with Her Majesty the Queen? Is she still alive in the tower, or has she perished?’

But the King answered, ‘She allowed my beloved son to be devoured by wild animals, and I do not wish to hear anything about her.’

Then the Huntsman stood up and said —

‘Gracious father, she is still alive, and I am her son. He was not devoured by wild animals; he was taken away by the scoundrel of a Cook. He stole me while my mother was asleep, and sprinkled her garments with the blood of a chicken.’ Then he brought up the black Poodle with the golden chain, and said, ‘This is the villain.’

He ordered some live coals to be brought, which he made the dog eat in the sight of all the people till the flames poured out of his mouth. Then he asked the King if he would like to see the Cook in his true shape, and wished him back, and there he stood in his white apron, with his knife at his side.

The King was furious when he saw him, and ordered him to be thrown into the deepest dungeon. Then the Huntsman said further —

‘My father would you like to see the Maiden who so tenderly saved my life when she was ordered to kill me, although by so doing she might have lost her own life?’

The King answered, ‘Yes, I will gladly see her.’

Then his son said, ‘Gracious father, I will show her to you first in the guise of a beautiful flower.’

He put his hand into his pocket, and brought out the Pink. It was a finer one than the King had ever seen before. Then his son said, ‘Now, I will show her to you in her true form.’

The moment his wish was uttered, she stood before them in all her beauty, which was greater than any artist could paint.

The King sent ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting to the tower to bring the Queen back to his royal table. But when they reached the tower they found that she would no longer eat or drink, and she said, ‘The merciful God, who has preserved my life so long, will soon release me now.’

Three days after she died. At her burial the two white Doves which had brought her food during her captivity, followed and hovered over her grave.

The old King caused the wicked Cook to be torn into four quarters; but his own heart was filled with grief and remorse, and he died soon after.

His son married the beautiful Maiden he had brought home with him as a Flower, and, for all I know, they may be living still.

Briar Rose

A LONG time ago there lived a King and Queen, who said every day, ‘If only we had a child’; but for a long time they had none.

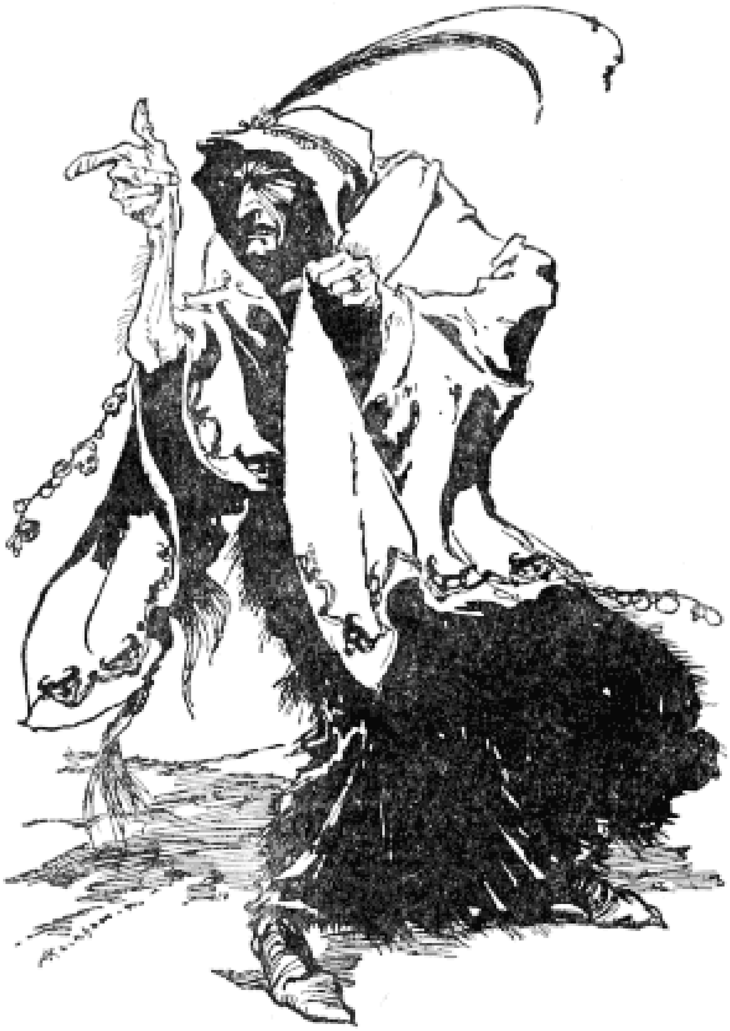
It fell out once, as the Queen was bathing, that a frog crept out of the water on to the land, and said to her: ‘Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has passed you shall bring a daughter into the world.’

The frog’s words came true. The Queen had a little girl who was so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy, and prepared a great feast. He invited not only his relations, friends, and acquaintances, but the fairies, in order that they might be favourably and kindly disposed towards the child. There were thirteen of them in the kingdom, but as the King had only twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of the fairies had to stay at home.

The feast was held with all splendour, and when it came to an end the fairies all presented the child with a magic gift. One gave her virtue, another beauty, a third riches, and so on, with everything in the world that she could wish for.

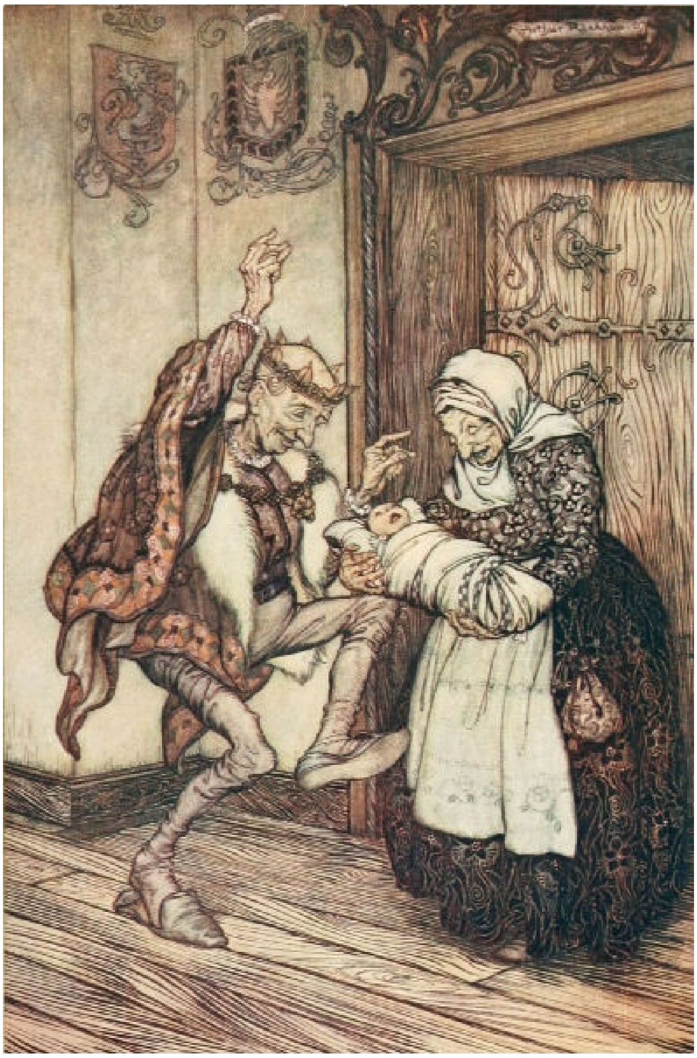
When eleven of the fairies had said their say, the thirteenth suddenly appeared. She wanted to revenge herself for not having been invited. Without greeting any one, or even glancing at the company, she called out in a loud voice: ‘The Princess shall prick herself with a distaff in her fifteenth year and shall fall down dead’; and without another word she turned and left the hall.

Every one was terror-struck, but the twelfth fairy, whose wish was still unspoken, stepped forward. She could not cancel the curse, but could only soften it, so she said: ‘It shall not be death, but a deep sleep lasting a hundred years, into which your daughter shall fall.’



‘The Thirteenth Fairy.’

The King was so anxious to guard his dear child from the misfortune, that he sent out a command that all the distaffs in the whole kingdom should be burned.



As time went on all the promises of the fairies came true. The Princess grew up so beautiful, modest, kind, and clever that every one who saw her could not but love her. Now it happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old the King and Queen were away from home, and the Princess was left quite alone in the castle. She wandered about over the whole place, looking at rooms and halls as she pleased, and at last she came to an old tower. She ascended a narrow, winding staircase and reached a little door. A rusty key was sticking in the lock, and when she turned it the door flew open. In a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, spinning her flax busily.

‘Good day, Granny,’ said the Princess; ‘what are you doing?’

‘I am spinning,’ said the old woman, and nodded her head.

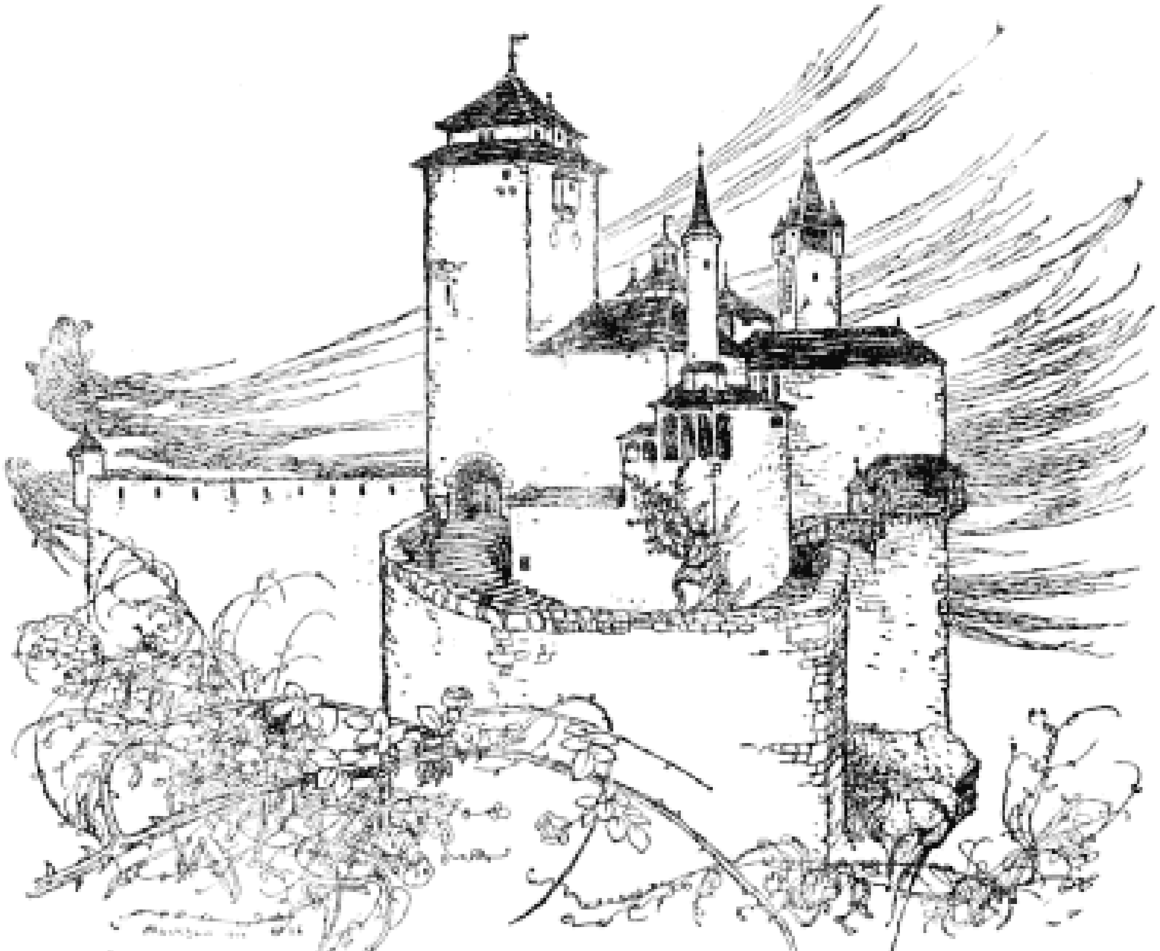
‘What is the thing that whirls round so merrily?’ asked the Princess; and she took the spindle and tried to spin too.

But she had scarcely touched it before the curse was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with the spindle. The instant she felt the prick she fell upon the bed which was standing near, and lay still in a deep sleep which spread over the whole castle.

The King and Queen, who had just come home and had stepped into the hall, went to sleep, and all their courtiers with them. The horses went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the doves on the roof, the flies on the wall; yes, even the fire flickering on the hearth grew still and went to sleep, and the roast meat stopped crackling; the cook, who was pulling the scullion's hair because he had made some mistake, let him go and went to sleep. The wind dropped, and on the trees in front of the castle not a leaf stirred.

But round the castle a hedge of briar roses began to grow up; every year it grew higher, till at last it surrounded the whole castle so that nothing could be seen of it, not even the flags on the roof.

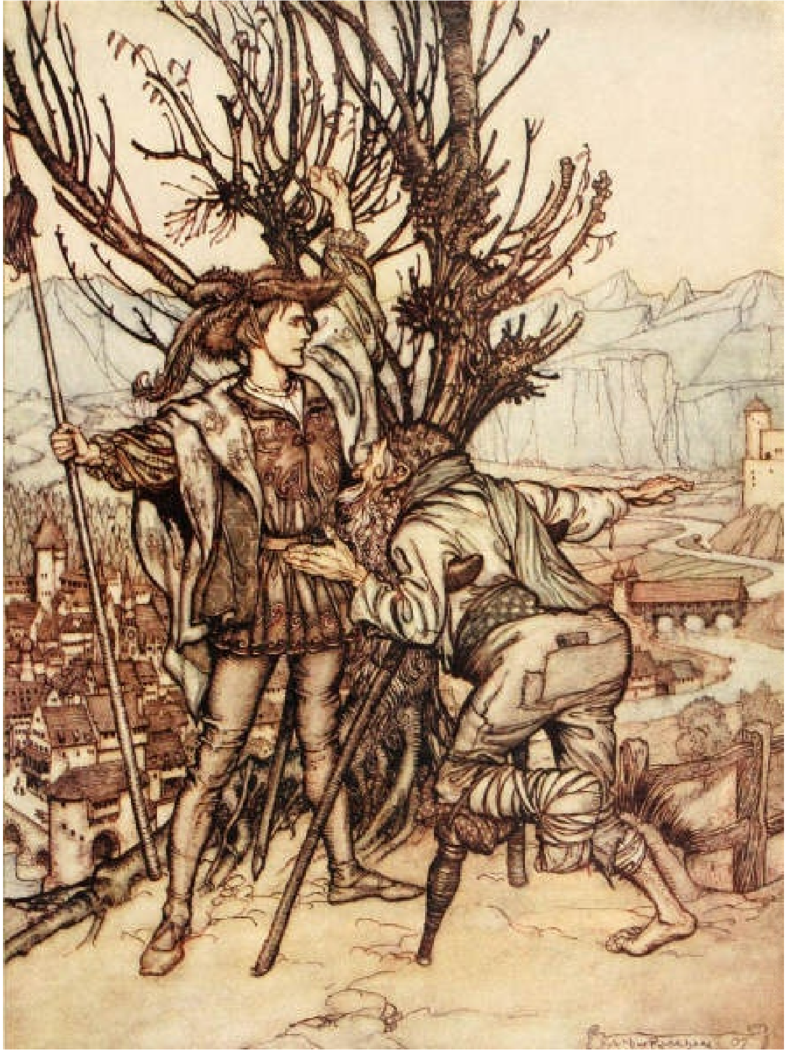
But there was a legend in the land about the lovely sleeping Briar Rose, as the King's daughter was called, and from time to time princes came and tried to force a way through the hedge into the castle. They found it impossible, for the thorns, as though they had hands, held them fast, and the princes remained caught in them without being able to free themselves, and so died a miserable death.



But round the castle a hedge of briar roses began to grow up.

After many, many years a Prince came again to the country and heard an old man tell of the castle which stood behind the briar hedge, in which a most beautiful maiden called Briar Rose had been asleep for the last hundred years, and with her slept the King, Queen, and all her courtiers. He knew also, from his grandfather, that many princes had already come and sought to pierce through the briar hedge, and had remained caught in it and died a sad death.

Then the young Prince said, ‘I am not afraid; I am determined to go and look upon the lovely Briar Rose.’



The good old man did all in his power to dissuade him, but the Prince would not listen to his words.

Now, however, the hundred years were just ended, and the day had come when Briar Rose was to wake up again. When the Prince approached the briar hedge it was in blossom, and was covered with beautiful large flowers which made way for him of their own accord and let him pass unharmed, and then closed up again into a hedge behind him.

In the courtyard he saw the horses and brindled hounds lying asleep, on the roof sat the doves with their heads under their wings: and when he went into the house the flies were asleep on the walls, and near the throne lay the King and Queen; in the kitchen was the cook, with his hand raised as though about to strike the scullion, and the maid sat with the black fowl in her lap which she was about to pluck.

He went on further, and all was so still that he could hear his own breathing. At last he reached the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Briar Rose was asleep. There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her; he bent down and gave her a kiss. As he touched her, Briar Rose opened her eyes and looked lovingly at him. Then they went down together; and the King woke up, and the Queen, and all the courtiers, and looked at each other with astonished eyes. The horses in the stable stood up and shook themselves, the hounds leaped about and wagged their tails, the doves on the roof lifted their heads from under their wings, looked round, and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls began to crawl again, the fire in the kitchen roused itself and blazed up and cooked the food, the meat began to crackle, and the cook boxed the scullion's ears so soundly that he screamed aloud, while the maid finished plucking the fowl. Then the wedding of the Prince and Briar Rose was celebrated with all splendour, and they lived happily till they died.

The Jew among the Thorns

THERE was once a rich Man, and he had a Servant who served him well and faithfully. He was first up in the morning, and last to go to bed at night. If there was any hard work to be done which no one else would do, he was always ready to undertake it. He never made any complaint, but was always merry and content.

When his year of service was over, his Master did not give him any wages, thinking: ‘This is my wisest plan. I save by it, and he is not likely to run away.’

The Servant said nothing, and served the second year like the first. And when at the end of the second he again received no wages, he still appeared contented, and stayed on. When the third year had passed, the Master bethought himself, and put his hand into his pocket, but he brought it out empty.

At last the Servant said: ‘Master, I have served you well and truly for three years; please pay me my wages. I want to go away and look about the world a bit.’

The Miser answered: ‘Yes, my good fellow, you have served me honestly, and you shall be liberally rewarded.’

Again he put his hand into his pocket, and counted three farthings, one by one, into the Servant’s hand, and said: ‘There, you have a farthing for every year; that is better wages than you would get from most masters.’

The good Servant, who knew little about money, put away his fortune, and thought: ‘Now my pocket is well filled, I need no longer trouble myself about work.’ Then he left and went singing down the hill, and dancing, in the lightness of his heart.

Now it so happened that as he was passing a thicket, that a little Mannikin came out and cried: ‘Whither away, my merry fellow? I see your troubles are not too heavy to be borne.’

‘Why should I be sad?’ answered the Servant. ‘I have three years’ wages in my pocket.’

‘And how much is your treasure?’ asked the Mannikin.

‘How much? Why, three good farthings.’

‘Listen!’ said the Mannikin. ‘I am a poor needy fellow; give me your three farthings. I can’t work any more; but you are young, and can easily earn your bread.’

Now the Servant had a good heart, and he was sorry for the poor little man, so he gave him his three farthings, and said:

‘Take them, in the name of heaven! I shall not miss them.’

‘Then,’ said the Mannikin, ‘I see what a good heart you have. I will give you three wishes, one for each farthing; and every wish shall be fulfilled.’

‘Aha!’ said the Servant, ‘you are a wonder-worker I see. Very well, then. First, I wish for a gun which will hit everything I aim at; secondly, for a fiddle which will make every one dance when I play; and, thirdly, if I ask anything of any one, that he shall not be able to refuse my request.'

'You shall have them all,' said the Mannikin, diving into the bushes, where, wonderful to relate, lay the gun and the fiddle ready, just as if they had been ordered beforehand. He gave them to the Servant, and said: 'No one will be able to refuse anything you ask.'

'Heart alive! what more can one desire,' said the Servant to himself, as he went merrily on.

Soon after, he met a Jew with a long goat's beard, who was standing still listening to the song of a bird sitting on the top of a tree. 'Good heavens!' he was saying, 'what a tremendous noise such a tiny creature makes. If only it were mine! If one could but put some salt upon its tail!'

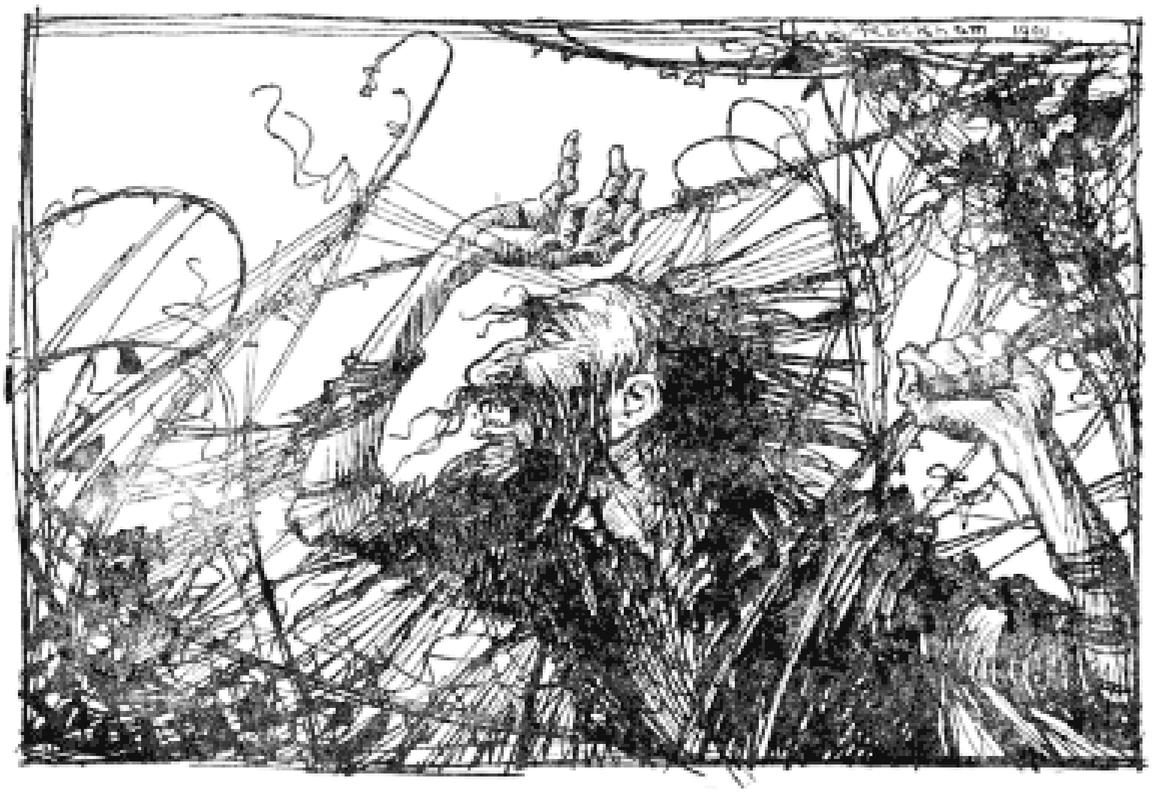
'If that is all,' said the Servant, 'the bird shall soon come down.'

He took aim, and down fell the bird into a quickset hedge.

'Go, you rogue,' he said to the Jew, 'and pick up the bird.'

'Leave out the "rogue," young man. I will get the bird sure enough, as you have killed it for me,' said the Jew.

He lay down on the ground and began to creep into the hedge.



The Jew was forced to spring up and begin to dance.

When he had got well among the thorns, a spirit of mischief seized the Servant, and he began to play his fiddle with all his might. The Jew was forced to spring up and begin to dance, and the more the Servant played, the faster he had to dance. The thorns tore his shabby coat, combed his goat's beard, and scratched him all over.

'Merciful Heavens!' cried the Jew. 'Leave off that fiddling! I don't want to dance, my good fellow.'

But the Servant paid no attention to him, but thought: 'You have fleeced plenty of people in your time, my man, and the thorns shan't spare you now!' And he played on and on, so that the Jew had to jump higher and higher, till his coat hung in ribbons about him.

'I cry "enough!"' screamed the Jew. 'I will give you anything you like if you will only stop. Take the purse, it is full of gold.'

'Oh, well, if you are so open-handed,' said the Servant, 'I am quite ready to stop my music, but I must say in praise of your dancing, that it has quite a style of its own.' Then he took the purse and went on his way.

The Jew stood still looking after him till he was a good way off, then he screamed with all his might: 'You miserable fiddler! Just you wait till I find you alone! I will chase you till the soles of your shoes drop off — you rascal!' And he went on pouring out a stream of abuse. Having relieved himself by so doing, he hurried off to the Judge in the nearest town.

'Just look here, your worship,' he said, 'look how I have been attacked, and ill-treated, and robbed on the high road by a wretch. My condition might melt the heart of a stone; my clothes and my body torn and scratched, and my purse with all my poor little savings taken away from me. All my beautiful ducats, each one prettier than the other. Oh dear! Oh dear! For heaven's sake, put the wretch in prison.'

The Judge said: 'Was it a soldier who punished you so with his sword?'

'Heaven preserve us!' cried the Jew, 'he had no sword, but he had a gun on his shoulder and a fiddle round his neck. The villain is easily to be recognised.'

So the Judge sent out men in pursuit of the honest Servant, who had walked on slowly. They soon overtook him, and the purse of gold was found on him. When he was brought before the Judge, he said —

'I never touched the Jew, nor did I take his money away; he offered it to me of his own free will if I would only stop playing, because he could not bear my music.'

'Heaven defend us!' screamed the Jew, 'his lies are as thick as flies on the wall.'

And the Judge did not believe him either, and said:

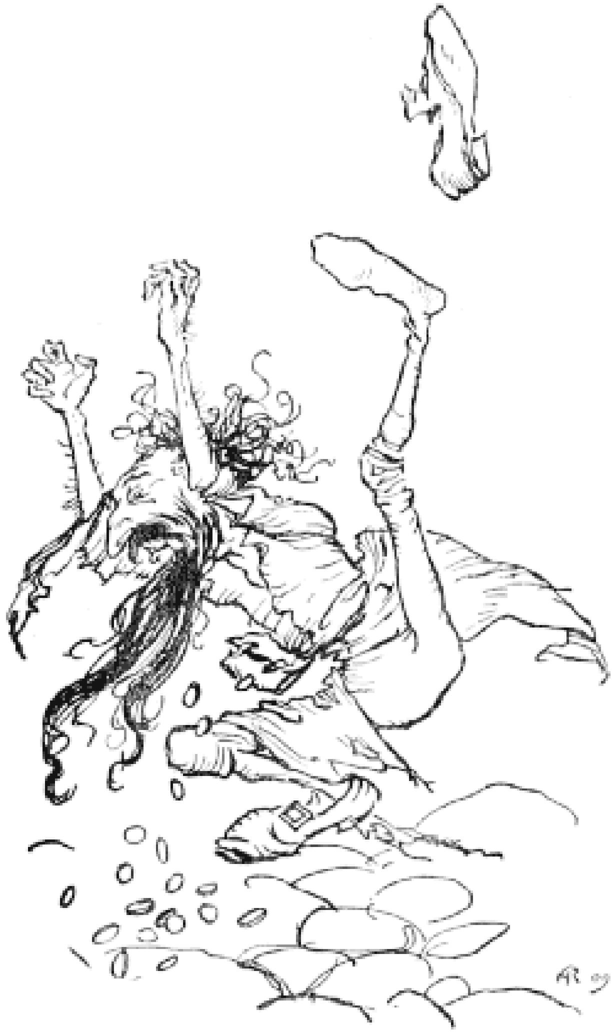
'That is a very lame excuse; no Jew ever did such a thing.' So he sentenced the honest Servant to the gallows for having committed a robbery upon the king's highway.

When he was being led away, the Jew screamed after him; 'You vagabond, you dog of a fiddler, now you will get your deserts!'

The Servant mounted the ladder to the gallows quite quietly, with the halter round his neck; but at the last rung he turned round and said to the Judge: 'Grant me one favour before I die.'

'Certainly,' said the Judge, 'as long as you don't ask for your life.'

'Not my life,' answered the Servant. 'I only ask to play my fiddle once more.'



Dancing as hard as he could.

The Jew raised a tremendous cry. ‘Don’t allow it, your worship, for heaven’s sake, don’t allow it!’

But the Judge said: ‘Why should I deny him that short pleasure? His wish is granted, and there’s an end of the matter!’

He could not have refused even if he had wished, because of the Mannikin’s gift to the Servant.

The Jew screamed, ‘Oh dear! Oh dear! Tie me tight, tie me tight!’

The good Servant took his fiddle from his neck, and put it into position, and at the first chord everybody began to wag their heads, the Judge, his Clerk, and all the Officers of Justice, and the rope fell out of the hand of the man about to bind the Jew.

At the second scrape, they all lifted their legs, and the Hangman let go his hold of the honest Servant, to make ready to dance.

At the third scrape they one and all leapt into the air, and began to caper about, the Judge and the Jew at the head, and they all leapt their best.

Soon, every one who had come to the market-place out of curiosity, old and young, fat and lean, were dancing as hard as they could; even the dogs got upon their hind legs, and pranced about with the rest. The longer he played, the higher they jumped, till they knocked their heads together, and made each other cry out.

At last the Judge, quite out of breath, cried: ‘I will give you your life, if only you will stop playing.’

The honest Servant allowed himself to be prevailed upon, laid his fiddle aside, and came down the ladder. Then he went up to the Jew, who lay upon the ground gasping, and said to him:

‘You rascal, confess where you got the money, or I will begin to play again.’

‘I stole it! I stole it!’ he screamed; ‘but you have honestly earned it.’

The Judge then ordered the Jew to the gallows to be hanged as a thief.

Ashenputtel

THE wife of a rich man fell ill, and when she felt that she was nearing her end, she called her only daughter to her bedside, and said:

‘Dear child, continue devout and good, then God will always help you, and I will look down upon you from heaven, and watch over you.’

Thereupon she closed her eyes, and breathed her last.

The maiden went to her mother’s grave every day and wept, and she continued to be devout and good. When the winter came, the snow spread a white covering on the grave, and when the sun of spring had unveiled it again, the husband took another wife. The new wife brought home with her two daughters, who were fair and beautiful to look upon, but base and black at heart.

Then began a sad time for the unfortunate step-child.

‘Is this stupid goose to sit with us in the parlour?’ they said.

‘Whoever wants to eat bread must earn it; go and sit with the kitchenmaid.’

They took away her pretty clothes, and made her put on an old grey frock, and gave her wooden clogs.

‘Just look at the proud Princess, how well she’s dressed,’ they laughed, as they led her to the kitchen. There, the girl was obliged to do hard work from morning till night, to get up at daybreak, carry water, light the fire, cook, and wash. Not content with that, the sisters inflicted on her every vexation they could think of; they made fun of her, and tossed the peas and lentils among the ashes, so that she had to sit down and pick them out again. In the evening, when she was worn out with work, she had no bed to go to, but had to lie on the hearth among the cinders. And because, on account of that, she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Ashenputtel.

It happened one day that the Father had a mind to go to the Fair. So he asked both his step-daughters what he should bring home for them.

‘Fine clothes,’ said one.

‘Pearls and jewels,’ said the other.

‘But you, Ashenputtel?’ said he, ‘what will you have?’

‘Father, break off for me the first twig which brushes against your hat on your way home.’

Well, for his two step-daughters he brought beautiful clothes, pearls and jewels, and on his way home, as he was riding through a green copse, a hazel twig grazed against him and knocked his hat off. Then he broke off the branch and took it with him.

When he got home he gave his step-daughters what they had asked for, and to Ashenputtel he gave the twig from the hazel bush.

Ashenputtel thanked him, and went to her mother’s grave and planted the twig upon it; she wept so much that her tears fell and watered it. And it took root and became a fine tree.

Ashenputtel went to the grave three times every day, wept and prayed, and every time a little white bird came and perched upon the tree, and when she uttered a wish, the little bird threw down to her what she had wished for.

Now it happened that the King proclaimed a festival, which was to last three days, and to which all the beautiful maidens in the country were invited, in order that his son might choose a bride.

When the two step-daughters heard that they were also to be present, they were in high spirits, called Ashenputtel, and said:

‘Brush our hair and clean our shoes, and fasten our buckles, for we are going to the feast at the King’s palace.’

Ashenputtel obeyed, but wept, for she also would gladly have gone to the ball with them, and begged her Step-mother to give her leave to go.

‘You, Ashenputtel!’ she said. ‘Why, you are covered with dust and dirt. You go to the festival! Besides you have no clothes or shoes, and yet you want to go to the ball.’

As she, however, went on asking, her Step-mother said:

‘Well, I have thrown a dishful of lentils into the cinders, if you have picked them all out in two hours you shall go with us.’

The girl went through the back door into the garden, and cried, ‘Ye gentle doves, ye turtle doves, and all ye little birds under heaven, come and help me,

‘The good into a dish to throw, The bad into your crops can go.’

Then two white doves came in by the kitchen window, and were followed by the turtle doves, and finally all the little birds under heaven flocked in, chirping, and settled down among the ashes. And the doves gave a nod with their little heads, peck, peck, peck; and then the rest began also, peck, peck, peck, and collected all the good beans into the dish. Scarcely had an hour passed before they had finished, and all flown out again.

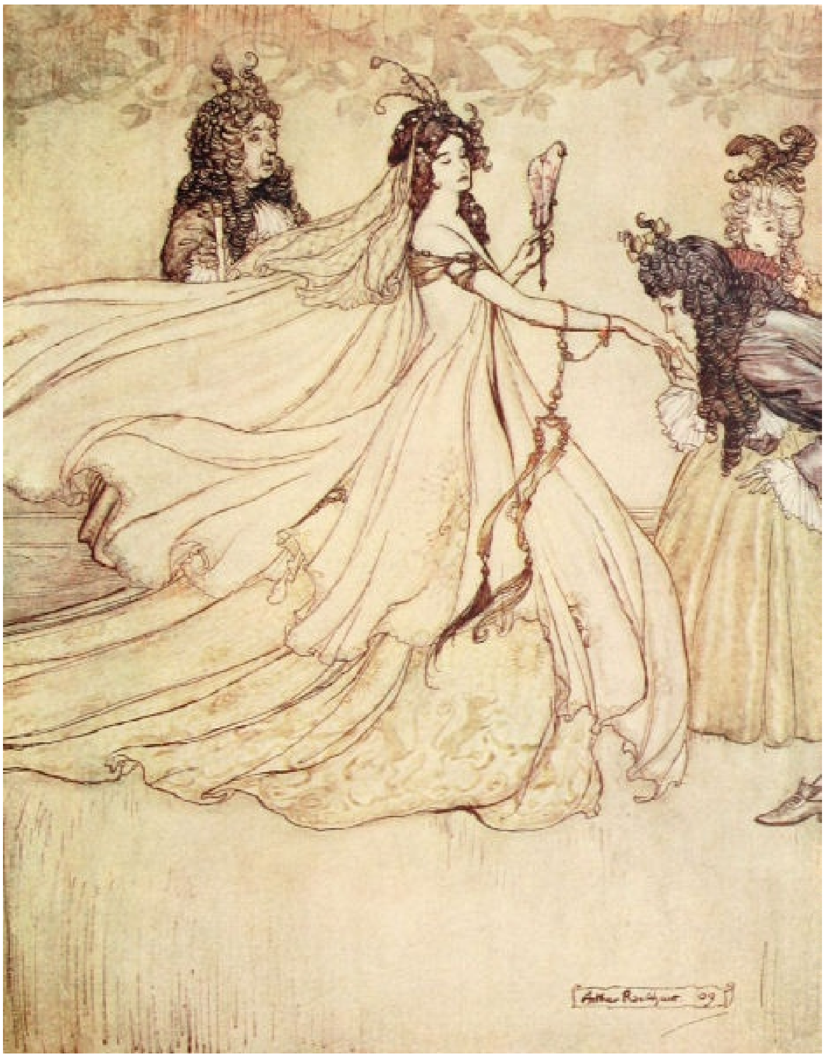
Then the girl brought the dish to her Step-mother, and was delighted to think that now she would be able to go to the feast with them.

But she said, ‘No, Ashenputtel, you have no clothes, and cannot dance; you will only be laughed at.’

But when she began to cry, the Step-mother said:

‘If you can pick out two whole dishes of lentils from the ashes in an hour, you shall go with us.’

And she thought, ‘She will never be able to do that.’



When her Step-mother had thrown the dishes of lentils among the ashes, the girl went out through the back door, and cried, ‘Ye gentle doves, ye turtle doves, and all ye little birds under heaven, come and help me,

‘The good into a dish to throw, The bad into your crops can go.’

Then two white doves came in by the kitchen window, and were followed by the turtle doves, and all the other little birds under heaven, and in less than an hour the whole had been picked up, and they had all flown away.

Then the girl carried the dish to her Step-mother, and was delighted to think that she would now be able to go to the ball.

But she said, ‘It’s not a bit of good. You can’t go with us, for you’ve got no clothes, and you can’t dance. We should be quite ashamed of you.’

Thereupon she turned her back upon her, and hurried off with her two proud daughters.

As soon as every one had left the house, Ashenputtel went out to her mother’s grave under the hazel-tree, and cried:

‘Shiver and shake, dear little tree, Gold and silver shower on me.’

Then the bird threw down to her a gold and silver robe, and a pair of slippers embroidered with silk and silver. With all speed she put on the robe and went to the feast. But her step-sisters and their mother did not recognise her, and supposed that she was some foreign Princess, so beautiful did she appear in her golden dress. They never gave a thought to Ashenputtel, but imagined that she was sitting at home in the dirt picking the lentils out of the cinders.

The Prince came up to the stranger, took her by the hand, and danced with her. In fact, he would not dance with any one else, and never left go of her hand. If any one came up to ask her to dance, he said, ‘This is my partner.’

She danced until nightfall, and then wanted to go home; but the Prince said, ‘I will go with you and escort you.’

For he wanted to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged. But she slipped out of his way and sprang into the pigeon-house.

Then the Prince waited till her Father came, and told him that the unknown maiden had vanished into the pigeon-house.

The old man thought, ‘Could it be Ashenputtel?’ And he had an axe brought to him, so that he might break down the pigeon-house, but there was no one inside.

When they went home, there lay Ashenputtel in her dirty clothes among the cinders, and a dismal oil lamp was burning in the chimney corner. For Ashenputtel had quietly jumped down out of the pigeon-house and ran back to the hazel-tree. There she had taken off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave, and the bird had taken them away again. Then she had settled herself among the ashes on the hearth in her old grey frock.

On the second day, when the festival was renewed, and her parents and step-sisters had started forth again, Ashenputtel went to the hazel-tree, and said:

‘Shiver and shake, dear little tree, Gold and silver shower on me.’

Then the bird threw down a still more gorgeous robe than on the previous day. And when she appeared at the festival in this robe, every one was astounded by her beauty.

The King’s son had waited till she came, and at once took her hand, and she danced with no one but him. When others came forward and invited her to dance, he said, ‘This is my partner.’

At nightfall she wished to leave; but the Prince went after her, hoping to see into what house she went, but she sprang out into the garden behind the house. There stood a fine big tree on which the most delicious pears hung. She climbed up among the branches as nimbly as a squirrel, and the Prince could not make out what had become of her.

But he waited till her Father came, and then said to him, ‘The unknown maiden has slipped away from me, and I think that she has jumped into the pear-tree.’

The Father thought, ‘Can it be Ashenputtel?’ And he had the axe brought to cut down the tree, but there was no one on it. When they went home and looked into the kitchen, there lay Ashenputtel among the cinders as usual; for she had jumped down on the other side of the tree, taken back the beautiful clothes to the bird on the hazel-tree, and put on her old grey frock.

On the third day, when her parents and sisters had started, Ashenputtel went again to her mother's grave, and said:

'Shiver and shake, dear little tree, Gold and silver shower on me.'

Then the bird threw down a dress which was so magnificent that no one had ever seen the like before, and the slippers were entirely of gold. When she appeared at the festival in this attire, they were all speechless with astonishment. The Prince danced only with her, and if any one else asked her to dance, he said, 'This is my partner.'

When night fell and she wanted to leave, the Prince was more desirous than ever to accompany her, but she darted away from him so quickly that he could not keep up with her. But the Prince had used a stratagem, and had caused the steps to be covered with cobbler's wax. The consequence was, that as the maiden sprang down them, her left slipper remained sticking there. The Prince took it up. It was small and dainty, and entirely made of gold.

The next morning he went with it to Ashenputtel's Father, and said to him, 'No other shall become my wife but she whose foot this golden slipper fits.'

The two sisters were delighted at that, for they both had beautiful feet. The eldest went into the room intending to try on the slipper, and her Mother stood beside her. But her great toe prevented her getting it on, her foot was too long.

Then her Mother handed her a knife, and said, 'Cut off the toe; when you are Queen you won't have to walk any more.'

The girl cut off her toe, forced her foot into the slipper, stifled her pain, and went out to the Prince. Then he took her up on his horse as his Bride, and rode away with her.

However, they had to pass the grave on the way, and there sat the two Doves on the hazel-tree, and cried:

'Prithee, look back, prithee, look back, There's blood on the track, The shoe is too small, At home the true Bride is waiting thy call.'

Then he looked at her foot and saw how the blood was streaming from it. So he turned his horse round and carried the false Bride back to her home, and said that she was not the right one; the second sister must try the shoe.

Then she went into the room, and succeeded in getting her toes into the shoe, but her heel was too big.

Then her Mother handed her a knife, and said, 'Cut a bit off your heel; when you are Queen you won't have to walk any more.'

The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, stifled her pain, and went out to the Prince.

Then he took her up on his horse as his Bride, and rode off with her.

As they passed the grave, the two Doves were sitting on the hazel-tree, and crying:

'Prithee, look back, prithee, look back, There's blood on the track, The shoe is too small, At home the true Bride is waiting thy call.'

He looked down at her foot and saw that it was streaming with blood, and there were deep red spots on her stockings. Then he turned his horse and brought the false Bride back to her home.

'This is not the right one either,' he said. 'Have you no other daughter?'

'No,' said the man. 'There is only a daughter of my late wife's, a puny, stunted drudge, but she cannot possibly be the Bride.'

The Prince said that she must be sent for.

But the Mother answered, 'Oh no, she is much too dirty; she mustn't be seen on any account.'

He was, however, absolutely determined to have his way, and they were obliged to summon Ashenputtel.

When she had washed her hands and face, she went up and curtsied to the Prince, who handed her the golden slipper.

Then she sat down on a bench, pulled off her wooden clog and put on the slipper, which fitted to a nicety.

And when she stood up and the Prince looked into her face, he recognised the beautiful maiden that he had danced with, and cried: 'This is the true Bride!'

The Step-mother and the two sisters were dismayed and turned white with rage; but he took Ashenputtel on his horse and rode off with her.

As they rode past the hazel-tree the two White Doves cried:

'Prithee, look back, prithee, look back, No blood's on the track, The shoe's *not* too small, You carry the true Bride home to your hall.'

And when they had said this they both came flying down, and settled on Ashenputtel's shoulders, one on the right, and one on the left, and remained perched there.

When the wedding was going to take place, the two false sisters came and wanted to curry favour with her, and take part in her good fortune. As the bridal party was going to the church, the eldest was on the right side, the youngest on the left, and the Doves picked out one of the eyes of each of them.

Afterwards, when they were coming out of the church, the elder was on the left, the younger on the right, and the Doves picked out the other eye of each of them. And so for their wickedness and falseness they were punished with blindness for the rest of their days.

The White Snake

A LONG time ago there lived a King whose wisdom was celebrated far and wide. Nothing was unknown to him, and news of the most secret transactions seemed to reach him through the air.

Now he had one very odd habit. Every day at dinner, when the courtiers had withdrawn, and he was quite alone, a trusted Servant had to bring in another dish. It was always covered, and even the Servant did not know what it contained, nor any one else, for the King never uncovered it till he was alone. This had gone on for a long time, when one day the Servant who carried the dish was overcome by his curiosity, and took the dish to his own room.

When he had carefully locked the door, he took the dish-cover off, and saw a White Snake lying on the dish.

At the sight of it, he could not resist tasting it; so he cut a piece off, and put it into his mouth.

Hardly had he tasted it, however, when he heard a wonderful whispering of delicate voices.

He went to the window and listened, and he noticed that the whispers came from the sparrows outside. They were chattering away, and telling each other all kinds of things that they had heard in the woods and fields. Eating the Snake had given him the power of understanding the language of birds and animals.

Now it happened on this day that the Queen lost her most precious ring, and suspicion fell upon this trusted Servant who went about everywhere.

The King sent for him, and threatened that if it was not found by the next day, he would be sent to prison.

In vain he protested his innocence; he was not believed.

In his grief and anxiety he went down into the courtyard and wondered how he should get out of his difficulty.

A number of Ducks were lying peaceably together by a stream, stroking down their feathers with their bills, while they chattered gaily.

The Servant stood still to listen to them. They were telling each other of their morning’s walks and experiences.

Then one of them said somewhat fretfully: ‘I have something lying heavy on my stomach. In my haste I swallowed the Queen’s ring this morning.’

The Servant quickly seized it by the neck, carried it off into the kitchen, and said to the Cook: ‘Here’s a fine fat Duck. You had better kill it at once.’

‘Yes, indeed,’ said the Cook, weighing it in her hand. ‘It has spared no pains in stuffing itself; it should have been roasted long ago.’

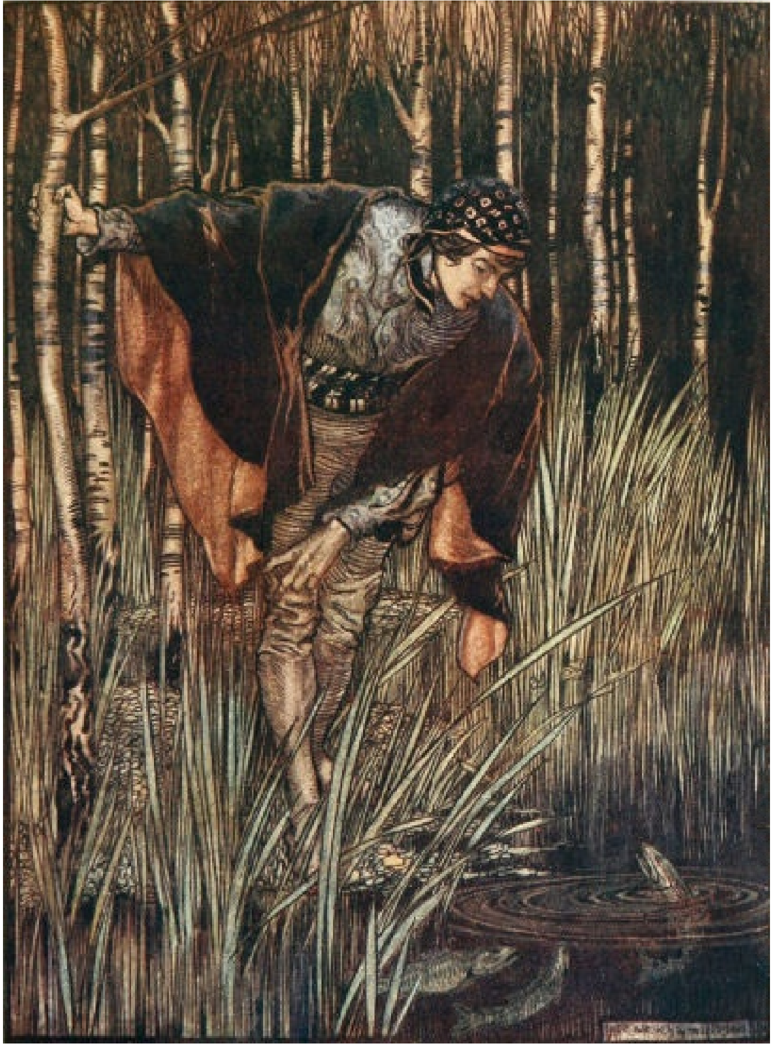
So she killed it, and cut it open, and there, sure enough, was the Queen’s ring.

The Servant had now no difficulty in proving his innocence, and the King, to make up for his injustice, gave the Servant leave to ask any favour he liked, and promised him the highest post about the Court which he might desire.

The Servant, however, declined everything but a horse, and some money to travel with, as he wanted to wander about for a while, to see the world.

His request being granted, he set off on his travels, and one day came to a pond, where he saw three Fishes caught among the reeds, and gasping for breath. Although it is said that fishes are dumb, he understood their complaint at perishing thus miserably. As he had a compassionate heart, he got off his horse and put the three captives back into the water. They wriggled in their joy, stretched up their heads above the water, and cried —

‘We will remember that you saved us, and reward you for it.’



He rode on again, and after a time he seemed to hear a voice in the sand at his feet. He listened, and heard an Ant-King complain: ‘I wish these human beings and their animals would keep out of our way. A clumsy horse has just put his hoof down upon a number of my people in the most heartless way.’

He turned his horse into a side path, and the Ant-King cried: ‘We will remember and reward you.’

The road now ran through a forest, and he saw a pair of Ravens standing by their nest throwing out their young.

‘Away with you, you gallows birds,’ they were saying. ‘We can’t feed you any longer. You are old enough to look after yourselves.’

The poor little nestlings lay on the ground, fluttering and flapping their wings, and crying: ‘We, poor helpless children, to feed ourselves, and we can’t even fly! We shall die of hunger, there is nothing else for it.’

The good Youth dismounted, killed his horse with his sword, and left the carcase as food for the young Ravens. They hopped along to it, and cried: ‘We will remember and reward you.’

Now he had to depend upon his own legs, and after going a long way he came to a large town.

There was much noise and bustle in the streets, where a man on horseback was making a proclamation.

‘The King’s daughter seeks a husband, but any one who wishes to sue for her hand must accomplish a hard task; and if he does not bring it to a successful issue, he will forfeit his life.’

Many had already attempted the task, but they had risked their lives in vain.

When the Youth saw the Princess, he was so dazzled by her beauty that he forgot all danger, at once sought an audience of the King, and announced himself as a suitor.

He was immediately led out to the seashore, and a golden ring was thrown into the water before his eyes. Then the King ordered him to fetch it out from the depths of the sea, and added —

‘If you come to land without it, you will be thrown back every time till you perish in the waves.’

Every one pitied the handsome Youth, but they had to go and leave him standing solitary on the seashore.

He was pondering over what he should do, when, all at once, he saw three Fishes swimming towards him. They were no others than the very ones whose lives he had saved.

The middle one carried a mussel-shell in its mouth, which it laid on the sand at the feet of the Youth. When he picked it up, and opened it, there lay the ring.

Full of joy, he took it to the King, expecting that he would give him the promised reward.

The proud Princess, however, when she heard that he was not her equal, despised him, and demanded that he should perform yet another task.

So she went into the garden herself, and strewed ten sacks of millet seeds among the grass.

‘He must pick up every one of those before the sun rises to-morrow morning,’ said she. ‘Not a grain must be missing.’

The Youth sat miserably in the garden, wondering how it could possibly be done. But as he could not think of a plan, he remained sadly waiting for the dawn which would bring death to him.

But when the first sunbeams fell on the garden, he saw the ten sacks full to the top, and not a grain was missing. The Ant-King had come in the night with thousands and thousands of his Ants, and the grateful creatures had picked up the millet and filled the sacks.

The Princess came into the garden herself, and saw with amazement that the Youth had completed the task.

But still she could not control her proud heart, and she said: ‘Even if he has accomplished these two tasks, he shall not become my husband till he brings me an apple from the tree of life.’

The Youth had no idea where to find the tree of life. However, he started off, meaning to walk as far as his legs would carry him; but he had no hope of finding it.

When he had travelled through three kingdoms, he was one night passing through a great forest, and he lay down under a tree to sleep.

He heard a rustling among the branches, and a golden apple fell into his hand. At the same time three Ravens flew down and perched on his knee, and said:

‘We are the young Ravens you saved from death. When we grew big, and heard that you were looking for the golden apple, we flew across the sea to the end of the world, where the tree of life stands, and brought you the apple.’

The Youth, delighted, started on his homeward journey, and took the golden apple to the beautiful Princess, who had now no further excuse to offer.

They divided the apple of life, and ate it together, and then her heart was filled with love for him, and they lived happily to a great age.

The Wolf and the Seven Kids

THERE was once an old Nanny-goat who had seven Kids, and she was just as fond of them as a mother of her children. One day she was going into the woods to fetch some food for them, so she called them all up to her, and said —

‘My dear children, I am going out into the woods. Beware of the Wolf! If once he gets into the house, he will eat you up, skin, and hair, and all. The rascal often disguises himself, but you will know him by his rough voice and his black feet.’

The Kids said, ‘Oh, we will be very careful, dear mother. You may be quite happy about us.’

Bleating tenderly, the old Goat went off to her work. Before long, some one knocked at the door, and cried —

‘Open the door, dear children! Your mother has come back and brought something for each of you.’

But the Kids knew quite well by the voice that it was the Wolf.

‘We won’t open the door,’ they cried. ‘You are not our mother. She has a soft gentle voice; but yours is rough, and we are quite sure that you are the Wolf.’

So he went away to a shop and bought a lump of chalk, which he ate, and it made his voice quite soft. He went back, knocked at the door again, and cried —

‘Open the door, dear children. Your mother has come back and brought something for each of you.’

But the Wolf had put one of his paws on the window sill, where the Kids saw it, and cried —

‘We won’t open the door. Our mother has not got a black foot as you have; you are the Wolf.’

Then the Wolf ran to a Baker, and said, ‘I have bruised my foot; please put some dough on it.’ And when the Baker had put some dough on his foot, he ran to the Miller and said, ‘Strew some flour on my foot.’

The Miller thought, ‘The old Wolf is going to take somebody in,’ and refused.

But the Wolf said, ‘If you don’t do it, I will eat you up.’

So the Miller was frightened, and whitened his paws. People are like that, you know.

Now the wretch went for the third time to the door, and knocked, and said —

‘Open the door, children. Your dear mother has come home, and has brought something for each of you out of the wood.’

The Kids cried, ‘Show us your feet first, that we may be sure you are our mother.’

He put his paws on the window sill, and when they saw that they were white, they believed all he said, and opened the door.

Alas! It was the Wolf who walked in. They were terrified, and tried to hide themselves. One ran under the table, the second jumped into bed, the third into the oven, the fourth ran into the kitchen, the fifth got into the cupboard, the sixth into the wash-tub, and the seventh hid in the tall clock-case. But the Wolf found them all but one, and made short work of them. He swallowed one after the other, except the youngest one in the clock-case, whom he did not find. When he had satisfied his appetite, he took himself off, and lay down in a meadow outside, where he soon fell asleep.

Not long after the old Nanny-goat came back from the woods. Oh! what a terrible sight met her eyes! The house door was wide open, table, chairs, and benches were overturned, the washing bowl was smashed to atoms, the covers and pillows torn from the bed. She searched all over the house for her children, but nowhere were they to be found. She called them by name, one by one, but no one answered. At last, when she came to the youngest, a tiny voice cried:

‘I am here, dear mother, hidden in the clock-case.’

She brought him out, and he told her that the Wolf had come and devoured all the others.

You may imagine how she wept over her children.

At last, in her grief, she went out, and the youngest Kid ran by her side. When they went into the meadow, there lay the Wolf under a tree, making the branches shake with his snores. They examined him from every side, and they could plainly see movements within his distended body.

‘Ah, heavens!’ thought the Goat, ’is it possible that my poor children whom he ate for his supper, should be still alive?’

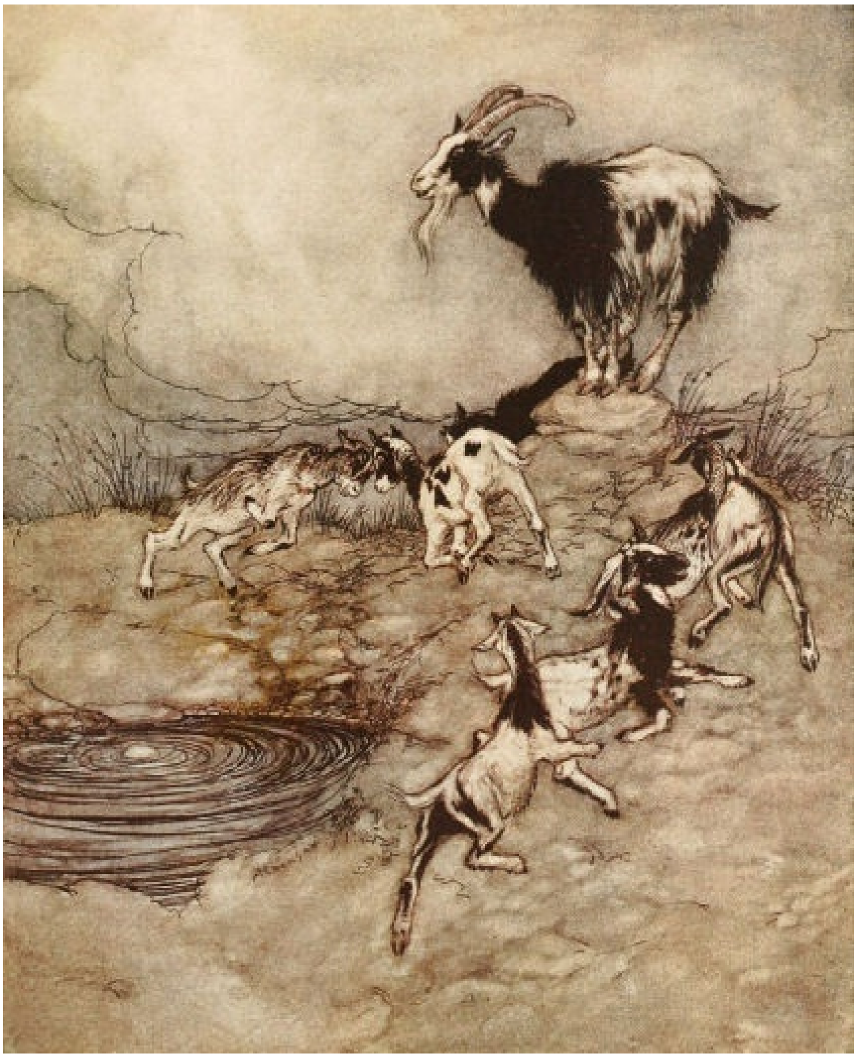
She sent the Kid running to the house to fetch scissors, needles, and thread. Then she cut a hole in the monster’s side, and, hardly had she begun, when a Kid popped out its head, and as soon as the hole was big enough, all six jumped out, one after the other, all alive, and without having suffered the least injury, for, in his greed, the monster had swallowed them whole. You may imagine the mother’s joy. She hugged them, and skipped about like a tailor on his wedding day. At last she said:

‘Go and fetch some big stones, children, and we will fill up the brute’s body while he is asleep.’

Then the seven Kids brought a lot of stones, as fast as they could carry them, and stuffed the Wolf with them till he could hold no more. The old mother quickly sewed him up, without his having noticed anything, or even moved.

At last, when the Wolf had had his sleep out, he got up, and, as the stones made him feel very thirsty, he wanted to go to a spring to drink. But as soon as he moved the stones began to roll about and rattle inside him. Then he cried —

‘What’s the rumbling and tumbling That sets my stomach grumbling? I thought ’twas six Kids, flesh and bones, Now find it’s nought but rolling stones.’



When he reached the spring, and stooped over the water to drink, the heavy stones dragged him down, and he was drowned miserably.

When the seven Kids saw what had happened, they came running up, and cried aloud— ‘The Wolf is dead, the Wolf is dead!’ and they and their mother capered and danced round the spring in their joy.

The Queen Bee

ONCE upon a time two Princes started off in search of adventure, and, falling into a wild, free mode of life, did not come home again.

The third Brother, who was called the Blockhead, set out to look for the other two. But when at last he found them, they mocked him for thinking of making his way in the world with his simplicity, while they, who were so much cleverer, could not get on.

They all three went on together till they came to an ant-heap. The two elder Princes wanted to disturb it, to see how the little ants crept away, carrying their eggs.

But the Blockhead said: ‘Leave the little creatures alone; I will not allow you to disturb them.’

Then they went on further till they came to a lake, in which a great many ducks were swimming about. The two wanted to catch and roast a pair.

But the Blockhead would not allow it, and said: ‘Leave the creatures alone. You shall not kill them.’

At last they came to a bee’s nest, containing such a quantity of honey that it flowed round the trunk of the tree.

The two Princes wanted to set fire to the tree, and suffocate the bees, so as to remove the honey.

But the Blockhead stopped them again, and said: ‘Leave the creatures alone. I will not let you burn them.’

At last the three Brothers came to a castle, where the stables were full of stone horses, but not a soul was to be seen. They went through all the rooms till they came to a door quite at the end, fastened with three bolts. In the middle of the door was a lattice, through which one could see into the room.

There they saw a little grey Man sitting at a table. They called to him once — twice — but he did not hear them. Finally, when they had called him the third time, he stood up and opened the door, and came out. He said not a word, but led them to a richly-spread table, and when they had eaten and drunk, he took them each to a bedroom.

The next morning the little grey Man came to the eldest Prince, beckoned, and led him to a stone tablet whereon were inscribed three tasks by means of which the castle should be freed from enchantment.

This was the first task: In the wood, under the moss, lay the Princesses’ pearls, a thousand in number. These had all to be found, and if at sunset a single one were missing, the seeker was turned to stone.

The eldest went away, and searched all day, but when evening came, he had only found the first hundred, and it happened as the inscription foretold. He was turned to stone.

The next day the second Brother undertook the quest; but he fared no better than the first, for he only found two hundred pearls, and he too was turned to stone.

At last came the Blockhead's turn; he searched in the moss, but the pearls were hard to find, and he got on but slowly.

Then he sat down on a rock and cried, and as he was sitting there, the Ant-King, whose life he had saved, came up with five thousand ants, and it was not long before the little creatures had found all the pearls and laid them in a heap.

Now the second task was to get the key of the Princesses' room out of the lake.

When the Blockhead came to the lake, the ducks he had once saved, swam up, dived, and brought up the key from the depths.

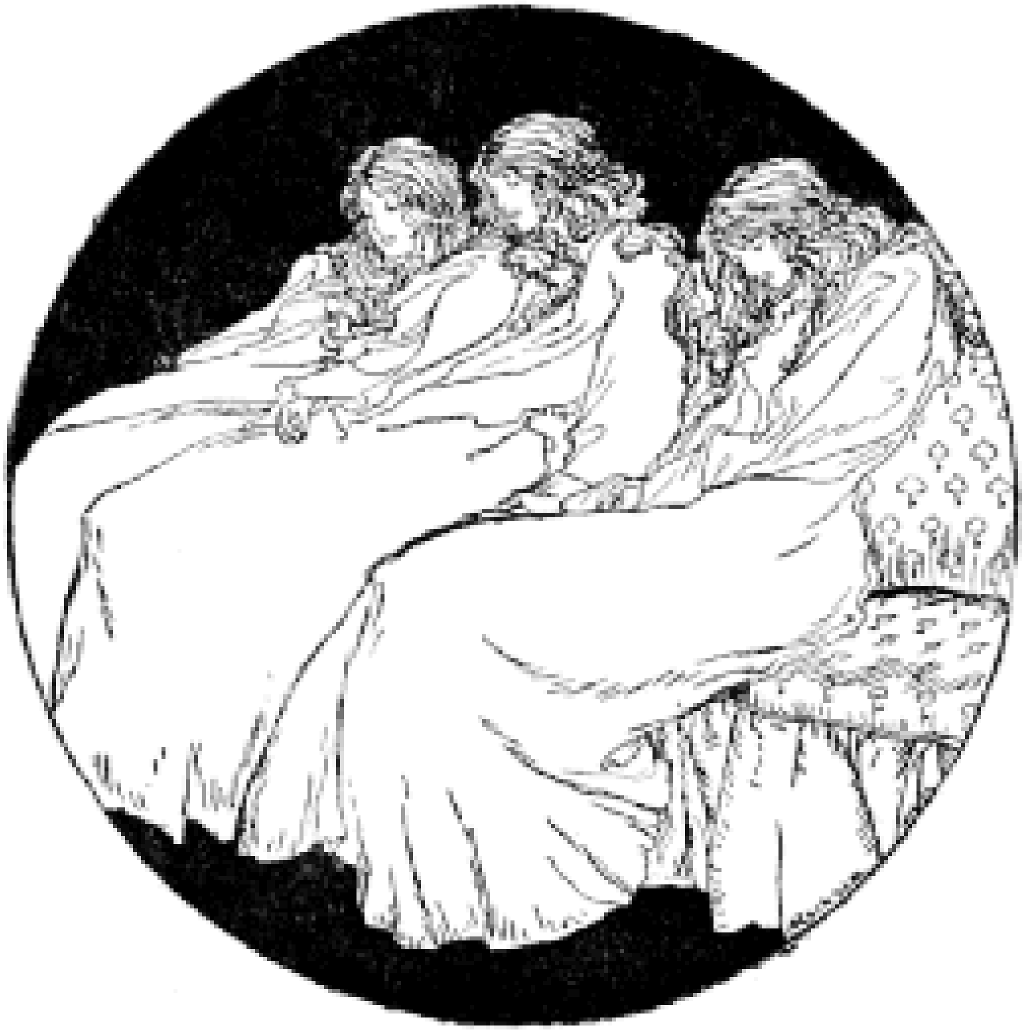
But the third task was the hardest. The Prince had to find out which was the youngest and most charming of the Princesses while they were asleep.

They were exactly alike, and could not be distinguished in any way, except that before going to sleep each had eaten a different kind of sweet. The eldest a piece of sugar, the second a little syrup, and the third a spoonful of honey.

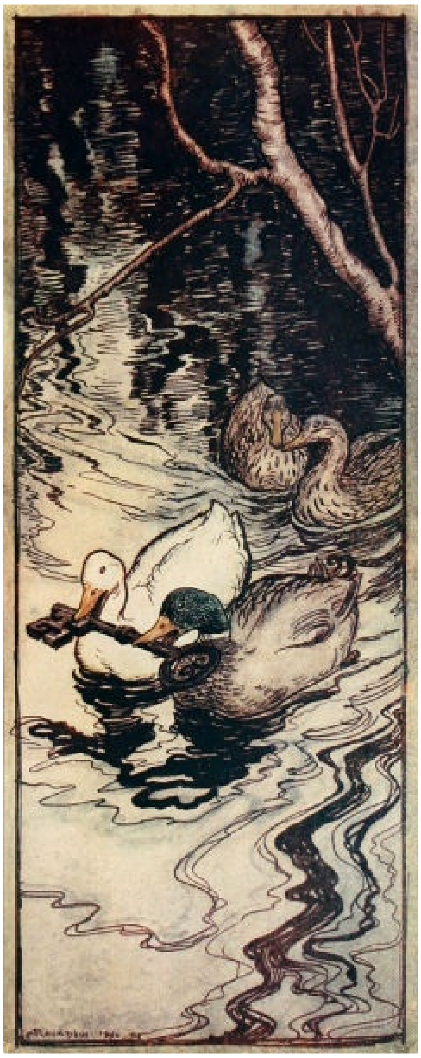
Then the Queen of the Bees, whom the Blockhead had saved from burning, came and tried the lips of all three. Finally, she settled on the mouth of the one who had eaten the honey, and so the Prince recognised the right one.

Then the charm was broken and everything in the castle was set free, and those who had been turned to stone took human form again.

And the Blockhead married the youngest and sweetest Princess, and became King after her father's death, while his two Brothers married the other sisters.



The Three Sleeping Princesses.



The Elves and the Shoemaker

THERE was once a Shoemaker who, through no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had only leather enough left for one pair of shoes. At evening he cut out the shoes which he intended to begin upon the next morning, and since he had a good conscience, he lay down quietly, said his prayers, and fell asleep.

In the morning when he had said his prayers, and was preparing to sit down to work, he found the pair of shoes standing finished on his table. He was amazed, and could not understand it in the least.

He took the shoes in his hand to examine them more closely. They were so neatly sewn that not a stitch was out of place, and were as good as the work of a master-hand.

Soon after a purchaser came in, and as he was much pleased with the shoes, he paid more than the ordinary price for them, so that the Shoemaker was able to buy leather for two pairs of shoes with the money.

He cut them out in the evening, and next day, with fresh courage, was about to go to work; but he had no need to, for when he got up, the shoes were finished, and buyers were not lacking. These gave him so much money that he was able to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

Early next morning he found the four pairs finished, and so it went on; what he cut out at evening was finished in the morning, so that he was soon again in comfortable circumstances, and became a well-to-do man.

Now it happened one evening, not long before Christmas, when he had cut out some shoes as usual, that he said to his Wife: ‘How would it be if we were to sit up to-night to see who it is that lends us such a helping hand?’

The Wife agreed, lighted a candle, and they hid themselves in the corner of the room behind the clothes which were hanging there.

At midnight came two little naked men who sat down at the Shoemaker’s table, took up the cut-out work, and began with their tiny fingers to stitch, sew, and hammer so neatly and quickly, that the Shoemaker could not believe his eyes. They did not stop till everything was quite finished, and stood complete on the table; then they ran swiftly away.

The next day the Wife said: ‘The little men have made us rich, and we ought to show our gratitude. They were running about with nothing on, and must freeze with cold. Now I will make them little shirts, coats, waistcoats, and hose, and will even knit them a pair of stockings, and you shall make them each a pair of shoes.’

The Husband agreed, and at evening, when they had everything ready, they laid out the presents on the table, and hid themselves to see how the little men would behave.

At midnight they came skipping in, and were about to set to work; but, instead of the leather ready cut out, they found the charming little clothes.

At first they were surprised, then excessively delighted. With the greatest speed they put on and smoothed down the pretty clothes, singing:

‘Now we’re boys so fine and neat, Why cobble more for other’s feet?’

Then they hopped and danced about, and leapt over chairs and tables and out at the door. Henceforward, they came back no more, but the Shoemaker fared well as long as he lived, and had good luck in all his undertakings.

The Wolf and the Man

A FOX was one day talking to a Wolf about the strength of man.

'No animals,' he said, 'could withstand man, and they were obliged to use cunning to hold their own against him.'

The Wolf answered, 'If ever I happened to see a man, I should attack him all the same.'

'Well, I can help you to that,' said the Fox. 'Come to me early to-morrow, and I will show you one!'

The Wolf was early astir, and the Fox took him out to a road in the forest, traversed daily by a Huntsman.

First came an old discharged soldier.

'Is that a Man?' asked the Wolf.

'No,' answered the Fox. 'He has been a Man.'

After that, a little boy appeared on his way to school.

'Is that a Man?'

'No; he is going to be a Man.'

At last the Huntsman made his appearance, his gun on his back, and his hunting-knife at his side. The Fox said to the Wolf, —

'Look! There comes a Man. You may attack him, but I will make off to my hole!'

The Wolf set on the Man, who said to himself when he saw him, 'What a pity my gun isn't loaded with ball,' and fired a charge of shot in the Wolf's face. The Wolf made a wry face, but he was not to be so easily frightened, and attacked him again. Then the Huntsman gave him the second charge. The Wolf swallowed the pain, and rushed at the Huntsman; but he drew his bright hunting-knife, and hit out right and left with it, so that, streaming with blood, the Wolf ran back to the Fox.

'Well, brother Wolf,' said the Fox, 'and how did you get on with the Man?'

'Alas!' said the Wolf. 'I never thought the strength of man would be what it is. First, he took a stick from his shoulder, and blew into it, and something flew into my face, which tickled frightfully. Then he blew into it again, and it flew into my eyes and nose like lightning and hail. Then he drew a shining rib out of his body, and struck at me with it till I was more dead than alive.'

'Now, you see,' said the Fox, 'what a braggart you are. You throw your hatchet so far that you can't get it back again.'

The Turnip

THERE were once two Brothers who both served as soldiers, and one was rich and the other was poor.

The poor one, wishing to better himself, discarded his uniform and worked like a Peasant. Then he dug and hoed his little field and sowed Turnips.

The seed came up, and one of the Turnips grew to such an enormous size, that it seemed as though it would never have finished; and it might have been called the Queen of Turnips, for its like had never been seen before, nor ever will be again.

At last it was so big that it filled a cart, and needed two oxen to draw it; and the Peasant could not imagine what would come of it, whether it would bring good luck or bad.

At last he said to himself: ‘If I sell it what shall I gain? I might eat it, but the little Turnips would do as well for that. The best thing will be to take it to the King and offer it to him.’

So he loaded a cart, harnessed two oxen, and took it to the Court to present it to the King.

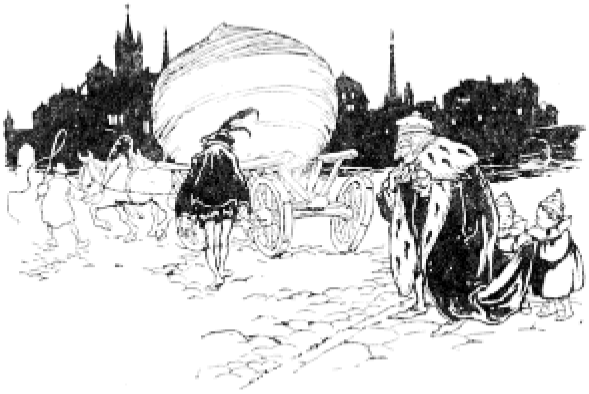
‘What is that extraordinary object?’ said the King. ‘I have seen many marvels in my time, but never anything so remarkable as this. What seed did it spring from? Perhaps it belongs to you, especially if you are a child of good luck?’

‘Oh no,’ said the Peasant, ‘lucky I certainly am not, for I am a poor Soldier, who, since he could keep himself no longer, has hung up his uniform on a nail, and tills the earth. Further, I have a Brother who is rich, and well known to you, my Lord King; but I, because I have nothing, am forgotten by all the world.’

Then the King pitied him and said: ‘Your poverty shall be at an end, and you shall receive such rich presents from me that your wealth will equal that of your Brother.’

Thereupon he gave him plenty of gold, lands, fields, and flocks, and enriched him with precious stones, so that the other Brother’s wealth could not be compared with his.

Now, when the rich Brother heard what his Brother with the single Turnip had acquired, he envied him, and pondered how he might gain a like treasure for himself.



So the rich Brother had to put his Brother's Turnip into a cart, and have it taken home.

But he wanted to show himself much cleverer, so he took gold and horses and presented them to the King, feeling certain that he would give him a far handsomer gift; for if his Brother got so much for a Turnip, what would not he get for his beautiful things.

The King took the present, saying that he could give him in return nothing rarer or better than the huge Turnip.

So the rich Brother had to put his Brother's Turnip into a cart, and have it taken home.

Then he did not know on whom to expend his wrath and bitterness, till evil thoughts came to him, and he determined to kill his Brother.

He hired Murderers, who were to place themselves in ambush, and then he went to his Brother, and said: 'Dear Brother, I know of a secret treasure which we will carry off and divide.'

The other agreed, and went without suspicion. But when they got out, the Murderers sprang upon him, bound him, and prepared to hang him on a tree.

While they were about it, they heard in the distance the clatter of hoofs and the sound of singing, which frightened them so much that they stuck their Prisoner into a sack, head foremost, slung it up on a branch, and took to flight.

But the Man up in the sack worked a hole in it, and stuck his head through.

Now the traveller turned out to be nothing more than a Student, a young fellow who was riding through the wood, singing cheerily.

When the Man up in the sack saw some one down below, he called out: 'Good-day. You come in the nick of time.'

The Student looked all round, but could not make out where the voice came from.

At last he said: 'Who calls?'

A voice from above answered: 'Raise your eyes, I am sitting up here in the Sack of Wisdom, and in a short time I have learnt so much that the wisdom of the schools is as air compared to mine. Soon I shall be quite perfect, and shall come down and be the wisest of all mankind. I understand the stars and signs of the heavens, the blowing of the winds, the sand of the sea, the healing of sickness, the power of herbs, birds, and stones. If you were once inside, you would feel what wonders flow from the Sack of Knowledge.'

When the Student heard this he was astonished, and said: 'Blessed be the hour when I met you, if only I too might get into the sack for a little.'

The other answered, as though unwillingly: 'I will let you in for a little while for payment and kind words, but you must wait an hour, as there is something rather difficult which I must learn first.'

But when the Student had waited a little, he grew impatient and entreated permission to get in, so great was his thirst for knowledge. Then the Man in the sack pretended to give in, and said: 'In order that I may get out of the sack you must let it down, then you can get in.'

So the Student let it down, undid the sack and released the Prisoner, and said: 'Now pull me up as fast as possible'; and he tried to get into the sack and stand upright in it.

'Stop,' said the other. 'That won't do.' And he packed him in head first, tied it up, and slung up the Disciple of Wisdom, dangling him in the air, and said: 'How are you, my dear fellow? You will soon feel wisdom coming upon you, and will have a most interesting experience. Sit still till you are wiser.'

Thereupon he mounted the Student's horse, and rode off, but sent some one in an hour to let him down again.

Clever Hans

WHERE are you going, Hans?' asked his Mother.

'To see Grettel,' answered Hans.

'Behave well, Hans!'

'All right, Mother. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Grettel.

'Good morning, Grettel.'

'Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?'

'I've not brought you anything. I want a present.'

Grettel gives him a needle. Hans takes the needle, and sticks it in a load of hay, and walks home behind the cart.

'Good evening, Mother.'

'Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'I've been to Grettel's.'

'What did you give her?'

'I gave her nothing. But she made me a present.'

'What did she give you?'

'She gave me a needle.'

'What did you do with it?'

'Stuck it in the hay-cart.'

'That was stupid, Hans. You should have stuck it in your sleeve.'

'Never mind, Mother; I'll do better next time.'

'Where are you going, Hans?'

'To see Grettel, Mother.'

'Behave well.'

'All right, Mother. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye, Hans.'

Hans comes to Grettel.

'Good morning, Grettel.'

'Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?'

'I've brought nothing. But I want something.'

Grettel gives him a knife.

'Good-bye, Grettel.'

'Good-bye, Hans.'

Hans takes the knife, and sticks it in his sleeve, and goes home.

'Good evening, Mother.'

'Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?'

'Been to see Grettel.'

'What did you give her?'

'I gave her nothing. But she gave me something.'

'What did she give you?'

'She gave me a knife.'

'Where is the knife, Hans?'

‘I stuck it in my sleeve.’

‘That’s a stupid place, Hans. You should have put it in your pocket.’

‘Never mind, Mother; I’ll do better next time.’

‘Where are you going, Hans?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘Behave well, then.’

‘All right, Mother. Good-bye.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans comes to Grettel.

‘Good morning, Grettel.’

‘Good morning, Hans. Have you brought me anything nice?’

‘I’ve brought nothing. What have you got for me?’

Grettel gives him a young kid.

‘Good-bye, Grettel.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans takes the kid, ties its legs together, and puts it in his pocket.

When he got home, it was suffocated.

‘Good evening, Mother.’

‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’

‘Been to see Grettel, Mother.’

‘What did you give her?’

‘I gave her nothing. But I brought away something.’

‘What did Grettel give you?’

‘She gave me a young kid.’

‘What did you do with the kid?’

‘Put it in my pocket, Mother.’

‘That was very stupid. You should have led it by a rope.’

‘Never mind, Mother; I’ll manage better next time.’

‘Where are you going, Hans?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘Manage well, then.’

‘All right, Mother. Good-bye.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans comes to Grettel.

‘Good morning, Grettel.’

‘Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?’

‘I’ve brought you nothing. What have you got for me?’

Grettel gives him a piece of bacon.

‘Good-bye, Grettel.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans takes the bacon, ties a rope round it, and drags it along behind him. The dogs come after him, and eat it up. When he got home he had the rope in his hand, but there was nothing at the end of it.

‘Good evening, Mother.’

‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘What did you take her?’

‘I took nothing. But I brought something away.’

‘What did she give you?’

‘She gave me a piece of bacon.’

‘What did you do with the bacon, Hans?’

‘I tied it to a rope, and dragged it home. But the dogs ate it.’

‘That was a stupid business, Hans. You should have carried it on your head.’

‘Never mind, Mother; I’ll do better next time.’

‘Where are you going, Hans?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘Behave properly, then.’

‘All right, Mother. Good-bye.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans comes to Grettel.

‘Good morning, Grettel.’

‘Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?’

‘I’ve brought nothing. What have you got for me?’

Grettel gives Hans a calf.

‘Good-bye, Grettel.’

‘Good-bye, Hans.’

Hans takes the calf, and puts it on his head. It kicks his face.

‘Good evening, Mother.’

‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’

‘Been to see Grettel, Mother.’

‘What did you take her?’

‘I took her nothing, Mother. She gave me something.’

‘What did she give you, Hans?’

‘She gave me a calf, Mother.’

‘What did you do with the calf?’

‘Put it on my head, Mother, and it kicked my face.’

‘That was very stupid, Hans. You should have led it by a rope, and put it in the cow-stall.’

‘Never mind, Mother; I’ll do better next time.’

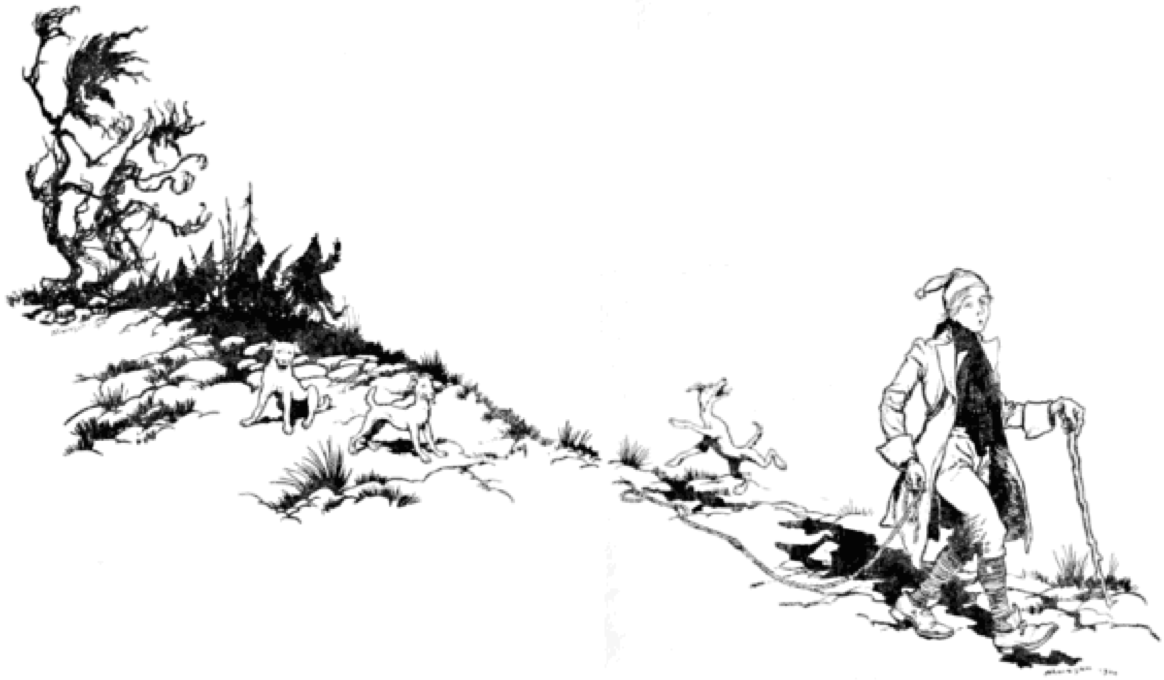
‘Where are you going, Hans?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘Mind how you behave, Hans.’

‘All right, Mother. Good-bye.’

Hans goes to Grettel.



When he got home he had the rope in his hand, but there was nothing at the end of it.

‘Good morning, Grettel.’

‘Good morning, Hans. What have you brought me?’

‘I’ve brought you nothing. I want to take away something.’

‘I’ll go with you myself, Hans.’

Hans ties Grettel to a rope, and leads her home, where he puts her in a stall, and ties her up. Then he goes into the house to his Mother.

‘Good evening, Mother.’

‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’

‘To see Grettel, Mother.’

‘What did you take her?’

‘I took nothing.’

‘What did Grettel give you?’

‘She gave me nothing. She came with me.’

‘Where did you leave Grettel?’

‘Tied up in the stable with a rope.’

‘That was stupid. You should have cast sheep’s eyes at her.’

‘Never mind; I’ll do better next time.’

Hans went into the stable, plucked the eyes out of the cows and calves, and threw them in Grettel’s face.

Grettel got angry, broke the rope, and ran away.

Yet she became Hans’ wife.

The Three Languages

THERE once lived in Switzerland an old Count, who had an only son; but he was very stupid, and could learn nothing. So his father said to him: ‘Listen to me, my son. I can get nothing into your head, try as hard as I may. You must go away from here, and I will hand you over to a renowned Professor for a whole year.’ At the end of the year he came home again, and his father asked: ‘Now, my son, what have you learnt?’

‘Father, I have learnt the language of dogs.’

‘Mercy on us!’ cried his father, ’is that all you have learnt? I will send you away again to another Professor in a different town.’ The youth was taken there, and remained with this Professor also for another year. When he came back his father asked him again: ‘My son, what have you learnt?’

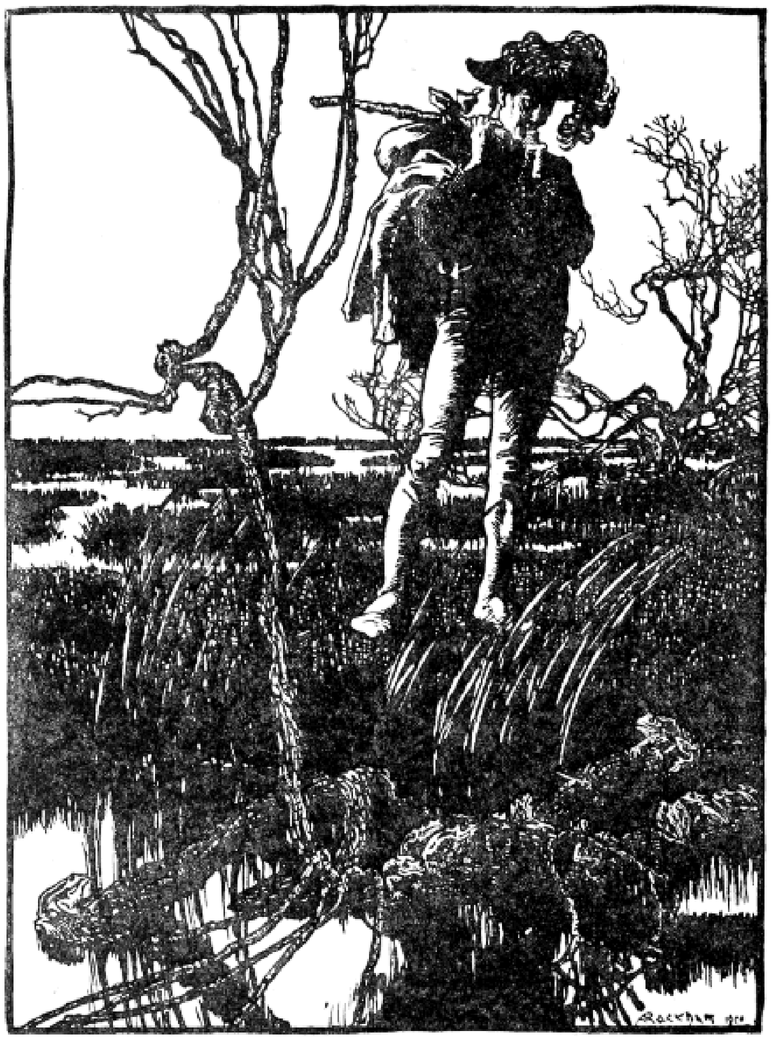
He answered: ‘I have learnt bird language.’

Then the father flew into a rage, and said: ‘Oh, you hopeless creature, have you been spending all this precious time and learnt nothing? Aren’t you ashamed to come into my presence? I will send you to a third Professor, but if you learn nothing this time, I won’t be your father any longer.’

The son stopped with the third Professor in the same way for a whole year, and when he came home again and his father asked, ‘My son, what have you learnt?’ he answered —

‘My dear father, this year I have learnt frog language.’

Thereupon his father flew into a fearful passion, and said: ‘This creature is my son no longer. I turn him out of the house and command you to lead him into the forest and take his life.’



On the way he passed a swamp, in which a number of Frogs were croaking.

They led him forth, but when they were about to kill him, for pity's sake they could not do it, and let him go. Then they cut out the eyes and tongue of a Fawn, in order that they might take back proofs to the old Count.

The youth wandered about, and at length came to a castle, where he begged a night's lodging.

'Very well,' said the Lord of the castle. 'If you like to pass the night down there in the old tower, you may; but I warn you that it will be at the risk of your life, for it is full of savage dogs. They bark and howl without ceasing, and at certain hours they must have a man thrown to them, and they devour him at once.'

The whole neighbourhood was distressed by the scourge, but no one could do anything to remedy it. But the youth was not a bit afraid, and said: 'Just let me go down to these barking dogs, and give me something that I can throw to them; they won't do me any harm.'

As he would not have anything else, they gave him some food for the savage dogs, and took him down to the tower.

The dogs did not bark at him when he entered, but ran round him wagging their tails in a most friendly manner, ate the food he gave them, and did not so much as touch a hair of his head.

The next morning, to the surprise of every one, he made his appearance again, and said to the Lord of the castle, ‘The Dogs have revealed to me in their own language why they live there and bring mischief to the country. They are enchanted, and obliged to guard a great treasure which is hidden under the tower, and will get no rest till it has been dug up; and how that has to be done I have also learnt from them.’

Every one who heard this was delighted, and the Lord of the castle said he would adopt him as a son if he accomplished the task successfully. He went down to the tower again, and as he knew how to set to work he accomplished his task, and brought out a chest full of gold. The howling of the savage Dogs was from that time forward heard no more. They entirely disappeared, and the country was delivered from the scourge.

After a time, he took it into his head to go to Rome. On the way he passed a swamp, in which a number of Frogs were croaking. He listened, and when he heard what they were saying he became quite pensive and sad.

At last he reached Rome, at a moment when the Pope had just died, and there was great doubt among the Cardinals whom they ought to name as his successor. They agreed at last that the man to whom some divine miracle should be manifested ought to be chosen as Pope. Just as they had come to this decision, the young Count entered the church, and suddenly two snow-white doves flew down and alighted on his shoulders.

The clergy recognised in this the sign from Heaven, and asked him on the spot whether he would be Pope.

He was undecided, and knew not whether he was worthy of the post; but the Doves told him that he might accept, and at last he said ‘Yes.’

Thereupon he was anointed and consecrated, and so was fulfilled what he had heard from the Frogs on the way, which had disturbed him so much — namely, that he should become Pope.

Then he had to chant mass, and did not know one word of it. But the two Doves sat upon his shoulders and whispered it to him.

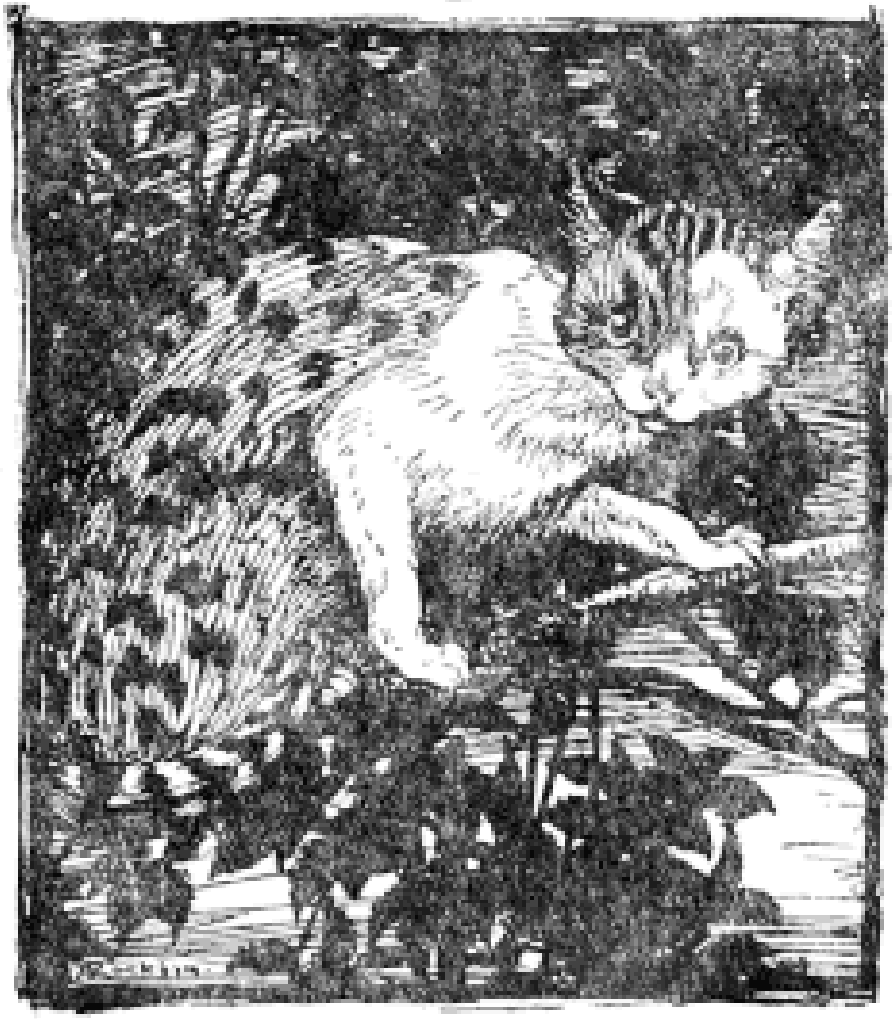
The Fox and the Cat

IT happened once that the Cat met Mr. Fox in the wood, and because she thought: ‘He is clever and experienced in all the ways of the world,’ she addressed him in a friendly manner.

‘Good morning, dear Mr. Fox! how are you and how do you get along in these hard times?’

The Fox, full of pride, looked at the Cat from head to foot for some time hardly knowing whether he would deign to answer or not. At last he said —

‘Oh, you poor whisker-wiper, you piebald fool, you starveling mouse-hunter! what has come into your head? How dare you ask me how I am getting on? What sort of education have you had? How many arts are you master of?’



The Cat crept stealthily up to the topmost branch.

‘Only one,’ said the Cat, meekly.

‘And what might that one be?’ asked the Fox.

‘When the hounds run after me, I can jump into a tree and save myself.’

‘Is that all?’ said the Fox. ‘I am master of a hundred arts, and I have a sack full of cunning tricks in addition. But I pity you. Come with me, and I will teach you how to escape the hounds.’

Just then, a huntsman came along with four hounds. The Cat sprang trembling into a tree, and crept stealthily up to the topmost branch, where she was entirely hidden by twigs and leaves.

‘Open your sack, Mr. Fox! open your sack!’ cried the Cat; but the hounds had gripped him, and held him fast.

‘O Mr. Fox!’ cried the Cat, ‘you with your hundred arts, and your sack full of tricks, are caught, while I, with my one, am safe. Had you been able to climb up here, you would not have lost your life.’

The Four Clever Brothers

THERE was once a poor man who had four sons, and when they were grown up, he said to them: ‘Dear children, you must go out into the world now, for I have nothing to give you. You must each learn a trade and make your own way in the world.’

So the four Brothers took their sticks in their hands, bid their father good-bye, and passed out of the town gate.

When they had walked some distance, they came to four cross roads, which led into four different districts. Then the eldest one said: ‘We must part here, but this day four years, we will meet here again, having in the meantime done our best to make our fortunes.’

Then each one went his own way. The eldest met an old man, who asked him where he came from, and what he was going to do.

‘I want to learn a trade,’ he answered.

Then the Man said: ‘Come with me and learn to be a Thief.’

‘No,’ answered he, ‘that is no longer considered an honest trade; and the end of that song would be that I should swing as the clapper in a bell.’

‘Oh,’ said the Man, ‘you need not be afraid of the gallows. I will only teach you how to take things no one else wants, or knows how to get hold of, and where no one can find you out.’

So he allowed himself to be persuaded, and under the Man’s instructions he became such an expert thief that nothing was safe from him which he had once made up his mind to have.

The second Brother met a Man who put the same question to him, as to what he was going to do in the world.

‘I don’t know yet,’ he answered.

‘Then come with me and be a Star-gazer. It is the grandest thing in the world, nothing is hidden from you.’

He was pleased with the idea, and became such a clever Star-gazer, that when he had learnt everything and wanted to go away, his master gave him a telescope, and said —

‘With this you can see everything that happens in the sky and on earth, and nothing can remain hidden from you.’

The third Brother was taken in hand by a Huntsman, who taught him everything connected with sport so well, that he became a first-rate Huntsman.

On his departure his master presented him with a gun, and said: ‘This gun will never miss: whatever you aim at you will hit without fail.’

The youngest Brother also met a Man who asked him what he was going to do.

‘Wouldn’t you like to be a Tailor?’ he asked.

‘I don’t know about that,’ said the young man. ‘I don’t much fancy sitting cross-legged from morning till night, and everlastingly pulling a needle in and out, and pushing a flat iron.’

‘Dear, dear!’ said the Man, ‘what are you talking about? If you come to me you will learn quite a different sort of tailoring. It is a most pleasant and agreeable trade, not to say most honourable.’

So he allowed himself to be talked over, and went with the Man, who taught him his trade thoroughly.

On his departure, he gave him a needle, and said: ‘With this needle you will be able to stitch anything together, be it as soft as an egg, or as hard as steel; and it will become like a whole piece of stuff with no seam visible.’

When the four years, which the Brothers had agreed upon, had passed, they met at the cross-roads. They embraced one another and hurried home to their Father.

‘Well!’ said he, quite pleased to see them, ‘has the wind wafted you back to me again?’

They told him all that had happened to them, and that each had mastered a trade. They were sitting in front of the house under a big tree, and their Father said —

‘Now, I will put you to the test, and see what you can do.’

Then he looked up and said to his second son —

‘There is a chaffinch’s nest in the topmost branch of this tree; tell me how many eggs there are in it?’

The Star-gazer took his glass and said: ‘There are five.’

His Father said to the eldest: ‘Bring the eggs down without disturbing the bird sitting on them.’

The cunning Thief climbed up and took the five eggs from under the bird so cleverly that it never noticed they were gone, and he gave them to his Father. His Father took them, and put them one on each corner of the table, and one in the middle, and said to the Sportsman —

‘You must shoot the five eggs through the middle at one shot.’

The Sportsman levelled his gun, and divided each egg in half at one shot, as his Father desired. He certainly must have had some of the powder which shoots round the corner.

‘Now it is your turn,’ said his Father to the fourth son. ‘You will sew the eggs together again, the shells and the young birds inside them; and you will do it in such a manner that they will be none the worse for the shot.’

The Tailor produced his needle, and stitched away as his Father ordered. When he had finished, the Thief had to climb up the tree again, and put the eggs back under the bird without her noticing it. The bird spread herself over the eggs, and a few days later the fledglings crept out of the shell, and they all had a red line round their throats where the Tailor had sewn them together.

‘Yes,’ said the old man to his sons; ‘I can certainly praise your skill. You have learnt something worth knowing, and made the most of your time. I don’t know which of you to give the palm to. I only hope you may soon have a chance of showing your skill so that it may be settled.’

Not long after this there was a great alarm raised in the country: the King’s only daughter had been carried off by a Dragon. The King sorrowed for her day and night, and proclaimed that whoever brought her back should marry her.

The four Brothers said to one another: ‘This would be an opportunity for us to prove what we can do.’ And they decided to go out together to deliver the Princess.

‘I shall soon know where she is,’ said the Star-gazer, as he looked through his telescope; and then he said —

‘I see her already. She is a long way from here, she is sitting on a rock in the middle of the sea, and the Dragon is near, watching her.’

Then he went to the King and asked for a ship for himself and his Brothers to cross the sea in search of the rock.

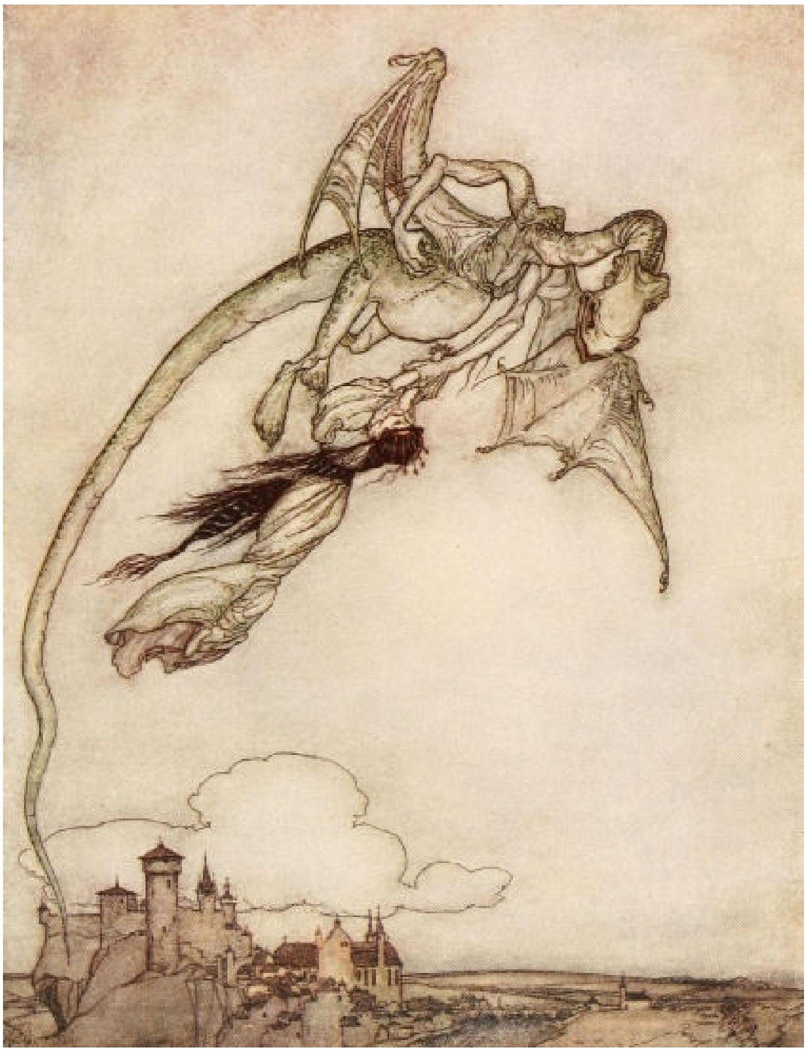
They found the Princess still on the rock, but the Dragon was asleep with his head on her lap.

The Sportsman said: ‘I dare not shoot. I should kill the beautiful maiden.’

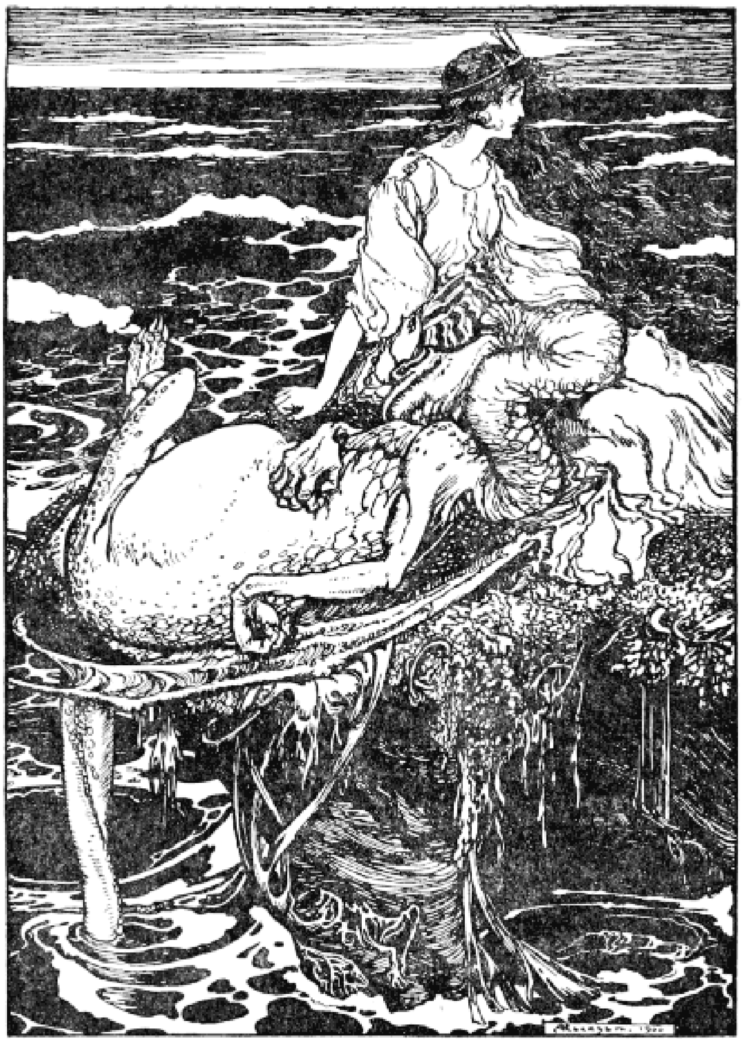
‘Then I will try my luck,’ said the Thief, and he stole her away from beneath the Dragon. He did it so gently and skilfully, that the monster never discovered it, but went snoring on.

Full of joy, they hurried away with her to the ship, and steered for the open sea. But the Dragon on waking had missed the Princess, and now came after them through the air, foaming with rage.

Just as he was hovering over the ship and about to drop on them, the Sportsman took aim with his gun and shot him through the heart. The monster fell down dead, but he was so huge, that in falling, he dragged the whole ship down with him. They managed to seize a few boards, on which they kept themselves afloat.



They were now in great straits, but the Tailor, not to be outdone, produced his wonderful needle, and put some great stitches into the boards, seated himself on them, and collected all the floating bits of the ship. Then he stitched them all together so cleverly, that in a very short time the ship was seaworthy again, and they sailed happily home.



They found the Princess still on the rock, but the Dragon was asleep with his head on her lap.

The King was overjoyed when he saw his daughter again, and he said to the four Brothers: ‘One of you shall marry her, but which one, you must decide among yourselves.’

An excited discussion then took place among them, for each one made a claim.

The Star-gazer said: ‘Had I not discovered the Princess, all your arts would have been in vain, therefore she is mine!’

The Thief said: ‘What would have been the good of discovering her if I had not taken her from under the Dragon? So she is mine.’

The Sportsman said: ‘You, as well as the Princess, would have been destroyed by the monster if my shot had not hit him. So she is mine.’

The Tailor said: ‘And if I had not sewn the ship together with my skill, you would all have been drowned miserably. Therefore she is mine.’

The King said: ‘Each of you has an equal right; but, as you can’t all have her, none of you shall have her. I will give every one of you half a kingdom as a reward.’

The Brothers were quite satisfied with this decision, and they said: ‘It is better so than that we should quarrel over it.’

So each of them received half a kingdom, and they lived happily with their Father for the rest of their days.

The Lady and the Lion

THERE was once a Man who had to take a long journey, and when he was saying good-bye to his daughters he asked what he should bring back to them.

The eldest wanted pearls, the second diamonds, but the third said, ‘Dear father, I should like a singing, soaring lark.’

The father said, ‘Very well, if I can manage it, you shall have it’; and he kissed all three and set off. He bought pearls and diamonds for the two eldest, but he had searched everywhere in vain for the singing, soaring lark, and this worried him, for his youngest daughter was his favourite child.

Once his way led through a wood, in the midst of which was a splendid castle; near it stood a tree, and right up at the top he saw a lark singing and soaring. ‘Ah,’ he said, ‘I have come across you in the nick of time’; and he called to his Servant to dismount and catch the little creature. But as he approached the tree a Lion sprang out from underneath, and shook himself, and roared so that the leaves on the tree trembled.

‘Who dares to steal my lark?’ said he. ‘I will eat up the thief!’

Then the Man said, ‘I didn’t know that the bird was yours. I will make up for my fault by paying a heavy ransom. Only spare my life.’

But the Lion said, ‘Nothing can save you, unless you promise to give me whatever first meets you when you get home. If you consent, I will give you your life and the bird into the bargain.’

But the Man hesitated, and said, ‘Suppose my youngest and favourite daughter were to come running to meet me when I go home!’

But the Servant was afraid, and said, ‘Your daughter will not necessarily be the first to come to meet you; it might just as well be a cat or a dog.’

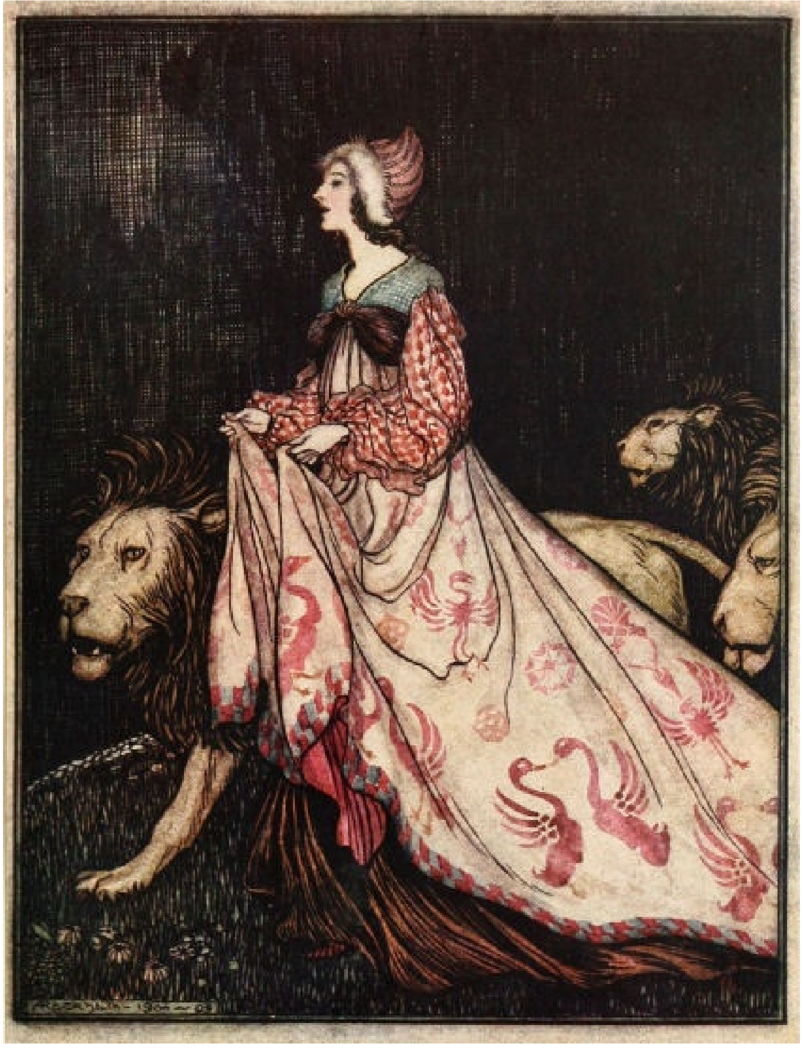
So the Man let himself be persuaded, took the lark, and promised to the Lion for his own whatever first met him on his return home. When he reached home, and entered his house, the first person who met him was none other than his youngest daughter; she came running up and kissed and caressed him, and when she saw that he had brought the singing, soaring lark, she was beside herself with joy. But her father could not rejoice; he began to cry, and said, ‘My dear child, it has cost me dear, for I have had to promise you to a Lion who will tear you in pieces when he has you in his power.’ And he told her all that had happened, and begged her not to go, come what might.

But she consoled him, saying, ‘Dear father, what you have promised must be performed. I will go and will soon soften the Lion’s heart, so that I shall come back safe and sound.’ The next morning the way was shown to her, and she said good-bye and went confidently into the forest.

Now the Lion was an enchanted Prince, who was a Lion by day, and all his followers were Lions too; but by night they reassumed their human form. On her arrival she was kindly received, and conducted to the castle. When night fell, the Lion turned into a handsome man, and their wedding was celebrated with due magnificence. And they lived happily together, sitting up at night and sleeping by day. One day he came to her and said, ‘To-morrow there is a festival at your father’s house to celebrate your eldest sister’s wedding; if you would like to go my Lions shall escort you.’

She answered that she was very eager to see her father again, so she went away accompanied by the Lions.

There was great rejoicing on her coming, for they all thought that she had been torn to pieces and had long been dead.



But she told them what a handsome husband she had and how well she fared; and she stayed with them as long as the wedding festivities lasted. Then she went back again into the wood.

When the second daughter married, and the youngest was again invited to the wedding, she said to the Lion, ‘This time I will not go alone, you must come too.’

But the Lion said it would be too dangerous, for if a gleam of light touched him he would be changed into a Dove and would have to fly about for seven years.

‘Ah,’ said she, ‘only go with me, and I will protect you and keep off every ray of light.’

So they went away together, and took their little child with them too. They had a hall built with such thick walls that no ray could penetrate, and thither the Lion was to retire when the wedding torches were kindled. But the door was made of fresh wood which split and caused a little crack which no one noticed.

Now the wedding was celebrated with great splendour. But when the procession came back from church with a large number of torches and lights, a ray of light no broader than a hair fell upon the Prince, and the minute this ray touched him he was changed; and when his wife came in and looked for him, she saw nothing but a White Dove sitting there. The Dove said to her, ‘For seven years I must fly about the world; every seventh step I will let fall a drop of blood and a white feather which will show you the way, and if you will follow the track you can free me.’

Thereupon the Dove flew out of the door, and she followed it, and every seventh step it let fall a drop of blood and a little white feather to show her the way. So she wandered about the world, and never rested till the seven years were nearly passed. Then she rejoiced, thinking that she would soon be free of her troubles; but she was still far from release. One day as they were journeying on in the accustomed way, the feather and the drop of blood ceased falling, and when she looked up the Dove had vanished.

‘Man cannot help me,’ she thought. So she climbed up to the Sun and said to it, ‘You shine upon all the valleys and mountain peaks, have you not seen a White Dove flying by?’

‘No,’ said the Sun, ‘I have not seen one; but I will give you a little casket. Open it when you are in dire need.’

She thanked the Sun, and went on till night, when the Moon shone out. ‘You shine all night,’ she said, ‘over field and forest, have you seen a White Dove flying by?’

‘No,’ answered the Moon, ‘I have seen none; but here is an egg. Break it when you are in great need.’

She thanked the Moon, and went on till the Night Wind blew upon her. ‘You blow among all the trees and leaves, have not you seen a White Dove?’ she asked.

‘No,’ said the Night Wind, ‘I have not seen one; but I will ask the other three Winds, who may, perhaps, have seen it.’

The East Wind and the West Wind came, but they had seen no Dove. Only the South Wind said, ‘I have seen the White Dove. It has flown away to the Red Sea, where it has again become a Lion, since the seven years are over; and the Lion is ever fighting with a Dragon who is an enchanted Princess.’

Then the Night Wind said, ‘I will advise you. Go to the Red Sea, you will find tall reeds growing on the right bank; count them, and cut down the eleventh, strike the Dragon with it and then the Lion will be able to master it, and both will regain human shape. Next, look round, and you will see the winged Griffin, who dwells by the Red Sea, leap upon its back with your beloved, and it will carry you across the sea. Here is a nut. Drop it when you come to mid-ocean; it will open immediately and a tall nut-tree will grow up out of the water, on which the Griffin will settle. Could it not rest, it would not be strong enough to carry you across, and if you forget to drop the nut, it will let you fall into the sea.'

Then she journeyed on, and found everything as the Night Wind had said. She counted the reeds by the sea and cut off the eleventh, struck the Dragon with it, and the Lion mastered it; immediately both regained human form. But when the Princess who had been a Dragon was free from enchantment, she took the Prince in her arms, seated herself on the Griffin's back, and carried him off. And the poor wanderer, again forsaken, sat down and cried. At last she took courage and said to herself: 'Wherever the winds blow, I will go, and as long as cocks crow, I will search till I find him.'

So she went on a long, long way, till she came to the castle where the Prince and Princess were living. There she heard that there was to be a festival to celebrate their wedding. Then she said to herself, 'Heaven help me,' and she opened the casket which the Sun had given her; inside it was a dress, as brilliant as the Sun itself. She took it out, put it on, and went into the castle, where every one, including the Bride, looked at her with amazement. The dress pleased the Bride so much that she asked if it was to be bought.

'Not with gold or goods,' she answered; 'but with flesh and blood.'

The Bride asked what she meant, and she answered, 'Let me speak with the Bridegroom in his chamber to-night.'

The Bride refused. However, she wanted the dress so much that at last she consented; but the Chamberlain was ordered to give the Prince a sleeping draught.

At night, when the Prince was asleep, she was taken to his room. She sat down and said: 'For seven years I have followed you. I have been to the Sun, and the Moon, and the Four Winds to look for you. I have helped you against the Dragon, and will you now quite forget me?'

But the Prince slept so soundly that he thought it was only the rustling of the wind among the pine-trees. When morning came she was taken away, and had to give up the dress; and as it had not helped her she was very sad, and went out into a meadow and cried. As she was sitting there, she remembered the egg which the Moon had given her; she broke it open, and out came a hen and twelve chickens, all of gold, who ran about chirping, and then crept back under their mother's wings. A prettier sight could not be seen. She got up and drove them about the meadow, till the Bride saw them from the window. The chickens pleased her so much that she asked if they were for sale. 'Not for gold and goods, but for flesh and blood. Let me speak with the Bridegroom in his chamber once more.'

The Bride said 'Yes,' intending to deceive her as before; but when the Prince went to his room he asked the Chamberlain what all the murmuring and rustling in the night meant. Then the Chamberlain told him how he had been ordered to give him a sleeping draught because a poor girl had been concealed in his room, and that night he was to do the same again. 'Pour out the drink, and put it near my bed,' said the Prince. At night she was brought in again, and when she began to relate her sad fortunes he recognised the voice of his dear wife, sprang up, and said, 'Now I am really free for the first time. All has been as a dream, for the foreign Princess cast a spell over me so that I was forced to forget you; but heaven in a happy hour has taken away my blindness.'

Then they both stole out of the castle, for they feared the Princess's father, because he was a sorcerer. They mounted the Griffin, who bore them over the Red Sea, and when they got to mid-ocean, she dropped the nut. On the spot a fine nut-tree sprang up, on which the bird rested; then it took them home, where they found their child grown tall and beautiful, and they lived happily till the end.

The Fox and the Horse

A PEASANT once had a faithful Horse, but it had grown old and could no longer do its work. Its master grudged it food, and said: ‘I can’t use you any more, but I still feel kindly towards you, and if you show yourself strong enough to bring me a Lion I will keep you to the end of your days. But away with you now, out of my stable’; and he drove it out into the open country.

The poor Horse was very sad, and went into the forest to get a little shelter from the wind and weather. There he met a Fox, who said: ‘Why do you hang your head, and wander about in this solitary fashion?’

‘Alas!’ answered the Horse, ‘avarice and honesty cannot live together. My master has forgotten all the service I have done him for these many years, and because I can no longer plough he will no longer feed me, and he has driven me away.’

‘Without any consideration?’ asked the Fox.

‘Only the poor consolation of telling me that if I was strong enough to bring him a Lion he would keep me, but he knows well enough that the task is beyond me.’

The Fox said: ‘But I will help you. Just you lie down here, and stretch your legs out as if you were dead.’ The Horse did as he was told, and the Fox went to the Lion’s den, not far off, and said: ‘There is a dead Horse out there. Come along with me, and you will have a rare meal.’ The Lion went with him, and when they got up to the Horse, the Fox said: ‘You can’t eat it in comfort here. I’ll tell you what. I will tie it to you, and you can drag it away to your den, and enjoy it at your leisure.’

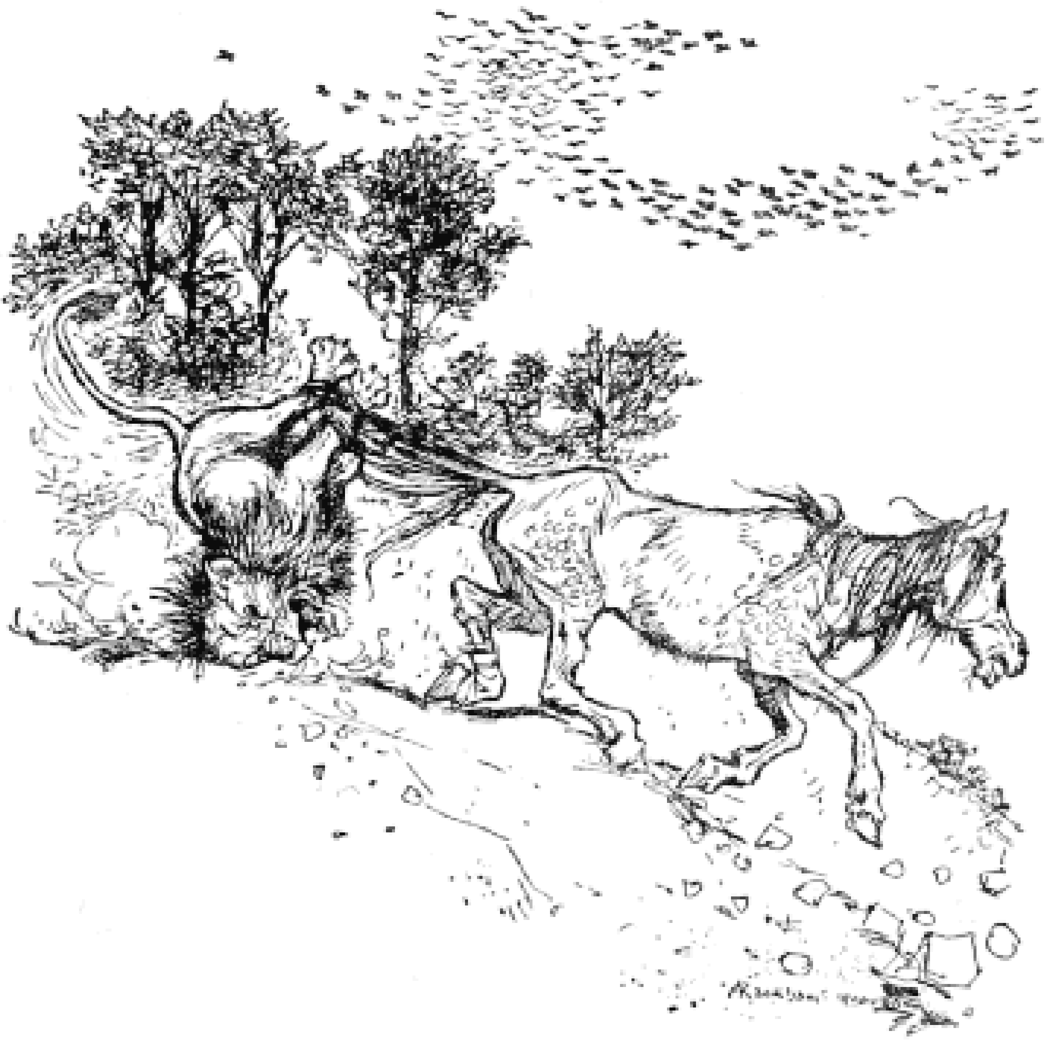
The plan pleased the Lion, and he stood quite still, close to the Horse, so that the Fox should fasten them together. But the Fox tied the Lion’s legs together with the Horse’s tail, and twisted and knotted it so that it would be quite impossible for it to come undone.

When he had finished his work he patted the Horse on the shoulder, and said: ‘Pull, old Grey! Pull!’

Then the Horse sprang up, and dragged the Lion away behind him. The Lion in his rage roared, so that all the birds in the forest were terrified, and flew away. But the Horse let him roar, and never stopped till he stood before his master’s door.

When the master saw him he was delighted, and said to him: ‘You shall stay with me, and have a good time as long as you live.’

And he fed him well till he died.



Then the Horse sprang up, and dragged the Lion away behind him.

The Blue Light

THERE was once a Soldier who had served his King well and faithfully for many years. But, on account of his many wounds, he could serve no longer.

The King said: ‘You can go home now. I have no further need for you. I can only pay those who serve me.’

The Soldier did not know what to do for a living, and he went sadly away.

He walked all day, till he reached a wood, where, in the distance, he saw a light. On approaching it, he found a house inhabited by a Witch.

‘Pray give me shelter for the night, and something to eat and drink,’ he said, ‘or I shall perish.’

‘Oh ho!’ she said. ‘Who gives anything to a runaway Soldier, I should like to know. But I will be merciful and take you in, if you will do something for me.’

‘What is it?’ asked the Soldier.

‘I want you to dig up my garden to-morrow.’

The Soldier agreed to this, and next day he worked as hard as he could, but he could not finish before evening.

‘I see,’ said the Witch, ‘that you can do no more this evening. I will keep you one night more, and to-morrow you shall split up some logs for firewood.’

The Soldier took the whole day over this task, and in the evening the Witch proposed that he should again stay another night.

‘You shall only have a very light task to-morrow,’ she said. ‘There is an old, dry well behind my house. My light, which burns blue, and never goes out, has fallen into it, and I want you to bring it back.’

Next day the Witch led him to the well, and let him down in a basket.

He found the light, and made a sign to be pulled up; but when he was near the top, the Witch put out her hand, and wanted to take it from him.

But he, seeing her evil designs, said: ‘No; I will not give you the light till I have both feet safe on dry land again.’

The Witch flew into a passion, let him fall back into the well again, and went away.

The poor Soldier fell on to the damp ground without taking any harm, and the Blue Light burnt as brightly as ever. But what was the good of that? He saw that he could not escape death.

He sat for some time feeling very sad, then happening to put his hand into his pocket, he found his pipe still half full.

‘This will be my last pleasure,’ he thought, as he lighted it at the Blue Light, and began to smoke.

When the cloud of smoke he made cleared off a little, a tiny black Man appeared before him, and asked: ‘What orders, Master?’

‘What do you mean?’ the Soldier asked in amazement.

‘I must do anything that you command,’ said the Little Man.

‘Oh, if that is so,’ said the Soldier, ‘get me out of this well first.’

The Little Man took him by the hand, and led him through an underground passage; but the Soldier did not forget to take the Blue Light with him.

On the way he showed the Soldier all the treasures the Witch had amassed there, and he took as much gold as he could carry.

When they reached the top he said to the Little Man: ‘Now go, bind the Witch and take her before the Judge.’

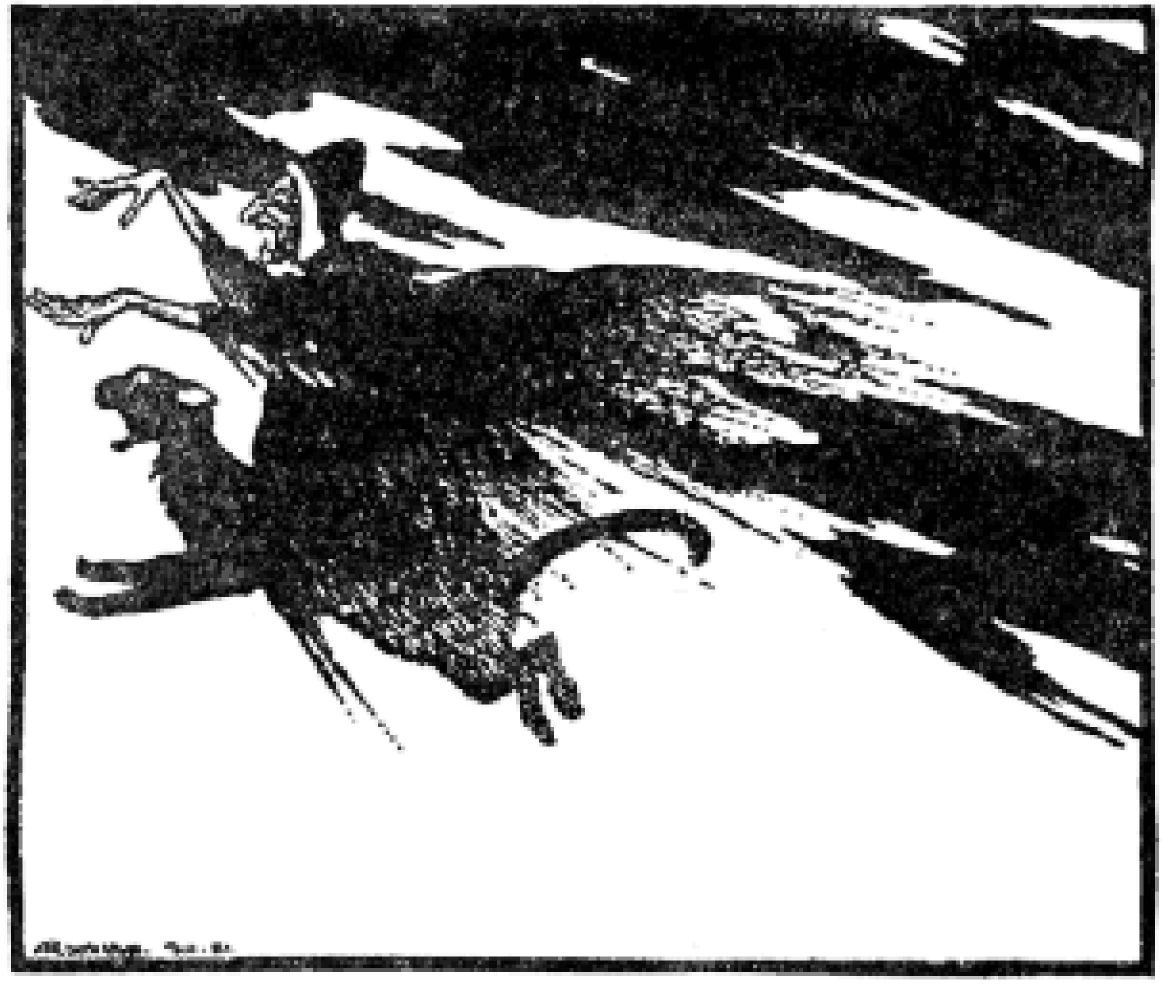
Before long she came by riding at a furious pace on a tom cat, and screaming at the top of her voice.

The Little Man soon after appeared, and said: ‘Everything is done as you commanded, and the Witch hangs on the gallows. What further orders have you, Master?’

‘Nothing at this moment,’ answered the Soldier. ‘You can go home; only be at hand when I call.’

‘You only have to light your pipe at the Blue Light, and I will be there,’ said the Little Man, and then he vanished.

The Soldier went back to the town that he had left, and ordered some new clothes, then he went to the best inn and told the landlord to give him the best rooms.



Before long the Witch came by riding at a furious pace on a tom cat.

When he had taken possession, he summoned the little black Man, and said: ‘I served my King faithfully, but he sent me away to die of hunger. Now I will have my revenge.’

‘What do you wish me to do?’ asked the Little Man.

‘Late at night, when the Princess is asleep in her bed, bring her, sleeping, to me, and I will make her do menial service for me.’

‘It is an easy enough thing for me to do,’ said the Little Man. ‘But it will be a bad business for you if it comes out.’

As the clock struck twelve, the door sprang open, and the Little Man bore the Maiden in.

‘Ah ha! There you are!’ cried the Soldier. ‘Set about your work at once. Fetch the broom and sweep the floor.’

When she had finished, he sat down and ordered her to take his boots off. Then he threw them at her, and made her pick them up and clean them. She did everything he ordered without resistance, silently, and with half-shut eyes.

At the first cock-crow, the Little Man carried her away to the royal palace, and put her back in bed.

In the morning when the Princess got up, she went to her Father, and told him that she had had an extraordinary dream.

‘I was carried through the streets at lightning speed, and taken to the room of a Soldier, whom I had to serve as a maid, and do all kinds of menial work. I had to sweep the room, and clean his boots. Of course, it was only a dream, and yet I am as tired this morning as if I had done it all.’

‘The dream could not have been true,’ said the King. ‘But I will give you a piece of advice. Fill your pocket with peas, and cut a little hole in it, then if you are carried away again, they will drop out and leave a track on the road.’

When the King said this, the Little Man was standing by, invisible, and heard it all.

At night, when he again carried off the Princess, the peas certainly fell out of her pocket, but they were useless to trace her by, for the cunning Little Man had scattered peas all over the streets. Again the Princess had to perform her menial duties till cock-crow.

The next morning the King sent out people who were to find the track; but they were unable to do so, because in every street the poor children were picking up peas, and saying: ‘It must have rained peas in the night.’

‘We must devise a better plan,’ said the King. ‘Keep your shoes on when you go to bed, and before you come away from the place where you are taken, hide one of them. I shall be sure to find it.’

The Little Man heard this plan also; and when the Soldier told him to bring the Princess again, he advised him to put it off. He said he knew no further means against their craftiness; and if the shoe were found, it would be very dangerous for his master.

‘Do what I tell you,’ answered the Soldier; and for the third time the Princess was brought and made to work like a servant. But before leaving she hid one of her shoes under the bed.

Next morning the King ordered the whole town to be searched for his Daughter’s shoe, and it was soon found in the Soldier’s room. He himself, at the request of the Little Man, had gone outside the gates; but before long he was seized and thrown into prison.

In his flight he had forgotten his greatest treasures, the Blue Light and his gold. He had but one ducat in his pocket.

As he stood at his window in the prison, loaded with chains, he saw one of his comrades going by. He tapped on the pane, and said:

‘Be so good as to fetch me the little bundle I left behind at the inn, and I will give you a ducat.’

His comrade hurried off and brought him the bundle. As soon as the Soldier was alone, he lighted his pipe and summoned the Little Man.

‘Don’t be afraid,’ he said to his Master. ‘Go where they take you, and let what will happen, only take the Blue Light with you.’

Next day a trial was held, and although the Soldier had done no harm, the Judge sentenced him to death.

When he was led out to execution he asked a last favour of the King.

‘What is your wish?’ asked the King.

‘That I may smoke a last pipe.’

‘You may smoke three,’ answered the King. ‘But don’t imagine that I will therefore grant you your life.’

Then the Soldier drew out his pipe, and lighted it at the Blue Light.

As soon as a few rings of smoke arose, the Little Man appeared with a little cudgel in his hand, and said: ‘What is my Master’s command?’

‘Strike the false Judge and his minions to the ground, and do not spare the King either for all his cruelty to me.’

Then the Little Man flew about like lightning, zig-zag, hither and thither, and whomever he touched with his cudgel fell to the ground, and dared not move.

The King was now seized with alarm, and, begging on his knees that his life might be spared, he rendered up his kingdom and gave his Daughter to the Soldier to be his wife.

The Goosegirl

THERE was once an old Queen whose husband had been dead for many years, and she had a very beautiful daughter. When she grew up she was betrothed to a Prince in a distant country. When the time came for the maiden to be sent into this distant country to be married, the old Queen packed up quantities of clothes and jewels, gold and silver, cups and ornaments, and, in fact, everything suitable to a royal outfit, for she loved her daughter very dearly.

She also sent a Waiting-woman to travel with her, and to put her hand into that of the bridegroom. They each had a horse. The Princess's horse was called Falada, and it could speak.

When the hour of departure came, the old Queen went to her bedroom, and with a sharp little knife cut her finger and made it bleed. Then she held a piece of white cambric under it, and let three drops of blood fall on to it. This cambric she gave to her daughter, and said, 'Dear child, take good care of this; it will stand you in good stead on the journey.' They then bade each other a sorrowful farewell. The Princess hid the piece of cambric in her bosom, mounted her horse, and set out to her bridegroom's country.

When they had ridden for a time the Princess became very thirsty, and said to the Waiting-woman, 'Get down and fetch me some water in my cup from the stream. I must have something to drink.'

'If you are thirsty,' said the Waiting-woman, 'dismount yourself, lie down by the water and drink. I don't choose to be your servant.'

So, in her great thirst, the Princess dismounted and stooped down to the stream and drank, as she might not have her golden cup. The poor Princess said, 'Alas!' and the drops of blood answered, 'If your mother knew this, it would break her heart.'

The royal bride was humble, so she said nothing, but mounted her horse again. Then they rode several miles further; but the day was warm, the sun was scorching, and the Princess was soon thirsty again.

When they reached a river she called out again to her Waiting-woman, 'Get down, and give me some water in my golden cup!'

She had forgotten all about the rude words which had been said to her. But the Waiting-woman answered more haughtily than ever, 'If you want to drink, get the water for yourself. I won't be your servant.'

Being very thirsty, the Princess dismounted, and knelt by the flowing water. She cried, and said, 'Ah me!' and the drops of blood answered, 'If your mother knew this it would break her heart.'

While she stooped over the water to drink, the piece of cambric with the drops of blood on it fell out of her bosom, and floated away on the stream; but she never noticed this in her great fear. The Waiting-woman, however, had seen it, and rejoiced at getting more power over the bride, who, by losing the drops of blood, had become weak and powerless.

Now, when she was about to mount her horse Falada again, the Waiting-woman said, ‘By rights, Falada belongs to me; this jade will do for you!’

The poor little Princess was obliged to give way. Then the Waiting-woman, in a harsh voice, ordered her to take off her royal robes, and to put on her own mean garments. Finally, she forced her to swear before heaven that she would not tell a creature at the Court what had taken place. Had she not taken the oath she would have been killed on the spot. But Falada saw all this and marked it.

The Waiting-woman then mounted Falada and put the real bride on her poor jade, and they continued their journey.

There was great rejoicing when they arrived at the castle. The Prince hurried towards them, and lifted the Waiting-woman from her horse, thinking she was his bride. She was led upstairs, but the real Princess had to stay below.

The old King looked out of the window and saw the delicate, pretty little creature standing in the courtyard; so he went to the bridal apartments and asked the bride about her companion, who was left standing in the courtyard, and wished to know who she was.

‘I picked her up on the way, and brought her with me for company. Give the girl something to do to keep her from idling.’

But the old King had no work for her, and could not think of anything. At last he said, ‘I have a little lad who looks after the geese; she may help him.’

The boy was called little Conrad, and the real bride was sent with him to look after the geese.

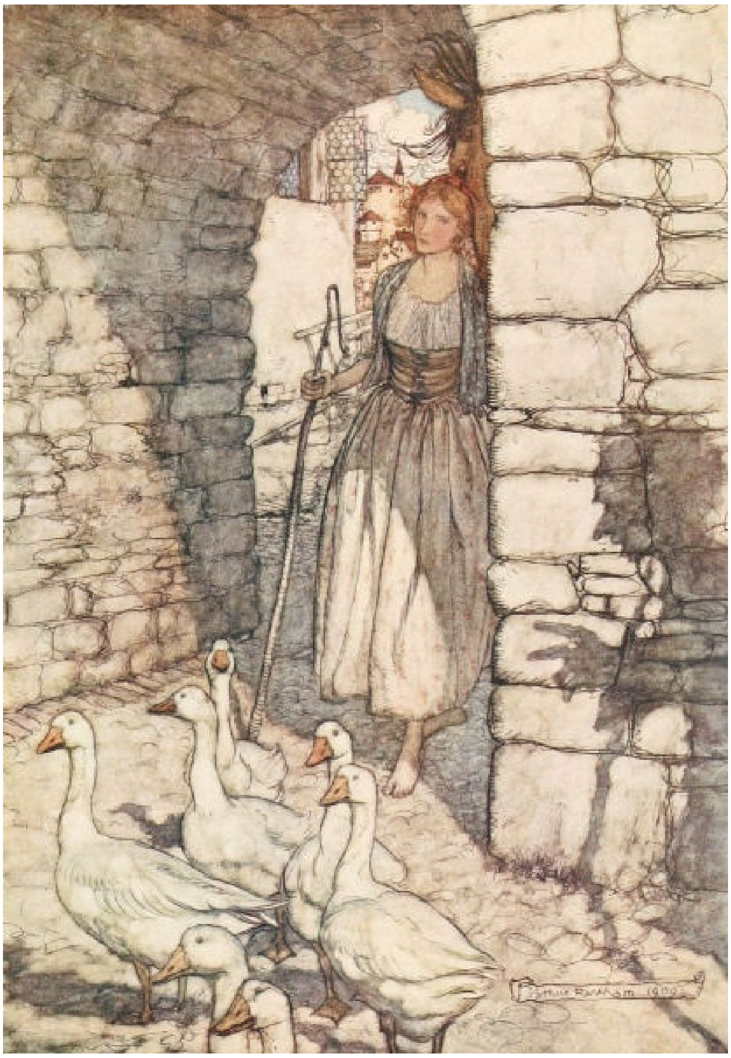
Soon after, the false bride said to the Prince, ‘Dear husband, I pray you do me a favour.’

He answered, ‘That will I gladly.’

‘Well, then, let the knacker be called to cut off the head of the horse I rode; it angered me on the way.’

Really, she was afraid that the horse would speak, and tell of her treatment of the Princess. So it was settled, and the faithful Falada had to die.

When this came to the ear of the real Princess, she promised the knacker a piece of gold if he would do her a slight service. There was a great dark gateway to the town, through which she had to pass every morning and evening. ‘Would he nail up Falada’s head in this gateway, so that she might see him as she passed?’



The knacker promised to do as she wished, and when the horse's head was cut off, he hung it up in the dark gateway. In the early morning, when she and Conrad went through the gateway, she said in passing —

'Alas! dear Falada, there thou hangest.'

And the Head answered —

'Alas! Queen's daughter, there thou gangest. If thy mother knew thy fate, Her heart would break with grief so great.'

Then they passed on out of the town, right into the fields, with the geese. When they reached the meadow, the Princess sat down on the grass and let down her hair. It shone like pure gold, and when little Conrad saw it, he was so delighted that he wanted to pluck some out; but she said —

'Blow, blow, little breeze, And Conrad's hat seize. Let him join in the chase While away it is whirled, Till my tresses are curled And I rest in my place.'

Then a strong wind sprang up, which blew away Conrad's hat right over the fields, and he had to run after it. When he came back, she had finished combing her hair, and it was all put up again; so he could not get a single hair. This made him very sulky, and he would not say another word to her. And they tended the geese till evening, when they went home.

Next morning, when they passed under the gateway, the Princess said —

‘Alas! dear Falada, there thou hangest.’

Falada answered: —

‘Alas! Queen’s daughter, there thou gangest. If thy mother knew thy fate, Her heart would break with grief so great.’

Again, when they reached the meadows, the Princess undid her hair and began combing it. Conrad ran to pluck some out; but she said quickly —

‘Blow, blow, little breeze, And Conrad’s hat seize. Let him join in the chase While away it is whirled, Till my tresses are curled And I rest in my place.’

The wind sprang up and blew Conrad’s hat far away over the fields, and he had to run after it. When he came back the hair was all put up again, and he could not pull a single hair out. And they tended the geese till the evening. When they got home Conrad went to the old King, and said, ‘I won’t tend the geese with that maiden again.’

‘Why not?’ asked the King.

‘Oh, she vexes me every day.’

The old King then ordered him to say what she did to vex him.

Conrad said, ‘In the morning, when we pass under the dark gateway with the geese, she talks to a horse’s head which is hung up on the wall. She says —

‘Alas! Falada, there thou hangest,’

and the Head answers —

‘Alas! Queen’s daughter, there thou gangest. If thy mother knew thy fate, Her heart would break with grief so great.’

Then Conrad went on to tell the King all that happened in the meadow, and how he had to run after his hat in the wind.

The old King ordered Conrad to go out next day as usual. Then he placed himself behind the dark gateway, and heard the Princess speaking to Falada’s head. He also followed her into the field, and hid himself behind a bush, and with his own eyes he saw the Goosegirl and the lad come driving the geese into the field. Then, after a time, he saw the girl let down her hair, which glittered in the sun. Directly after this, she said —

‘Blow, blow, little breeze, And Conrad’s hat seize. Let him join in the chase While away it is whirled, Till my tresses are curled And I rest in my place.’

Then came a puff of wind, which carried off Conrad’s hat and he had to run after it. While he was away, the maiden combed and did up her hair; and all this the old King observed. Thereupon he went away unnoticed; and in the evening, when the Goosegirl came home, he called her aside and asked why she did all these things.

‘That I may not tell you, nor may I tell any human creature; for I have sworn it under the open sky, because if I had not done so I should have lost my life.’

He pressed her sorely, and gave her no peace, but he could get nothing out of her. Then he said, ‘If you won’t tell me, then tell your sorrows to the iron stove there’; and he went away.

She crept up to the stove, and, beginning to weep and lament, unburdened her heart to it, and said: ‘Here I am, forsaken by all the world, and yet I am a Princess. A false Waiting-woman brought me to such a pass that I had to take off my royal robes. Then she took my place with my bridegroom, while I have to do mean service as a Goosegirl. If my mother knew it she would break her heart.’

The old King stood outside by the pipes of the stove, and heard all that she said. Then he came back, and told her to go away from the stove. He caused royal robes to be put upon her, and her beauty was a marvel. The old King called his son, and told him that he had a false bride — she was only a Waiting-woman; but the true bride was here, the so-called Goosegirl.

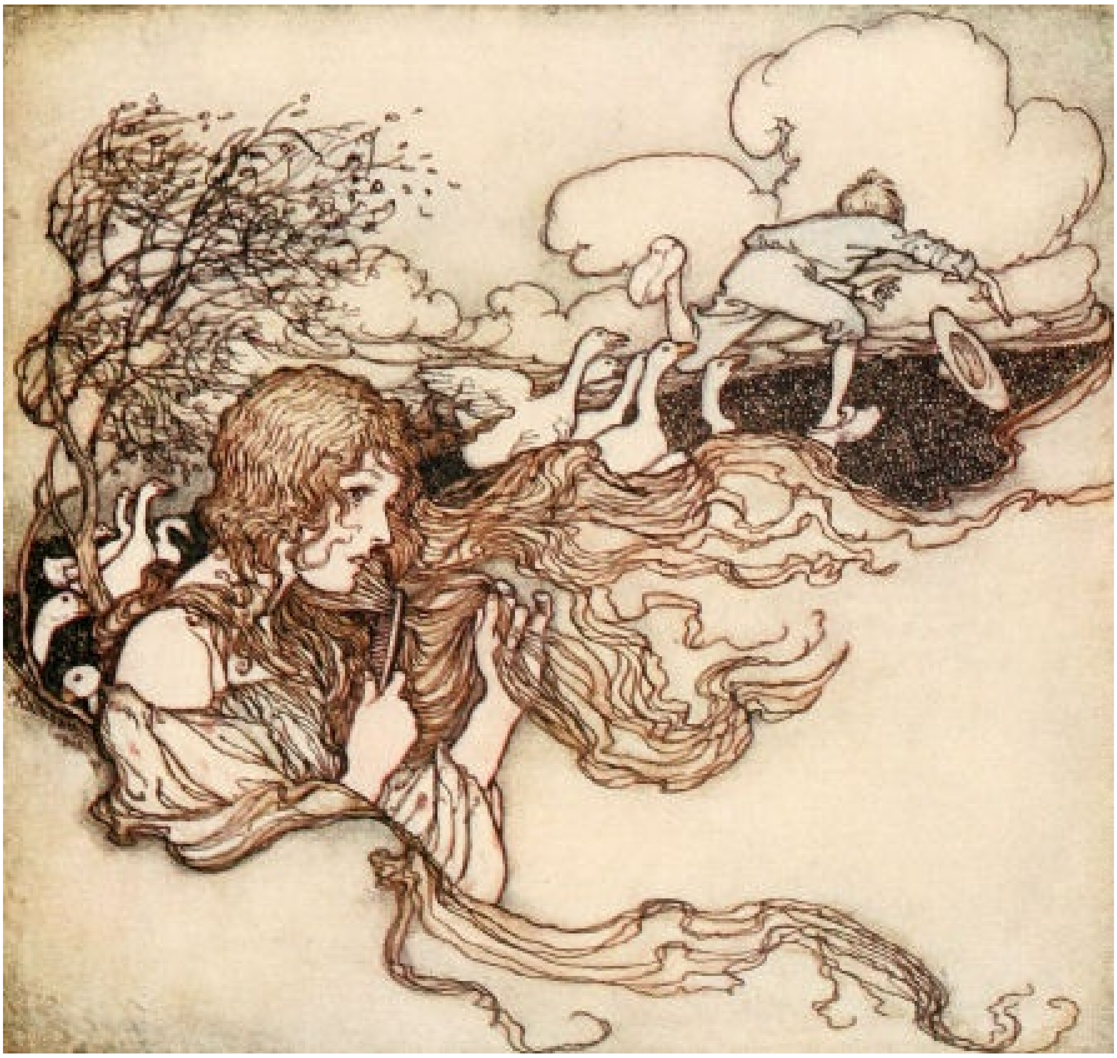
The young Prince was charmed with her youth and beauty. A great banquet was prepared, to which all the courtiers and good friends were bidden. The bridegroom sat at the head of the table, with the Princess on one side and the Waiting-woman at the other; but she was dazzled, and did not recognise the Princess in her brilliant apparel.

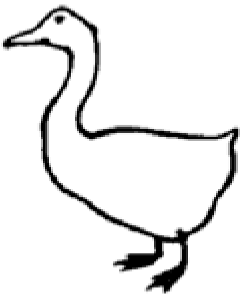
When they had eaten and drunk and were all very merry, the old King put a riddle to the Waiting-woman. ‘What does a person deserve who deceives his master?’ telling the whole story, and ending by asking, ‘What doom does he deserve?’

The false bride answered, ‘No better than this. He must be put stark naked into a barrel stuck with nails, and be dragged along by two white horses from street to street till he is dead.’

‘That is your own doom,’ said the King, ‘and the judgment shall be carried out.’

When the sentence was fulfilled, the young Prince married his true bride, and they ruled their kingdom together in peace and happiness.





The Golden Goose

THERE was once a man who had three sons. The youngest of them was called Simpleton; he was scorned and despised by the others, and kept in the background.

The eldest son was going into the forest to cut wood, and before he started, his mother gave him a nice sweet cake and a bottle of wine to take with him, so that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst. In the wood he met a little, old, grey Man, who bade him good-day, and said, ‘Give me a bit of the cake in your pocket, and let me have a drop of your wine. I am so hungry and thirsty.’

But the clever son said: ‘If I give you my cake and wine, I shan’t have enough for myself. Be off with you.’

He left the little Man standing there, and went on his way. But he had not been long at work, cutting down a tree, before he made a false stroke, and dug the axe into his own arm, and he was obliged to go home to have it bound up.

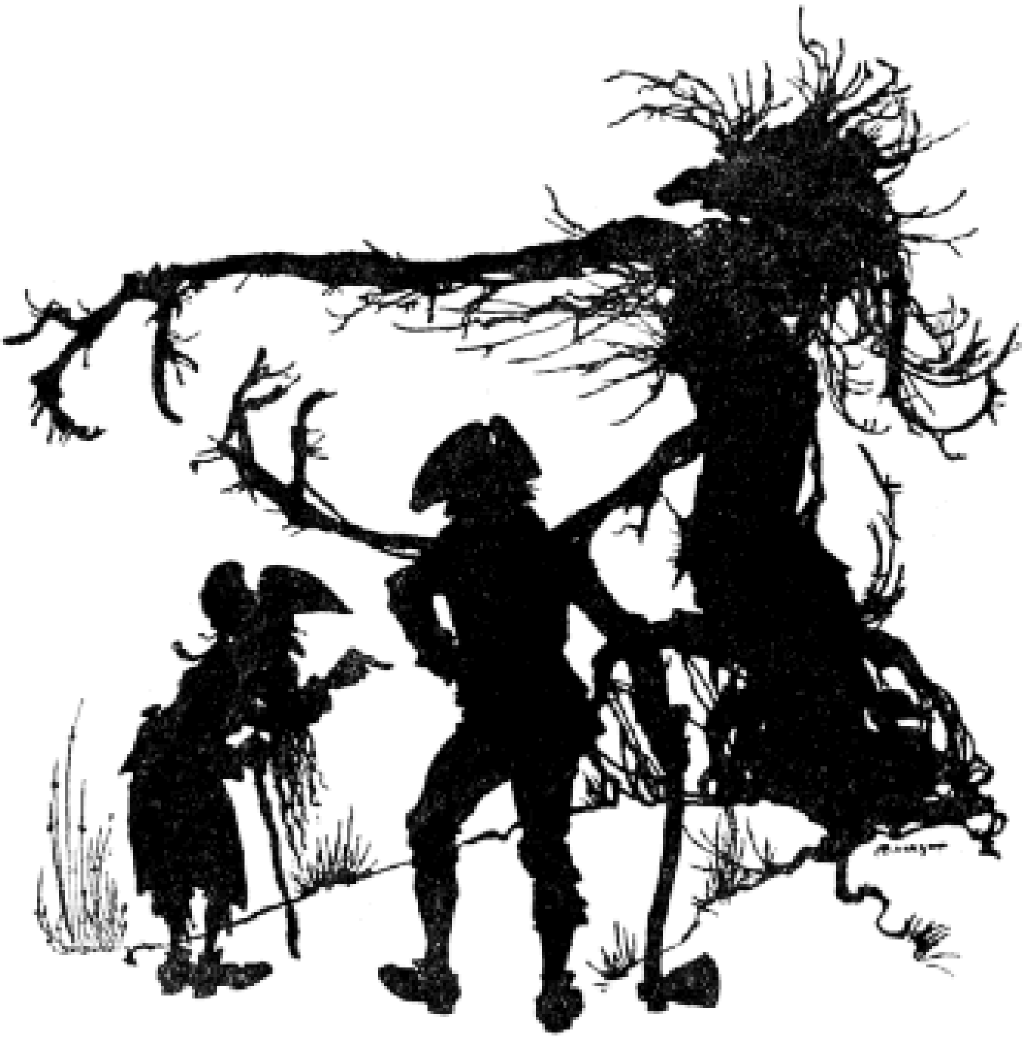
Now, this was no accident; it was brought about by the little grey Man.

The second son now had to go into the forest to cut wood, and, like the eldest, his mother gave him a sweet cake and a bottle of wine. In the same way the little grey Man met him, and asked for a piece of his cake and a drop of his wine. But the second son made the same sensible answer, ‘If I give you any, I shall have the less for myself. Be off out of my way,’ and he went on.

His punishment, however, was not long delayed. After a few blows at the tree, he hit his own leg, and had to be carried home.

Then Simpleton said, ‘Let me go to cut the wood, father.’

But his father said, ‘Your brothers have only come to harm by it; you had better leave it alone. You know nothing about it.’ But Simpleton begged so hard to be allowed to go that at last his father said, ‘Well, off you go then. You will be wiser when you have hurt yourself.’

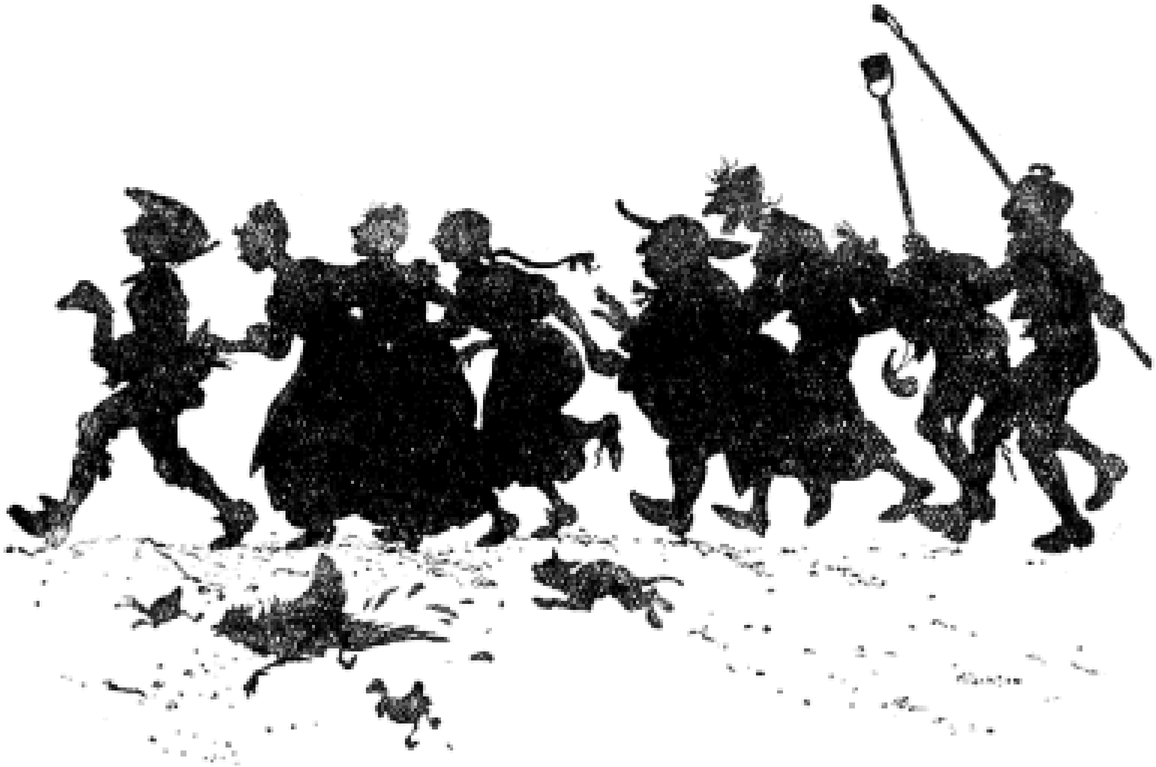


There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something at the roots.

His mother gave him a cake which was only mixed with water and baked in the ashes, and a bottle of sour beer. When he reached the forest, like the others, he met the little grey Man, who greeted him, and said, ‘Give me a bit of your cake and a drop of your wine. I am so hungry and thirsty.’

Simpleton answered, ‘I only have a cake baked in the ashes, and some sour beer; but, if you like such fare, we will sit down and eat it together.’

So they sat down; but when Simpleton pulled out his cake it was a sweet, nice cake, and his sour beer was turned into good wine. So they ate and drank, and the little Man said, ‘As you have such a good heart, and are willing to share your goods, I will give you good luck. There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something at the roots.’



So now there were seven people running behind Simpleton and his Goose.

So saying he disappeared.

Simpleton cut down the tree, and when it fell, lo, and behold! a Goose was sitting among the roots, and its feathers were of pure gold. He picked it up, and taking it with him, went to an inn, where he meant to stay the night. The landlord had three daughters, who saw the Goose, and were very curious as to what kind of bird it could be, and wanted to get one of its golden feathers.

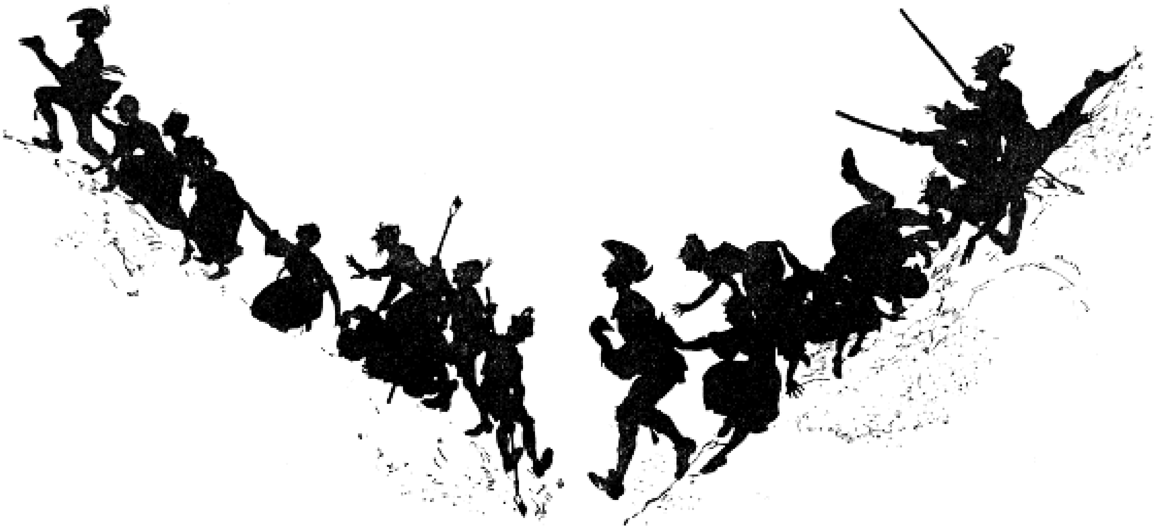
The eldest thought, ‘There will soon be some opportunity for me to pull out one of the feathers,’ and when Simpleton went outside, she took hold of its wing to pluck out a feather; but her hand stuck fast, and she could not get away.

Soon after, the second sister came up, meaning also to pluck out one of the golden feathers; but she had hardly touched her sister when she found herself held fast.

Lastly, the third one came, with the same intention, but the others screamed out, ‘Keep away! For goodness sake, keep away!’

But she, not knowing why she was to keep away, thought, ‘Why should I not be there, if they are there?’

So she ran up, but as soon as she touched her sisters she had to stay hanging on to them, and they all had to pass the night like this.



And so they followed up hill and down dale after Simpleton and his Goose.

In the morning, Simpleton took up the Goose under his arm, without noticing the three girls hanging on behind. They had to keep running behind, dodging his legs right and left.

In the middle of the fields they met the Parson, who, when he saw the procession, cried out: ‘For shame, you bold girls! Why do you run after the lad like that? Do you call that proper behaviour?’

Then he took hold of the hand of the youngest girl to pull her away; but no sooner had he touched her than he felt himself held fast, and he, too, had to run behind.

Soon after the Sexton came up, and, seeing his master the Parson treading on the heels of the three girls, cried out in amazement, ‘Hullo, your Reverence! Whither away so fast? Don’t forget that we have a christening!’

So saying, he plucked the Parson by the sleeve, and soon found that he could not get away.

As this party of five, one behind the other, tramped on, two Peasants came along the road, carrying their hoes. The Parson called them, and asked them to set the Sexton and himself free. But as soon as ever they touched the Sexton they were held fast, so now there were seven people running behind Simpleton and his Goose.

By-and-by they reached a town, where a King ruled whose only daughter was so solemn that nothing and nobody could make her laugh. So the King had proclaimed that whoever could make her laugh should marry her.

When Simpleton heard this he took his Goose, with all his following, before her, and when she saw these seven people running, one behind another, she burst into fits of laughter, and seemed as if she could never stop.

Thereupon Simpleton asked her in marriage. But the King did not like him for a son-in-law, and he made all sorts of conditions. First, he said Simpleton must bring him a man who could drink up a cellar full of wine.

Then Simpleton at once thought of the little grey Man who might be able to help him, and he went out to the forest to look for him. On the very spot where the tree that he had cut down had stood, he saw a man sitting with a very sad face. Simpleton asked him what was the matter, and he answered —

‘I am so thirsty, and I can’t quench my thirst. I hate cold water, and I have already emptied a cask of wine; but what is a drop like that on a burning stone?’

‘Well, there I can help you,’ said Simpleton. ‘Come with me, and you shall soon have enough to drink and to spare.’

He led him to the King’s cellar, and the Man set to upon the great casks, and he drank and drank till his sides ached, and by the end of the day the cellar was empty.

Then again Simpleton demanded his bride. But the King was annoyed that a wretched fellow called ‘Simpleton’ should have his daughter, and he made new conditions. He was now to find a man who could eat up a mountain of bread.

Simpleton did not reflect long, but went straight to the forest, and there in the self-same place sat a man tightening a strap round his body, and making a very miserable face. He said: ‘I have eaten up a whole ovenful of rolls, but what is the good of that when any one is as hungry as I am. I am never satisfied. I have to tighten my belt every day if I am not to die of hunger.’

Simpleton was delighted, and said: ‘Get up and come with me. You shall have enough to eat.’

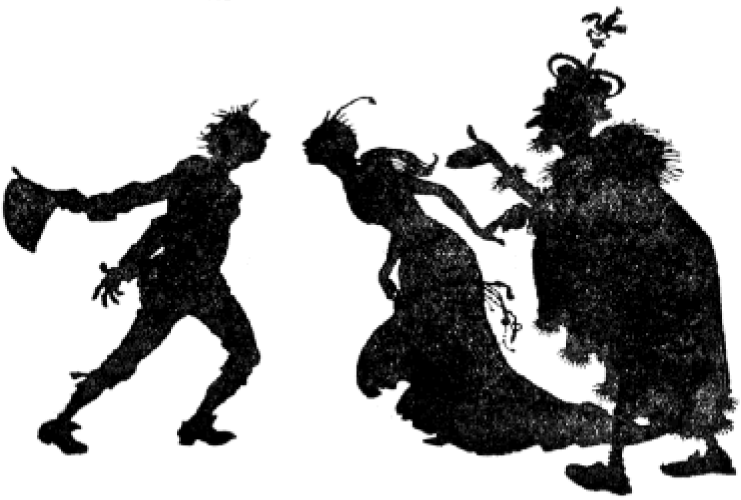
And he took him to the Court, where the King had caused all the flour in the kingdom to be brought together, and a huge mountain of bread to be baked. The Man from the forest sat down before it and began to eat, and at the end of the day the whole mountain had disappeared.

Now, for the third time, Simpleton asked for his bride. But again the King tried to find an excuse, and demanded a ship which could sail on land as well as at sea.

‘As soon as you sail up in it, you shall have my daughter,’ he said.

Simpleton went straight to the forest, and there sat the little grey Man to whom he had given his cake. The little Man said: ‘I have eaten and drunk for you, and now I will give you the ship, too. I do it all because you were merciful to me.’

Then he gave him the ship which could sail on land as well as at sea, and when the King saw it he could no longer withhold his daughter. The marriage was celebrated, and, at the King’s death, the Simpleton inherited the kingdom, and lived long and happily with his wife.



The King could no longer withhold his daughter.

The Water of Life

THERE was once a King who was so ill that it was thought impossible his life could be saved. He had three sons, and they were all in great distress on his account, and they went into the castle gardens and wept at the thought that he must die. An old man came up to them and asked the cause of their grief. They told him that their father was dying, and nothing could save him. The old man said, ‘There is only one remedy which I know; it is the Water of Life. If he drinks of it, he will recover, but it is very difficult to find.’

The eldest son said, ‘I will soon find it’; and he went to the sick man to ask permission to go in search of the Water of Life, as that was the only thing to cure him.

‘No,’ said the King. ‘The danger is too great. I would rather die.’

But he persisted so long that at last the King gave his permission.

The Prince thought, ‘If I bring this water I shall be the favourite, and I shall inherit the kingdom.’

So he set off, and when he had ridden some distance he came upon a Dwarf standing in the road, who cried, ‘Whither away so fast?’

‘Stupid little fellow,’ said the Prince, proudly; ‘what business is it of yours?’ and rode on.

The little man was very angry, and made an evil vow.

Soon after, the Prince came to a gorge in the mountains, and the further he rode the narrower it became, till he could go no further. His horse could neither go forward nor turn round for him to dismount; so there he sat, jammed in.

The sick King waited a long time for him, but he never came back. Then the second son said, ‘Father, let me go and find the Water of Life,’ thinking, ‘if my brother is dead I shall have the kingdom.’

The King at first refused to let him go, but at last he gave his consent. So the Prince started on the same road as his brother, and met the same Dwarf, who stopped him and asked where he was going in such a hurry.

‘Little Snippet, what does it matter to you?’ he said, and rode away without looking back.

But the Dwarf cast a spell over him, and he, too, got into a narrow gorge like his brother, where he could neither go backwards nor forwards.

This is what happens to the haughty.

As the second son also stayed away, the youngest one offered to go and fetch the Water of Life, and at last the King was obliged to let him go.

When he met the Dwarf, and he asked him where he was hurrying to, he stopped and said, ‘I am searching for the Water of Life, because my father is dying.’

‘Do you know where it is to be found?’

‘No,’ said the Prince.

‘As you have spoken pleasantly to me, and not been haughty like your false brothers, I will help you and tell you how to find the Water of Life. It flows from a fountain in the courtyard of an enchanted castle; but you will never get in unless I give you an iron rod and two loaves of bread. With the rod strike three times on the iron gate of the castle, and it will spring open. Inside you will find two Lions with wide-open jaws, but if you throw a loaf to each they will be quiet. Then you must make haste to fetch the Water of Life before it strikes twelve, or the gates of the castle will close and you will be shut in.'

The Prince thanked him, took the rod and the loaves, and set off. When he reached the castle all was just as the Dwarf had said. At the third knock the gate flew open, and when he had pacified the Lions with the loaves, he walked into the castle. In the great hall he found several enchanted Princes, and he took the rings from their fingers. He also took a sword and a loaf, which were lying by them. On passing into the next room he found a beautiful Maiden, who rejoiced at his coming. She embraced him, and said that he had saved her, and should have the whole of her kingdom; and if he would come back in a year she would marry him. She also told him where to find the fountain with the enchanted water; but, she said, he must make haste to get out of the castle before the clock struck twelve.

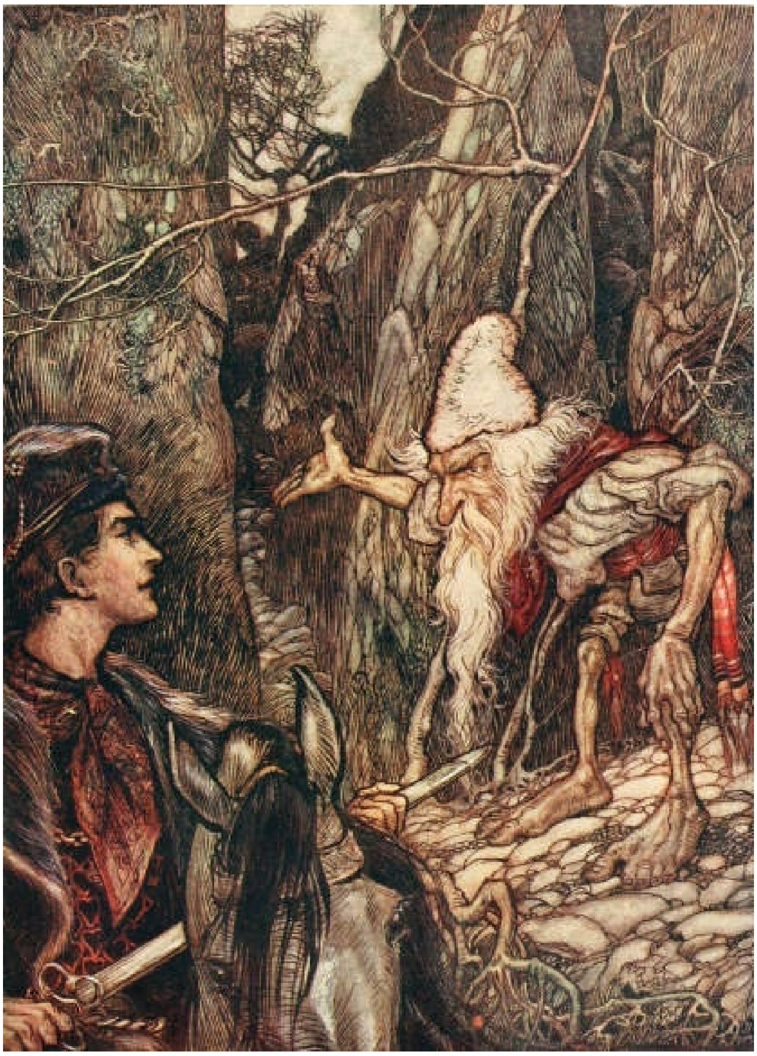
Then he went on, and came to a room where there was a beautiful bed freshly made, and as he was very tired he thought he would take a little rest; so he lay down and fell asleep. When he woke it was striking a quarter to twelve. He sprang up in a fright, and ran to the fountain, and took some of the water in a cup which was lying near, and then hurried away. The clock struck just as he reached the iron gate, and it banged so quickly that it took off a bit of his heel.

He was rejoiced at having got some of the Water of Life, and hastened on his homeward journey. He again passed the Dwarf, who said, when he saw the sword and the loaf, 'Those things will be of much service to you. You will be able to strike down whole armies with the sword, and the loaf will never come to an end.'

The Prince did not want to go home without his brothers, and he said, 'Good Dwarf, can you not tell me where my brothers are? They went in search of the Water of Life before I did, but they never came back.'

'They are both stuck fast in a narrow mountain gorge. I cast a spell over them because of their pride.'

Then the Prince begged so hard that they might be released that at last the Dwarf yielded; but he warned him against them, and said, 'Beware of them; they have bad hearts.'



He was delighted to see his brothers when they came back, and told them all that had happened to him; how he had found the Water of Life, and brought a goblet full with him. How he had released a beautiful Princess, who would wait a year for him and then marry him, and he would become a great Prince.

Then they rode away together, and came to a land where famine and war were raging. The King thought he would be utterly ruined, so great was the destitution.

The Prince went to him and gave him the loaf, and with it he fed and satisfied his whole kingdom. The Prince also gave him his sword, and he smote the whole army of his enemies with it, and then he was able to live in peace and quiet. Then the Prince took back his sword and his loaf, and the three brothers rode on. But they had to pass through two more countries where war and famine were raging, and each time the Prince gave his sword and his loaf to the King, and in this way he saved three kingdoms.

After that they took a ship and crossed the sea. During the passage the two elder brothers said to each other, ‘Our youngest brother found the Water of Life, and we did not, so our father will give him the kingdom which we ought to have, and he will take away our fortune from us.’

This thought made them very vindictive, and they made up their minds to get rid of him. They waited till he was asleep, and then they emptied the Water of Life from his goblet and took it themselves, and filled up his cup with salt sea water.

As soon as they got home the youngest Prince took his goblet to the King, so that he might drink of the water which was to make him well; but after drinking only a few drops of the sea water he became more ill than ever. As he was bewailing himself, his two elder sons came to him and accused the youngest of trying to poison him, and said that they had the real Water of Life, and gave him some. No sooner had he drunk it than he felt better, and he soon became as strong and well as he had been in his youth.

Then the two went to their youngest brother, and mocked him, saying, 'It was you who found the Water of Life; you had all the trouble, while we have the reward. You should have been wiser, and kept your eyes open; we stole it from you while you were asleep on the ship. When the end of the year comes, one of us will go and bring away the beautiful Princess. But don't dare to betray us. Our father will certainly not believe you, and if you say a single word you will lose your life; your only chance is to keep silence.'

The old King was very angry with his youngest son, thinking that he had tried to take his life. So he had the Court assembled to give judgment upon him, and it was decided that he must be secretly got out of the way.

One day when the Prince was going out hunting, thinking no evil, the King's Huntsman was ordered to go with him. Seeing the Huntsman look sad, the Prince said to him, 'My good Huntsman, what is the matter with you?'

The Huntsman answered, 'I can't bear to tell you, and yet I must.'

The Prince said, 'Say it out; whatever it is I will forgive you.'

'Alas!' said the Huntsman, 'I am to shoot you dead; it is the King's command.'

The Prince was horror-stricken, and said, 'Dear Huntsman, do not kill me, give me my life. Let me have your dress, and you shall have my royal robes.'

The Huntsman said, 'I will gladly do so; I could never have shot you.' So they changed clothes, and the Huntsman went home, but the Prince wandered away into the forest.

After a time three wagon loads of gold and precious stones came to the King for his youngest son. They were sent by the Kings who had been saved by the Prince's sword and his miraculous loaf, and who now wished to show their gratitude.

Then the old King thought, 'What if my son really was innocent?' and said to his people, 'If only he were still alive! How sorry I am that I ordered him to be killed.'

'He is still alive,' said the Huntsman. 'I could not find it in my heart to carry out your commands,' and he told the King what had taken place.

A load fell from the King's heart on hearing the good news, and he sent out a proclamation to all parts of his kingdom that his son was to come home, where he would be received with great favour.

In the meantime, the Princess had caused a road to be made of pure shining gold leading to her castle, and told her people that whoever came riding straight along it would be the true bridegroom, and they were to admit him. But any one who came either on one side of the road or the other would not be the right one, and he was not to be let in.

When the year had almost passed, the eldest Prince thought that he would hurry to the Princess, and by giving himself out as her deliverer would gain a wife and a kingdom as well. So he rode away, and when he saw the beautiful golden road he thought it would be a thousand pities to ride upon it; so he turned aside, and rode to the right of it. But when he reached the gate the people told him that he was not the true bridegroom, and he had to go away.

Soon after the second Prince came, and when he saw the golden road he thought it would be a thousand pities for his horse to tread upon it; so he turned aside, and rode up on the left of it. But when he reached the gate he was also told that he was not the true bridegroom, and, like his brother, was turned away.

When the year had quite come to an end, the third Prince came out of the wood to ride to his beloved, and through her to forget all his past sorrows. So on he went, thinking only of her, and wishing to be with her; and he never even saw the golden road. His horse cantered right along the middle of it, and when he reached the gate it was flung open and the Princess received him joyfully, and called him her Deliverer, and the Lord of her Kingdom. Their marriage was celebrated without delay, and with much rejoicing. When it was over, she told him that his father had called him back and forgiven him. So he went to him and told him everything; how his brothers had deceived him, and how they had forced him to keep silence. The old King wanted to punish them, but they had taken a ship and sailed away over the sea, and they never came back as long as they lived.

Clever Grethel

THERE was once a cook called Grethel, who wore shoes with red rosettes; and when she went out in them, she turned and twisted about gaily, and thought, ‘How fine I am!’

After her walk she would take a draught of wine, in her light-heartedness; and as wine gives an appetite, she would then taste some of the dishes that she was cooking, saying to herself, ‘The cook is bound to know how the food tastes.’

It so happened that one day her master said to her, ‘Grethel, I have a guest coming to-night; roast me two fowls in your best style.’

‘It shall be done, sir!’ answered Grethel. So she killed the chickens, scalded and plucked them, and then put them on the spit; towards evening she put them down to the fire to roast. They got brown and crisp, but still the guest did not come. Then Grethel called to her Master, ‘If the guest does not come I must take the fowls from the fire; but it will be a thousand pities if they are not eaten soon while they are juicy.’

Her Master said, ‘I will go and hasten the guest myself.’

Hardly had her Master turned his back before Grethel laid the spit with the fowls on it on one side, and said to herself, ‘It’s thirsty work standing over the fire so long. Who knows when he will come. I’ll go down into the cellar in the meantime and take a drop of wine.’

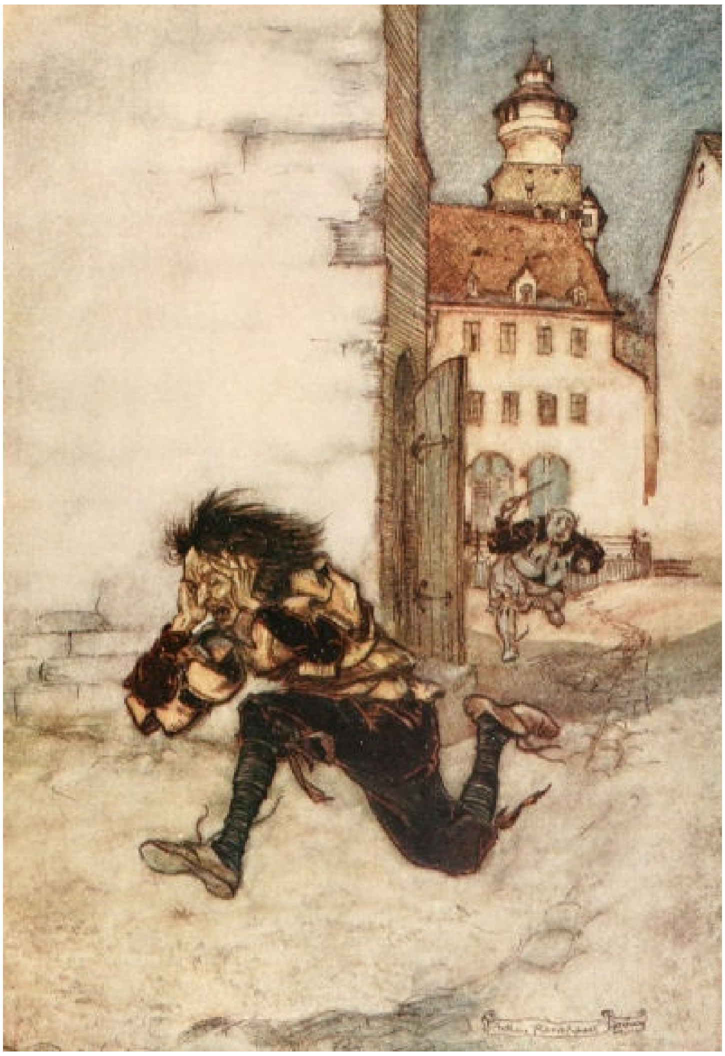
She ran down and held a jug to the tap, then said, ‘Here’s to your health, Grethel,’ and took a good pull. ‘Drinking leads to drinking,’ she said, ‘and it’s not easy to give it up,’ and again she took a good pull. Then she went upstairs and put the fowls to the fire again, poured some butter over them, and turned the spit round with a will. It smelt so good that she thought, ‘There may be something wanting, I must have a taste.’ And she passed her finger over the fowls and put it in her mouth. ‘Ah, how good they are; it’s a sin and a shame that there’s nobody to eat them.’ She ran to the window to see if her Master was coming with the guest, but she saw nobody. Then she went back to the fowls again, and thought, ‘One wing is catching a little, better to eat it — and eat it I will.’ So she cut it off and ate it with much enjoyment. When it was finished, she thought, ‘The other must follow, or the Master will notice that something is wanting.’ When the wings were consumed she went back to the window again to look for her Master, but no one was in sight.

‘Who knows,’ she thought. ‘I dare say they won’t come at all; they must have dropped in somewhere else.’ Then she said to herself, ‘Now, Grethel, don’t be afraid, eat it all up: why should the good food be wasted? When it’s all gone you can rest; run and have another drink and then finish it up.’ So she went down to the cellar, took a good drink, and contentedly ate up the rest of the fowl. When it had all disappeared and still no Master came, Grethel looked at the other fowl and said, ‘Where one is gone the other must follow. What is good for one is right for the other. If I have a drink first I shall be none the worse.' So she took another hearty pull at the jug, and then she sent the other fowl after the first one.

In the height of her enjoyment, her Master came back, and cried, 'Hurry, Grethel, the guest is just coming.'

'Very well, sir, I'll soon have it ready,' answered Grethel.

Her Master went to see if the table was properly laid, and took the big carving-knife with which he meant to cut up the fowls, to sharpen it. In the meantime the guest came and knocked politely at the door. Grethel ran to see who was there, and, seeing the guest, she put her finger to her lips and said, 'Be quiet, and get away quickly; if my Master catches you it will be the worse for you. He certainly invited you to supper, but only with the intention of cutting off both your ears. You can hear him sharpening his knife now.'



The guest heard the knife being sharpened, and hurried off down the steps as fast as he could.

Grethel ran with great agility to her Master, shrieking, 'A fine guest you have invited, indeed!'

'Why, what's the matter, Grethel? What do you mean?'

'Well,' she said, 'he has taken the two fowls that I had just put upon the dish, and run off with them.'

‘That’s a clever trick!’ said her Master, regretting his fine fowls. ‘If he had only left me one so that I had something to eat.’

He called out to him to stop, but the guest pretended not to hear. Then he ran after him, still holding the carving-knife, and cried, ‘Only one, only one!’ — meaning that the guest should leave him one fowl; but the guest only thought that he meant he was to give him one ear, and he ran as if he was pursued by fire, and so took both his ears safely home.

The King of the Golden Mountain

THERE was once a Merchant who had two children, a boy and a girl. They were both small, and not old enough to run about. He had also two richly-laden ships at sea, and just as he was expecting to make a great deal of money by the merchandise, news came that they had both been lost. So now instead of being a rich man he was quite poor, and had nothing left but one field near the town.

To turn his thoughts from his misfortune, he went out into this field, and as he was walking up and down a little black Mannikin suddenly appeared before him, and asked why he was so sad. The Merchant said, ‘I would tell you at once, if you could help me.’

‘Who knows,’ answered the little Mannikin. ‘Perhaps I could help you.’

Then the Merchant told him that all his wealth had been lost in a wreck, and that now he had nothing left but this field.

‘Don’t worry yourself,’ said the Mannikin. ‘If you will promise to bring me in twelve years’ time the first thing which rubs against your legs when you go home, you shall have as much gold as you want.’

The Merchant thought, ‘What could it be but my dog?’ He never thought of his boy, but said Yes, and gave the Mannikin his bond signed and sealed, and went home.

When he reached the house his little son, delighted to hold on to the benches and totter towards his father, seized him by the leg to steady himself.

The Merchant was horror-stricken, for his vow came into his head, and now he knew what he had promised to give away. But as he still found no gold in his chests, he thought it must only have been a joke of the Mannikin’s. A month later he went up into the loft to gather together some old tin to sell it, and there he found a great heap of gold on the floor. So he was soon up in the world again, bought and sold, became a richer merchant than ever, and was altogether contented.

In the meantime the boy had grown up, and he was both clever and wise. But the nearer the end of the twelve years came, the more sorrowful the Merchant grew; you could even see his misery in his face. One day his son asked him what was the matter, but his father would not tell him. The boy, however, persisted so long that at last he told him that, without knowing what he was doing, he had promised to give him up at the end of twelve years to a little black Mannikin, in return for a quantity of gold. He had given his hand and seal on it, and the time was now near for him to go.

Then his son said, ‘O father, don’t be frightened, it will be all right. The little black Mannikin has no power over me.’

When the time came, the son asked a blessing of the Priest, and he and his father went to the field together; and the son made a circle within which they took their places.

When the little black Mannikin appeared, he said to the father, ‘Have you brought what you promised me?’

The man was silent, but his son said, ‘What do you want?’

The Mannikin said, ‘My business is with your father, and not with you.’

The son answered, ‘You deceived and cheated my father. Give me back his bond.’

‘Oh no!’ said the little man; ‘I won’t give up my rights.’

They talked to each other for a long time, and at last they decided that, as the son no longer belonged to his father, and declined to belong to his foe, he should get into a boat on a flowing stream, and his father should push it off himself, thus giving him up to the stream.

So the youth took leave of his father, got into the boat, and his father pushed it off. Then, thinking that his son was lost to him for ever, he went home and sorrowed for him. The little boat, however, did not sink, it drifted quietly down the stream, and the youth sat in it in perfect safety. It drifted for a long time, till at last it stuck fast on an unknown shore. The youth landed, and seeing a beautiful castle near, walked towards it. As he passed under the doorway, however, a spell fell upon him. He went through all the rooms, but found them empty, till he came to the very last one, where a Serpent lay coiling and uncoiling itself. The Serpent was really an enchanted maiden, who was delighted when she saw the youth, and said, ‘Have you come at last, my preserver? I have been waiting twelve years for you. This whole kingdom is bewitched, and you must break the spell.’

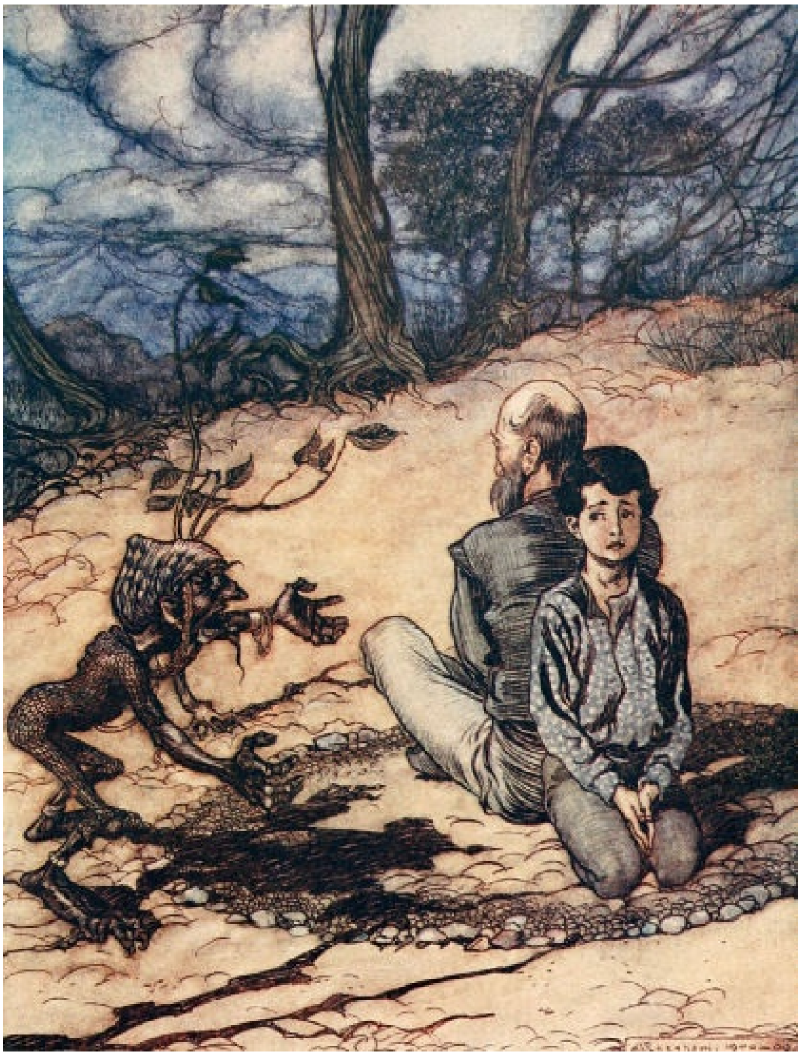
‘How am I to do that?’ he asked.

She said, ‘To-night, twelve black men hung with chains will appear, and they will ask what you are doing here. But do not speak a word, whatever they do or say to you. They will torment you, strike, and pinch you, but don’t say a word. At twelve o’clock they will have to go away. On the second night twelve more will come, and on the third twenty-four. These will cut off your head. But at twelve o’clock their power goes, and if you have borne it, and not spoken a word, I shall be saved. Then I will come to you, and bring a little flask containing the Water of Life, with which I will sprinkle you, and you will be brought to life again, as sound and well as ever you were.’

Then he said, ‘I will gladly save you!’

Everything happened just as she had said. The black men could not force a word out of him; and on the third night the Serpent became a beautiful Princess, who brought the Water of Life as she had promised, and restored the youth to life. Then she fell on his neck and kissed him, and there were great rejoicings all over the castle.

Their marriage was celebrated, and he became King of the Golden Mountain.



They lived happily together, and in course of time a beautiful boy was born to them.

When eight years had passed, the King’s heart grew tender within him as he thought of his father, and he wanted to go home to see him. But the Queen did not want him to go. She said, ‘I know it will be to my misfortune.’ However, he gave her no peace till she agreed to let him go. On his departure she gave him a wishing-ring, and said, ‘Take this ring, and put it on your finger, and you will at once be at the place where you wish to be. Only, you must promise never to use it to wish me away from here to be with you at your father’s.’

He made the promise, and put the ring on his finger; he then wished himself before the town where his father lived, and at the same moment found himself at the gate. But the sentry would not let him in because his clothes, though of rich material, were of such strange cut. So he went up a mountain, where a Shepherd lived, and, exchanging clothing with him, put on his old smock, and passed into the town unnoticed.

When he reached his father he began making himself known; but his father, never thinking that it was his son, said that it was true he had once had a son, but he had long been dead. But, he added, seeing that he was a poor Shepherd, he would give him a plate of food.

The supposed Shepherd said to his parents, ‘I am indeed your son. Is there no mark on my body by which you may know me?’

His mother said, ‘Yes, our son has a strawberry mark under his right arm.’

He pushed up his shirt sleeve, and there was the strawberry mark; so they no longer doubted that he was their son. He told them that he was the King of the Golden Mountain, his wife was a Princess, and they had a little son seven years old.

‘That can’t be true,’ said his father. ‘You are a fine sort of King to come home in a tattered Shepherd’s smock.’

His son grew angry, and, without stopping to reflect, turned his ring round and wished his wife and son to appear. In a moment they both stood before him; but his wife did nothing but weep and lament, and said that he had broken his promise, and by so doing had made her very unhappy. He said, ‘I have acted incautiously, but from no bad motive,’ and he tried to soothe her.

She appeared to be calmed, but really she nourished evil intentions towards him in her heart.

Shortly after he took her outside the town to the field, and showed her the stream down which he had drifted in the little boat. Then he said, ‘I am tired; I want to rest a little.’

So she sat down, and he rested his head upon her lap, and soon fell fast asleep. As soon as he was asleep, she drew the ring from his finger, and drew herself gently away from him, leaving only her slipper behind. Last of all, taking her child in her arms, she wished herself back in her own kingdom. When he woke up, he found himself quite deserted; wife and child were gone, the ring had disappeared from his finger, and only her slipper remained as a token.

‘I can certainly never go home to my parents,’ he said. ‘They would say I was a sorcerer. I must go away and walk till I reach my own kingdom again.’

So he went away, and at last he came to a mountain, where three Giants were quarrelling about the division of their father’s property. When they saw him passing, they called him up, and said, ‘Little people have sharp wits,’ and asked him to divide their inheritance for them.

It consisted, first, of a sword, with which in one’s hand, if one said, ‘All heads off, mine alone remain,’ every head fell to the ground. Secondly, of a mantle which rendered any one putting it on invisible. Thirdly, of a pair of boots which transported the wearer to whatever place he wished.

He said, ‘Give me the three articles so that I may see if they are all in good condition.’

So they gave him the mantle, and he at once became invisible. He took his own shape again, and said, ‘The mantle is good; now give me the sword.’

But they said, ‘No, we can’t give you the sword. If you were to say, “All heads off, mine alone remain,” all our heads would fall, and yours would be the only one left.'

At last, however, they gave it to him, on condition that he was to try it on a tree. He did as they wished, and the sword went through the tree trunk as if it had been a straw. Then he wanted the boots, but they said, 'No, we won't give them away. If you were to put them on and wish yourself on the top of the mountain, we should be left standing here without anything.'

'No,' said he; 'I won't do that.'

So they gave him the boots too; but when he had all three he could think of nothing but his wife and child, and said to himself, 'Oh, if only I were on the Golden Mountain again!' and immediately he disappeared from the sight of the Giants, and there was an end of their inheritance.

When he approached his castle he heard sounds of music, fiddles and flutes, and shouts of joy. People told him that his wife was celebrating her marriage with another husband. He was filled with rage, and said, 'The false creature! She deceived me, and deserted me when I was asleep.'

Then he put on his mantle, and went to the castle, invisible to all. When he went into the hall, where a great feast was spread with the richest foods and the costliest wines, the guests were joking and laughing while they ate and drank. The Queen sat on her throne in their midst in gorgeous clothing, with the crown on her head. He placed himself behind her, and no one saw him. Whenever the Queen put a piece of meat on her plate, he took it away and ate it, and when her glass was filled he took it away and drank it. Her plate and her glass were constantly refilled, but she never had anything, for it disappeared at once. At last she grew frightened, got up, and went to her room in tears, but he followed her there too. She said to herself, 'Am I still in the power of the demon? Did my preserver never come?'

He struck her in the face, and said, 'Did your preserver never come? He is with you now, deceiver that you are. Did I deserve such treatment at your hands?' Then he made himself visible, and went into the hall, and cried, 'The wedding is stopped, the real King has come.'

The Kings, Princes, and Nobles who were present laughed him to scorn. But he only said, 'Will you go, or will you not?' They tried to seize him, but he drew his sword and said,

'All heads off, mine alone remain.'

Then all their heads fell to the ground, and he remained sole King and Lord of the Golden Mountain.

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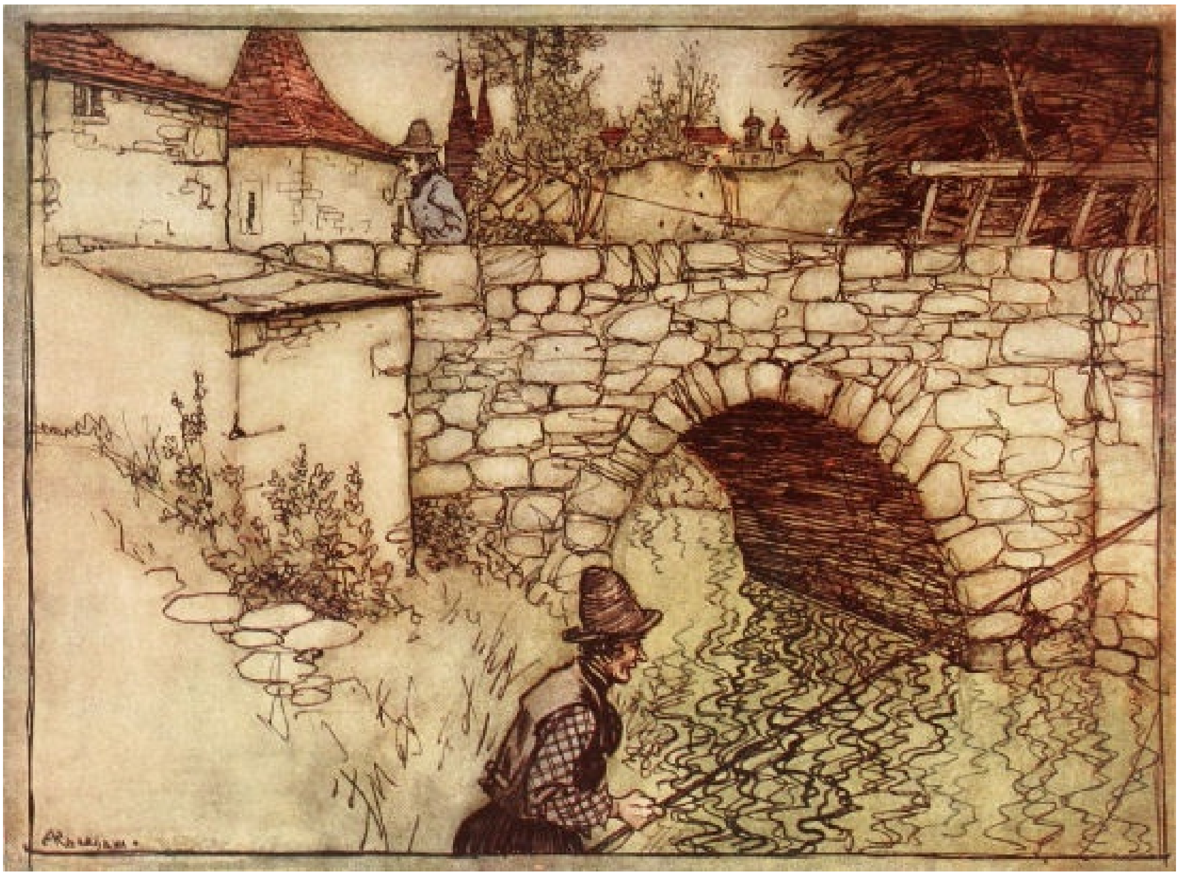


Doctor Know-All

ONCE upon a time a poor Peasant, named Crabb, was taking a load of wood drawn by two oxen to the town for sale. He sold it to a Doctor for four thalers. When the money was being paid to him, it so happened that the Doctor was sitting at dinner. When the Peasant saw how daintily the Doctor was eating and drinking, he felt a great desire to become a Doctor too. He remained standing and looking on for a time, and then asked if he could not be a Doctor.

‘Oh yes!’ said the Doctor; ‘that is easily managed.’

‘What must I do?’ asked the Peasant.

‘First buy an ABC book; you can get one with a cock as a frontispiece. Secondly, turn your wagon and oxen into money, and buy with it clothes and other things suitable for a Doctor. Thirdly, have a sign painted with the words, “I am Doctor Know-all,” and have it nailed over your door.’

The Peasant did everything that he was told to do.

Now when he had been doctoring for a while, not very long though, a rich nobleman had some money stolen from him. He was told about Doctor Know-all, who lived in such and such a village, who would be sure to know what had become of it. So the gentleman ordered his carriage and drove to the village.

He stopped at the Doctor’s house, and asked Crabb if he were Doctor Know-all.

‘Yes, I am.’

‘Then you must go with me to get my stolen money back.’

‘Yes, certainly; but Grethe, my wife, must come too.’

The nobleman agreed, and gave both of them seats in his carriage, and they all drove off together.

When they reached the nobleman’s castle the dinner was ready, and Crabb was invited to sit down to table.

‘Yes; but Grethe, my wife, must dine too’; and he seated himself with her.

When the first Servant brought in a dish of choice food, the Peasant nudged his wife, and said: ‘Grethe, that was the first,’ — meaning that the servant was handing the first dish. But the servant thought he meant, ‘That was the first thief.’ As he really was the thief, he became much alarmed, and said to his comrades outside —

‘That Doctor knows everything, we shan’t get out of this hole; he said I was the first.’

The second Servant did not want to go in at all, but he had to go, and when he offered his dish to the Peasant he nudged his wife, and said— ‘Grethe, that is the second.’

This Servant also was frightened and hurried out.

The third one fared no better. The Peasant said again: ‘Grethe, that is the third.’

The fourth one brought in a covered dish, and the master told the Doctor that he must show his powers and guess what was under the cover. Now it was a dish of crabs.

The Peasant looked at the dish and did not know what to do, so he said: ‘Wretched Crabb that I am.’

When the Master heard him he cried: ‘There, he knows it! Then he knows where the money is too.’

Then the Servant grew terribly frightened, and signed to the Doctor to come outside.

When he went out, they all four confessed to him that they had stolen the money; they would gladly give it to him and a large sum in addition, if only he would not betray them to their Master, or their necks would be in peril. They also showed him where the money was hidden. Then the Doctor was satisfied, went back to the table, and said —

‘Now, Sir, I will look in my book to see where the money is hidden.’

The fifth, in the meantime, had crept into the stove to hear if the Doctor knew still more. But he sat there turning over the pages of his ABC book looking for the cock, and as he could not find it at once, he said: ‘I know you are there, and out you must come.’

The man in the stove thought it was meant for him, and sprang out in a fright, crying: ‘The man knows everything.’

Then Doctor Know-all showed the nobleman where the money was hidden, but he did not betray the servants; and he received much money from both sides as a reward, and became a very celebrated man.

The Seven Ravens

THERE was once a Man who had seven sons, but never a daughter, however much he wished for one.

At last, however, he had a daughter.

His joy was great, but the child was small and delicate, and, on account of its weakness, it was to be christened at home.

The Father sent one of his sons in haste to the spring to fetch some water; the other six ran with him, and because each of them wanted to be the first to draw the water, between them the pitcher fell into the brook.

There they stood and didn’t know what to do, and not one of them ventured to go home.

As they did not come back, their Father became impatient, and said: ‘Perhaps the young rascals are playing about, and have forgotten it altogether.’

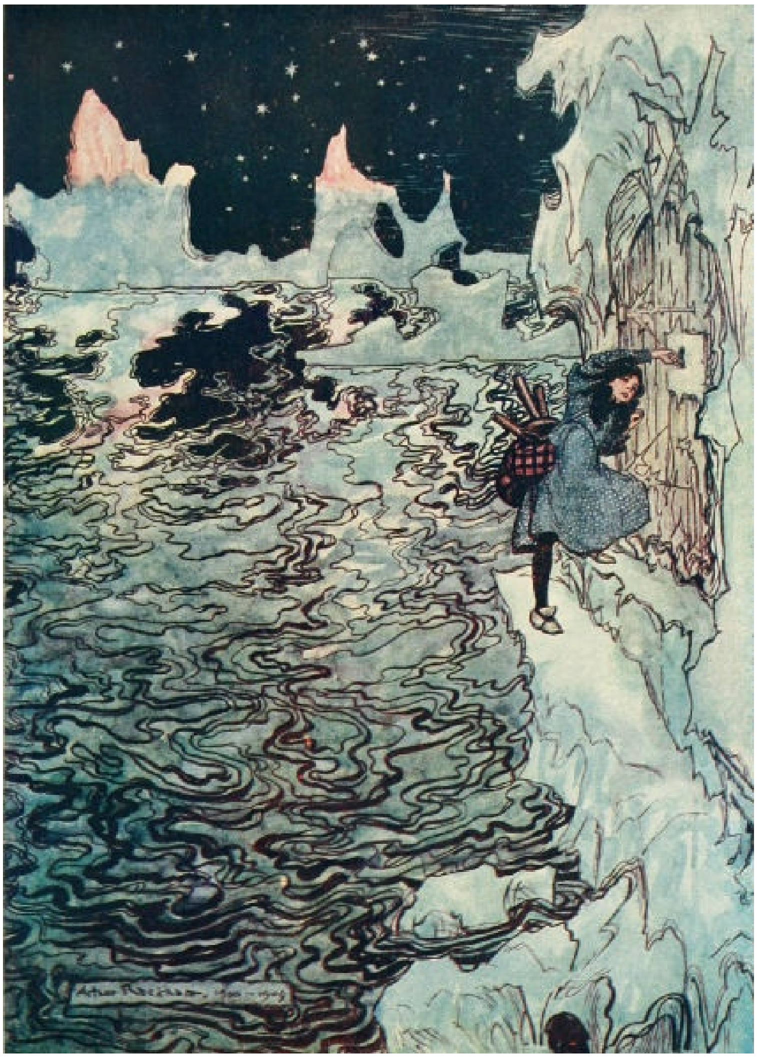
He became anxious lest his little girl should die unbaptized, and in hot vexation, he cried: ‘I wish the youngsters would all turn into Ravens!’

Scarcely were the words uttered, when he heard a whirring in the air above his head, and, looking upwards, he saw seven coal-black Ravens flying away.

The parents could not undo the spell, and were very sad about the loss of their seven sons, but they consoled themselves in some measure with their dear little daughter, who soon became strong, and every day more beautiful.

For a long time she was unaware that she had had any brothers, for her parents took care not to mention it.

However, one day by chance she heard some people saying about her: ‘Oh yes, the girl’s pretty enough; but you know she is really to blame for the misfortune to her seven brothers.’



Then she became very sad, and went to her father and mother and asked if she had ever had any brothers, and what had become of them.

The parents could no longer conceal the secret. They said, however, that what had happened was by the decree of heaven, and that her birth was merely the innocent occasion.

But the little girl could not get the matter off her conscience for a single day, and thought that she was bound to release her brothers again. She had no peace or quiet until she had secretly set out, and gone forth into the wide world to trace her brothers, wherever they might be, and to free them, let it cost what it might.

She took nothing with her but a little ring as a remembrance of her parents, a loaf of bread against hunger, a pitcher of water against thirst, and a little chair in case of fatigue. She kept ever going on and on until she came to the end of the world.

Then she came to the Sun, but it was hot and terrible, it devoured little children. She ran hastily away to the Moon, but it was too cold, and, moreover, dismal and dreary. And when the child was looking at it, it said: ‘I smell, I smell man’s flesh!’

Then she quickly made off, and came to the Stars, and they were kind and good, and every one sat on his own special seat.

But the Morning Star stood up, and gave her a little bone, and said: ‘Unless you have this bone, you cannot open the glass mountain, and in the glass mountain are your brothers.’

The girl took the bone, and wrapped it up carefully in a little kerchief, and went on again until she came to the glass mountain.

The gate was closed, and she meant to get out the little bone. But when she undid the kerchief it was empty, and she had lost the good Star’s present.

How, now, was she to set to work? She was determined to rescue her brothers, but had no key to open the glass mountain.

The good little sister took a knife and cut off her own tiny finger, fitted it into the keyhole, and succeeded in opening the lock.

When she had entered, she met a Dwarf, who said: ‘My child, what are you looking for?’

‘I am looking for my brothers, the Seven Ravens,’ she answered.

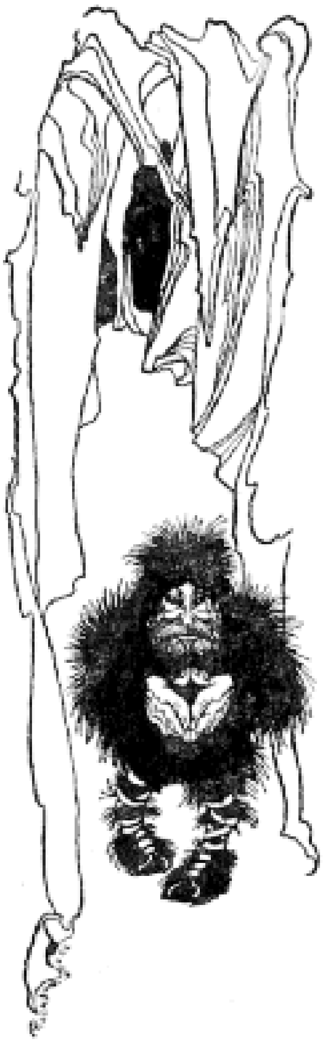
The Dwarf said: ‘My masters, the Ravens, are not at home; but if you like to wait until they come, please to walk in.’

Thereupon the Dwarf brought in the Ravens’ supper, on seven little plates, and in seven little cups, and the little sister ate a crumb or two from each of the little plates, and took a sip from each of the little cups, but she let the ring she had brought with her fall into the last little cup.

All at once a whirring and crying were heard in the air; then the Dwarf said: ‘Now my masters the Ravens are coming home.’

Then they came in, and wanted to eat and drink, and began to look about for their little plates and cups.

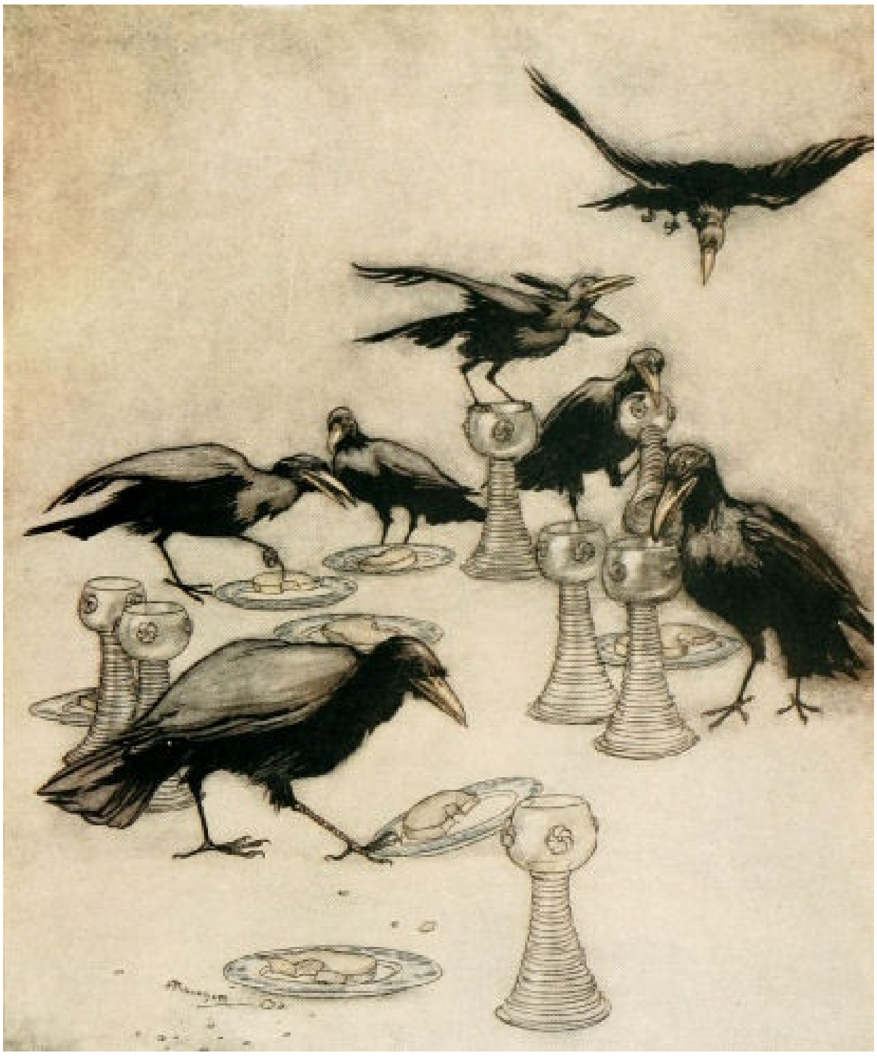
But they said one after another: ‘Halloa! who has been eating off my plate? Who has been drinking out of my cup? There has been some human mouth here.’



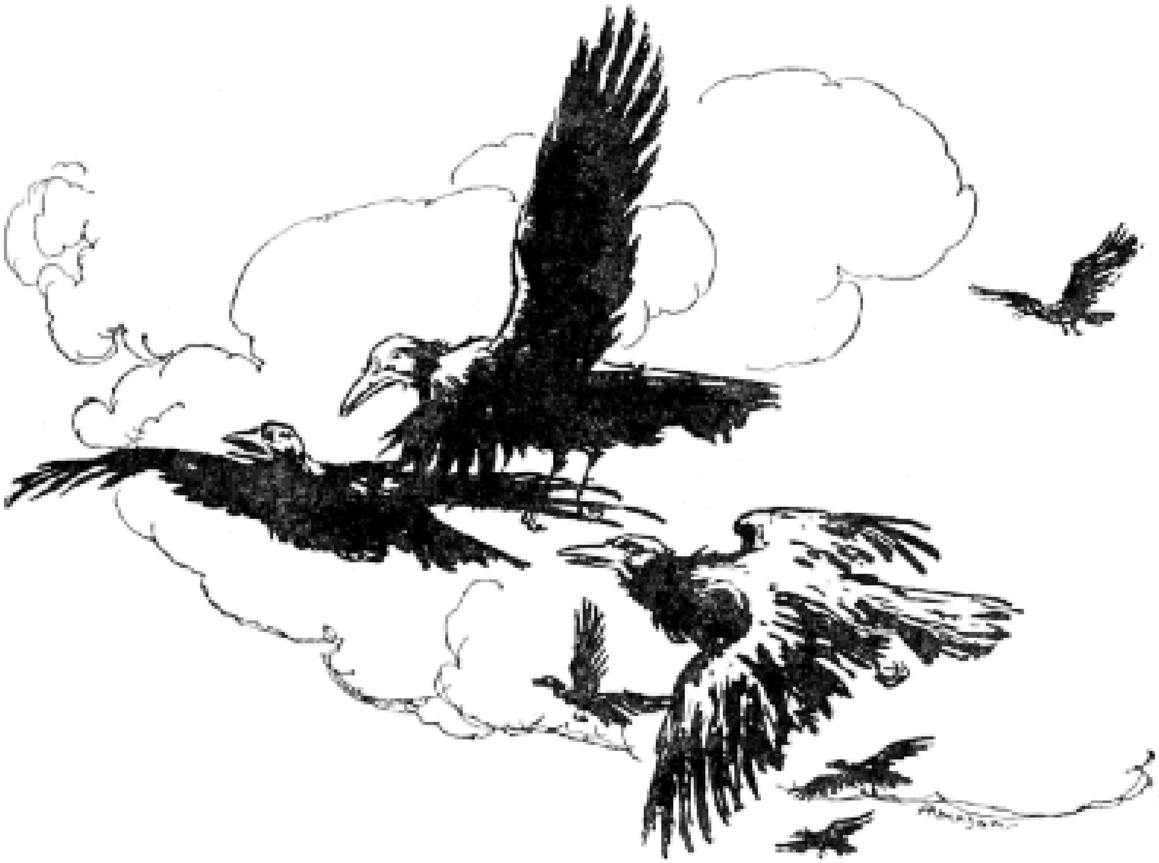
When she entered she met a Dwarf.

And when the seventh drank to the bottom of his cup, the ring rolled up against his lips.

He looked at it, and recognised it as a ring belonging to his father and mother, and said: ‘God grant that our sister may be here, and that we may be delivered.’



As the maiden was standing behind the door listening, she heard the wish and came forward, and then all the Ravens got back their human form again. And they embraced and kissed one another, and went joyfully home.



The Ravens coming home.

The Marriage of Mrs. Reynard

THERE was once an old Fox who thought that his wife was not true to him, and determined to put her to the test. He stretched himself under the bank, lay motionless, and pretended to be as dead as a door nail. Mrs. Reynard went to her chamber, and shut herself in; and her servant, Mistress Cat, sat by the fire, and cooked the dinner.

Now, when it became known that the old Fox was dead, suitors began to announce themselves. Soon afterwards, the servant heard some one knocking at the front door. She went and opened the door, and there stood a young Fox, who said —

'What are ye doing, pray, Mistress Cat? Sleeping or waking? or what are ye at?'

She answered —

'I'm not asleep; I'm wide awake. D'ye want to know what now I make? I'm warming beer, with butter in it; I beg ye'll taste it in a minute.'

'I'm much obliged, Mistress,' said the Fox. 'What is Mrs. Reynard doing?'

The Maid answered —

'In chamber sad she sits alone, And ceases not with grief to moan. She weeps until her eyes are red, Because the dear old Fox is dead.'

'Well, just tell her, Mistress, that there's a young Fox here, who would be glad to woo her.'

'Very well, young gentleman.'

'Then went the Cat with pit-a-pat And smote the door, rat-tata-tat! "Pray, Mrs. Reynard, are you in? Outside a wooer waits below!"'

'Well, what's he like? I want to know. Has he got nine such beautiful tails as the late lamented Mr. Reynard?'

'Oh dear no,' answered the Cat. 'He has only got one.'

'Then I won't have him.'

Mistress Cat went down, and sent the wooer away.

Soon after this there was knocking again, and another Fox appeared at the door, who wished to pay his addresses to Mrs. Reynard. He had two tails, but he came off no better than the first. Afterwards others came, each with one tail more; but they were all rejected, till at last one came that had nine tails like old Mr. Reynard.

When the widow heard this, full of joy, she said to the Cat —

'Open the gates and doors; be swift. Old Mr. Reynard turn adrift.'

But when the wedding was about to be celebrated, then old Mr. Reynard under the bank roused himself, and gave the whole crew a good drubbing, and sent them, Mrs. Reynard and all, helter-skelter out of the house.

Second Tale

When old Mr. Reynard really died, the Wolf came as a suitor, and knocked at the door, and the Cat who acted as servant to Mrs. Reynard, opened it.

The Wolf greeted her, and said —

‘Good-day, Miss Cat, of sprightly wit, How comes it that alone you sit? What are you making there, so good?’

The Cat answered —

‘Tumbling milk and butter up. Will your Lordship have a sup?’

‘Thank you kindly, Mistress Cat. Mistress Reynard is not at home, I suppose.’

‘Upstairs in her chamber she sits, And weeps as her sorrow befits. Her sad case she doth much deplore, Because Mr. Reynard’s no more.’

The Wolf answered —

‘“If now she wants to wed again, She must come down the stairs, ’tis plain.” The Cat ran up without delay, Nor did her claws their clatter stay Until she reached the long saloon. There, tapping with her five gold rings, “Is Mrs. Reynard in?” she sings. “If now she wants to wed again, She must come down the stairs, ’tis plain.”’

Mrs. Reynard asked: ‘Does the gentleman wear red breeches, and has he a pointed muzzle?’

‘No,’ answered the Cat.

‘Then he is no use to me.’

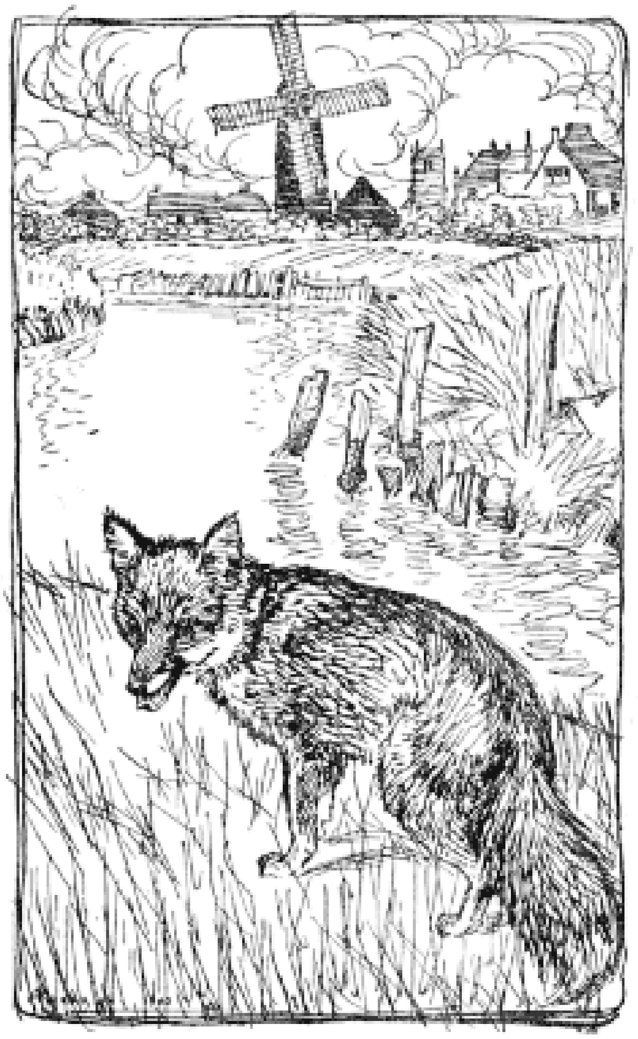
When the Wolf was rejected, there came a Dog, a Stag, a Hare, a Bear, and one after another every sort of wild animal. But in every one there was wanting some of the good qualities which old Mr. Reynard had possessed, and the Cat was obliged to dismiss the suitors every time. At last there came a young Fox. Then Mrs. Reynard asked: ‘Does the gentleman wear red breeches, and has he got a pointed muzzle?’

‘Yes,’ said the Cat. ‘He has both.’

‘Then let him come up,’ said Mrs. Reynard, and ordered the maid to make ready the wedding feast.

‘Now, Cat, set to and sweep the room. Then fling the old Fox from the house; Bring in many a good fat mouse, But eat them all yourself alone, Nor give your mistress e’er a one.’

Then the wedding with young Mr. Fox was held, and there was merry-making and dancing, and if they haven’t stopped, they are dancing still.



Does the gentleman wear red breeches, and has he a pointed muzzle?

The Salad

THERE was once a merry young Huntsman, who went into the forest to hunt. He was gay and light-hearted, and whistled a tune upon a leaf as he went along.

Suddenly an ugly old Crone spoke to him, and said: ‘Good morning, dear Huntsman; you are merry and happy enough, while I am hungry and thirsty. Pray give me an alms.’

The Huntsman pitied the poor Old Woman, put his hand in his pocket, and made her a present according to his means.

Then he wanted to go on. But the Old Woman held him back, and said: ‘Hark ye, dear Huntsman, I will make you a present because of your good heart. Go on your way, and you will come to a tree, on which nine birds are sitting. They will have a cloak in their claws, over which they are fighting. Take aim with your gun, and shoot into the middle of them. They will drop the cloak, and one of the birds will fall down dead. Take the cloak with you, it is a wishing-cloak. When you throw it round your shoulders you only have to wish yourself at a place to be there at once. Take the heart out of the dead bird and swallow it whole, then you will find a gold coin under your pillow every single morning when you wake.’

The Huntsman thanked the Wise Woman, and thought: ‘She promises fine things, if only they turn out as well.’

When he had gone about a hundred paces, he heard above him, in the branches of a tree, such a chattering and screaming that he looked up.

There he saw a flock of birds tearing a garment with their beaks and claws; snatching and tearing at it as if each one wanted to have it for himself.

‘Well,’ said the Huntsman, ‘this is extraordinary, it is exactly what the Old Woman said.’

He put his gun to his shoulder, took aim and fired right into the middle of them, making the feathers fly about.

The birds took flight with a great noise, all except one, which fell down dead, and the cloak dropped at his feet.

He did as the Old Woman had told him, cut the heart out of the bird and swallowed it whole. Then he took the cloak home with him.

When he woke in the morning, he remembered the Old Woman’s promise, and looked under his pillow to see if it was true.

There, sure enough, lay the golden coin shining before him, and the next morning he found another, and the same every morning when he got up.

He collected quite a heap of gold, and at last he thought: ‘What is the good of all my gold if I stay at home here? I will go and look about me in the world.’

So he took leave of his parents, shouldered his gun, and started off into the world.

But the Old Woman was a witch.

It so happened that one day he came to a thick forest, and when he got through it, he saw a fine castle lying in the plain beyond.

He saw an Old Woman standing in one of the windows looking out, with a beautiful Maiden beside her.

But the Old Woman was a witch, and she said to the Maiden: ‘Here comes some one out of the forest. He has a wonderful treasure inside him; we must try to get it from him, my darling, it will suit us better than him. He has a bird’s heart about him, and therefore he finds a gold coin every morning under his pillow when he wakes.’

She told the girl how he had got it, and at last said: ‘If you don’t get it from him, it will be the worse for you.’

When the Huntsman got nearer, he saw the Maiden, and said: ‘I have been wandering about for a long time, I will go into this castle and take a rest. I have plenty of money.’

But the real reason was that he had caught sight of the pretty picture at the window. He went in, and he was kindly received and hospitably treated.

Before long, he was so enamoured of the Witch-Maiden that he thought of nothing else, and cared for nothing but pleasing her.

The Old Woman said to the Maiden: ‘Now we must get the bird’s heart, he will never miss it.’

They concocted a potion, and when it was ready they put it into a goblet.

And the Maiden took it to him, and said: ‘Now, my beloved, you must drink to me.’

He took the cup and drank the potion, and when he was overpowered by it the bird’s heart came out of his mouth.

The Maiden took it away secretly and swallowed it herself, for the Old Woman wanted to have it.

From this time the Huntsman found no more gold under his pillow; but the coin was always under the Maiden’s instead, and the Old Woman used to fetch it away every morning.

But he was so much in love, that he thought of nothing but enjoying himself in the Maiden’s company.

Then the Old Woman said: ‘We have got the bird’s heart, but we must have his wishing-cloak too.’

The Maiden said: ‘Let us leave him that; we have taken away his wealth.’

The Old Woman was very angry, and said: ‘A cloak like that is a very wonderful thing, and not often to be got. Have it I must, and will!’

So she obeyed the Witch’s orders, placed herself at the window, and looked sadly out at the distant hills.

The Huntsman said: ‘Why are you so sad?’

‘Alas! my love,’ was her answer, ‘over there are the garnet mountains, where the precious stones are found. I long for them so much that I grow sad whenever I think of them. But who could ever get them? The birds which fly, perhaps; no mortal could ever reach them.’

‘If that is all your trouble,’ said the Huntsman, ‘I can soon lift that load from your heart.’

Then he drew her under his cloak, and in a moment they were both sitting on the mountain. The precious stones were glittering around them; their hearts rejoiced at the sight of them, and they soon gathered together some of the finest and largest.

Now the Witch had so managed that the Huntsman began to feel his eyes grow very heavy.

So he said to the Maiden: ‘We will sit down to rest a while, I am so tired I can hardly stand.’

So they sat down, and he laid his head on her lap and was soon fast asleep.

As soon as he was asleep, the Maiden slipped the cloak from his shoulders and put it on her own, loaded herself with the precious garnets, and wished herself at home.

When the Huntsman had had his sleep out, he woke up and saw that his beloved had betrayed him, and left him alone on the wild mountain.

‘Oh, what treachery there is in the world!’ he exclaimed, as he sat down in grief, and did not know what to do.

Now the mountain belonged to some wild and savage Giants who lived on it, and before long he saw three of them striding along.

He quickly lay down again and pretended to be fast asleep.

The first one, as he came along, stumbled against him, and said: ‘What kind of earthworm is this?’

The second said: ‘Tread on him and kill him.’

But the third said: ‘It isn’t worth the trouble. Let him alone, — he can’t live here; and when he climbs higher up the mountain, the clouds will roll down and carry him off.’

Then they passed on, and as soon as they were gone, the Huntsman, who had heard all they said, got up and climbed up to the top of the mountain.

After he had sat there for a time, a cloud floated over him, and carried him away.

At first he was swept through the air, but then he was gently lowered and deposited within a large walled garden, upon a soft bed of lettuces and other herbs.

He looked around him and said: ‘If only I had something to eat; I am so hungry. And it will be difficult to get away from here. I see neither apples nor pears, nor any other fruit, nothing but salad and herbs.'

At last, however, he thought: 'At the worst, I can eat some of this salad; it does not taste very good, but it will, at least, be refreshing.'

He picked out a fine head of lettuce, and began eating it. But he had hardly swallowed a little piece, when he began to feel very odd, and quite changed. He felt four legs growing, a big head, and two long ears, and he saw to his horror that he was changed into an ass.

As he at the same time felt as hungry as ever, and the juicy salad was now very much to his taste, he went on eating greedily.

At last he reached another kind of salad, which he had hardly tasted when he felt a new change taking place, and found himself back in his human shape.

After this he lay down and slept off his fatigue.

When he woke next morning he broke off a head of the bad salad, and a head of the good, and thought: 'These will help me to regain my own, and also to punish the traitors.'

He put the salad into his wallet, climbed over the wall, and went off to find the castle of his beloved.

After wandering about for a few days, he was fortunate enough to find it. Then he stained his face, and disguised himself so that his own mother would not have known him, and went to the castle to ask for shelter.

'I am so tired,' he said; 'I cannot go any further.'

The Witch said: 'Who are you, countryman, and what do you want?'

He answered: 'I am a messenger from the King. He sent me to find the rarest salad which grows under the sun. I have been lucky enough to find it, and I carry it with me. But the sun is so burning, that I am afraid the tender plant will be withered, and I don't know if I shall be able to take it any further.'

When the Old Witch heard about the rare salad, she felt a great desire to have some, and said: 'Good countryman, let me try the wonderful salad!'

'By all means,' he answered. 'I have two heads with me, and you shall have one.' So saying, he opened his sack, and handed her the bad one.

The Witch had no suspicions, and her mouth so watered for the new dish, that she went to the kitchen herself to prepare it.

When it was ready, she could not wait till it was put upon the table, but put a few leaves into her mouth at once.

Hardly had she swallowed them, when she lost her human shape, and ran out into the courtyard, as an old she-ass.

Then the Maid came into the kitchen, saw the salad standing ready, and was about to put it on the table. But on the way the fancy seized her to taste it, according to her usual habit, and she ate a few leaves.

The power of the salad at once became apparent, because she also turned into an ass, and ran out into the yard to join the Old Witch, while the dish of salad fell to the ground.

In the meantime the messenger was sitting with the beautiful Maiden, and as no one appeared with the salad, she also was seized with a desire to taste it, and said: ‘I don’t know what has become of the salad.’

But the Huntsman thought: ‘The plant must have done its work,’ and said: ‘I will go into the kitchen and see.’

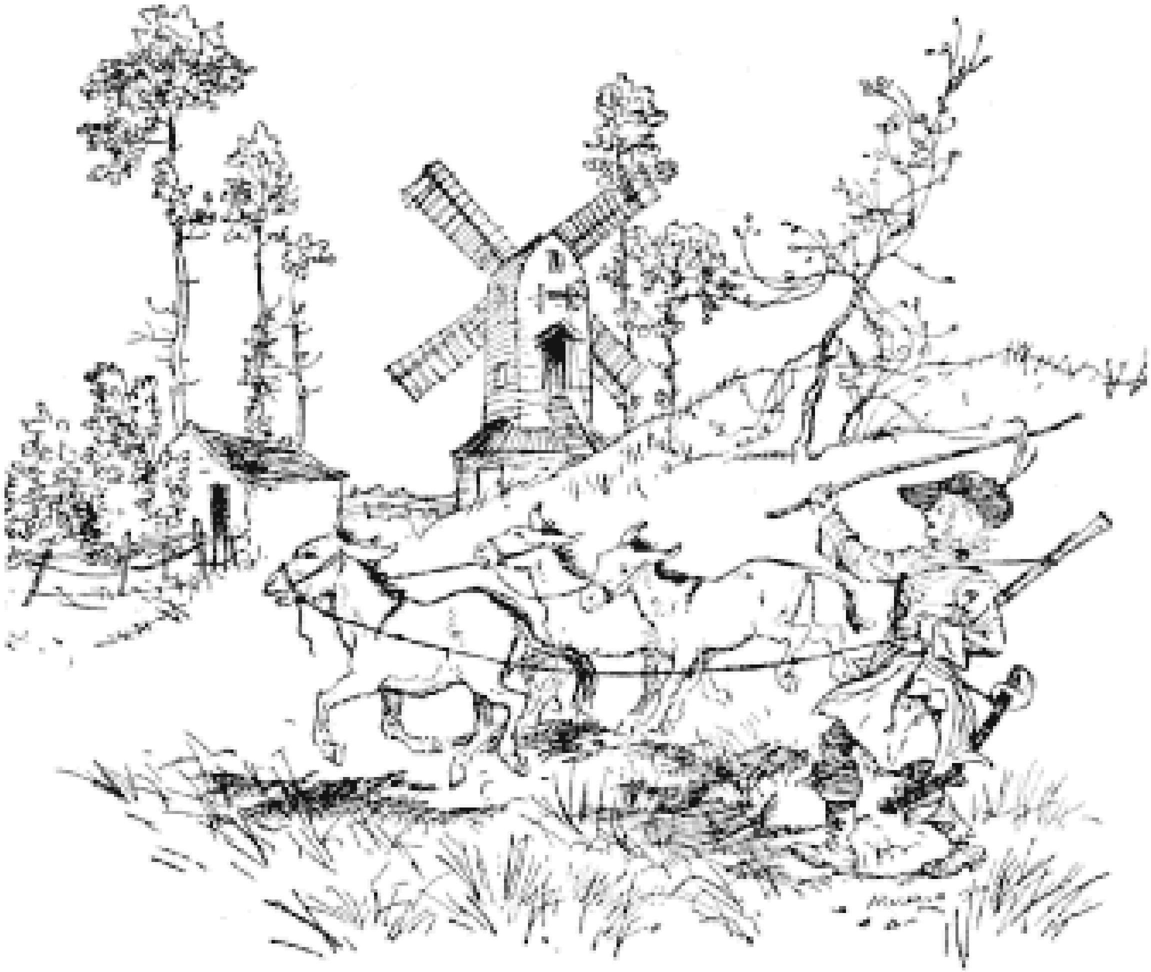
As soon as he got downstairs he saw the two asses running about, and the salad lying on the ground.

‘This is all right!’ he said; ‘two of them are done for.’

Then he picked up the leaves, put them on a dish, and took them to the Maiden.

‘I am bringing the precious food to you myself,’ said he, ‘so that you may not have to wait any longer.’

She ate some, and, like the others, was immediately changed into an ass, and ran out to them in the yard.



He tied them all together and drove them along till he came to a mill.

When the Huntsman had washed his face so that the transformed creatures might know him, he went into the courtyard, and said: ‘Now, you shall be paid for your treachery.’

He tied them all together with a rope, and drove them along till he came to a mill. He tapped at the window, and the Miller put his head out and asked what he wanted.

‘I have three bad animals here,’ he said, ‘that I want to get rid of. If you will take them and feed them, and treat them as I wish, I will pay you what you like to ask.'

'Why not?' said the Miller. 'How do you want them treated?'

The Huntsman said he wanted the old she-ass (the Witch) to be well beaten three times a day and fed once. The younger one, which was the Maid, beaten once and fed three times. The youngest of all, who was the beautiful Maiden, was to be fed three times, and not beaten at all; he could not find it in his heart to have her beaten.

Then he went back to the castle and found everything he wanted in it.

A few days later the Miller came and told him that the old ass which was to be beaten three times and fed once, was dead. 'The other two,' he said, 'which are to be fed three times, are not dead, but they are pining away, and won't last long.'

The Huntsman's heart was stirred with pity, and he told the Miller to bring them back to him.

When they came he gave them some of the other salad to eat, so that they took their human shapes again.

The beautiful Maiden fell on her knees before him, and said: 'O my beloved, forgive me all the wrong I have done you. My mother forced me to do it. It was against my own will, for I love you dearly. Your wishing-cloak is hanging in the cupboard, and you shall have the bird's heart back too.'

But he said: 'Keep it; it will be all the same, as I will take you to be my own true wife.'

Their marriage was soon after celebrated, and they lived happily together till they died.

The Youth who could not Shudder

THERE was once a Father who had two sons. One was clever and sensible, and always knew how to get on. But the younger one was stupid, and could not learn anything, and he had no imagination.

When people saw him, they said: 'His Father will have plenty of trouble with him.'

Whenever there was anything to be done, the eldest one always had to do it. But if his Father sent him to fetch anything late in the evening, or at night, and the way lay through the churchyard, or any other dreary place, he would answer: 'Oh no, Father, not there; it makes me shudder!' For he was afraid.

In the evening, when stories were being told round the fire which made one's flesh creep, and the listeners said: 'Oh, you make me shudder!' the youngest son, sitting in the corner listening, could not imagine what they meant. 'They always say "It makes me shudder! It makes me shudder!" And it doesn't make me shudder a bit. It must be some art which I can't understand.'

Now it happened one day that his Father said to him: 'I say, you in the corner there, you are growing big and strong. You must learn something by which you can make a living. See what pains your brother takes, but you are not worth your salt.'

'Well, Father,' he answered, 'I am quite ready to learn something; nay, I should very much like to learn how to shudder, for I know nothing about that.'

The elder son laughed when he heard him, and thought: 'Good heavens! what a fool my brother is; he will never do any good as long as he lives.'

But his Father sighed, and answered: 'You will easily enough learn how to shudder, but you won't make your bread by it.'

Soon after, the Sexton came to the house on a visit, and the Father confided his troubles about his son to him. He told him how stupid he was, and how he never could learn anything. 'Would you believe that when I asked him how he was going to make his living, he said he would like to learn how to shudder?'

'If that's all,' said the Sexton, 'he may learn that from me. Just let me have him, and I'll soon put the polish on him.'

The Father was pleased, for he thought: 'Anyhow, the Lad will gain something by it.'

So the Sexton took him home with him, and he had to ring the church bells.

A few days after, the Sexton woke him at midnight, and told him to get up and ring the bells. 'You shall soon be taught how to shudder!' he thought, as he crept stealthily up the stairs beforehand.

When the Lad got up into the tower, and turned round to catch hold of the bell rope, he saw a white figure standing on the steps opposite the belfry window.

‘Who is there?’ he cried; but the figure neither moved nor answered.

‘Answer,’ cried the Lad, ‘or get out of the way. You have no business here in the night.’

But so that the Lad should think he was a ghost, the Sexton did not stir.

The Lad cried for the second time: ‘What do you want here? Speak if you are an honest fellow, or I’ll throw you down the stairs.’

The Sexton did not think he would go to such lengths, so he made no sound, and stood as still as if he were made of stone.

Then the Lad called to him the third time, and, as he had no answer, he took a run and threw the ghost down the stairs. It fell down ten steps, and remained lying in a corner.

Then he rang the bells, went home, and, without saying a word to anybody, went to bed and was soon fast asleep.

The Sexton’s wife waited a long time for her husband, but, as he never came back, she got frightened, and woke up the Lad.

‘Don’t you know what has become of my husband?’ she asked. ‘He went up into the church tower before you.’

‘No,’ answered the Lad. ‘There was somebody standing on the stairs opposite the belfry window, and, as he would neither answer me nor go away, I took him to be a rogue and threw him downstairs. Go and see if it was your husband; I should be sorry if it were.’

The woman hurried away and found her husband lying in the corner, moaning, with a broken leg. She carried him down, and then hastened with loud cries to the Lad’s father.

‘Your son has brought about a great misfortune; he has thrown my husband downstairs and broken his leg. Take the good-for-nothing fellow away, out of our house.’

The Father was horrified, and, going back with her, gave the Lad a good scolding.

‘What is the meaning of this inhuman prank? The evil one must have put it into your head.’

‘Father,’ answered the Lad, ‘just listen to me. I am quite innocent. He stood there in the dark, like a man with some wicked design. I did not know who it was, and I warned him three times to speak, or to go away!’

‘Alas!’ said his Father, ‘you bring me nothing but disaster. Go away out of my sight. I will have nothing more to do with you.’

‘Gladly, Father. Only wait till daylight; then I will go away, and learn to shudder. Then, at least, I shall have one art to make my living by.’

‘Learn what you like,’ said his Father. ‘It’s all the same to me. Here are fifty thalers for you. Go out into the world, and don’t tell a creature where you come from, or who your Father is, for you will only bring me to shame.’

‘Just as you please, Father. If that is all you want, I can easily fulfil your desire.’

At daybreak, the Lad put his fifty thalers into his pocket, and went out along the high road, repeating over and over to himself as he went: ‘If only I could shudder, if only I could shudder.’

A Man came by and overheard the words the Lad was saying to himself, and when they had gone a little further, and came within sight of the gallows, he said: ‘See, there is the tree where those seven have been wedded to the ropemaker’s daughter, and are now learning to fly. Sit down below them, and when night comes you will soon learn to shudder.’

‘If nothing more than that is needed,’ said the Lad, ‘it is easily done. And if I learn to shudder as easily as that, you shall have my fifty thalers. Come back to me early to-morrow morning.’

Then the Lad went up to the gallows, and sat down under them to wait till night came.

As he was cold he lighted a fire, but at midnight the wind grew so cold that he did not know how to keep himself warm.

The wind blew the men on the gallows backwards and forwards, and swung them against each other, so he thought: ‘Here am I freezing by the fire, how much colder they must be up there.’

And as he was very compassionate, he mounted the ladder, undid them, and brought all seven down one by one.

Then he blew up the fire, and placed them round it to warm themselves.

They sat there and never moved, even when the fire caught their clothing.

‘Take care, or I will hang you all up again.’

The dead men, of course, could not hear, and remained silent while their few rags were burnt up.

Then he grew angry, and said: ‘If you won’t take care of yourselves, I can’t help you, and I won’t be burnt with you.’

So he hung them all up again in a row, and sat down by the fire and went to sleep again.

Next morning, the Man, wanting to get his fifty thalers, came to him and said: ‘Now do you know what shuddering means?’

‘No,’ he said; ‘how should I have learnt it? Those fellows up there never opened their mouths, and they were so stupid that they let the few poor rags they had about them burn.’

Then the Man saw that no thalers would be his that day, and he went away, saying: ‘Never in my life have I seen such a fellow as this.’

The Lad also went on his way, and again began saying to himself: ‘Oh, if only I could learn to shudder, if only I could learn to shudder.’

A Carter, walking behind him, heard this, and asked: ‘Who are you?’

‘I don’t know,’ answered the Youth.

‘Who is your Father?’

‘That I must not say.’

‘What are you always mumbling in your beard?’

‘Ah,’ answered the Youth, ‘I want to learn to shudder, but no one can teach me.’

‘Stop your silly chatter,’ said the Carter. ‘Just you come with me, and I’ll see that you have what you want.’

The Youth went with the Carter, and in the evening they reached an inn, where they meant to pass the night. He said quite loud, as they entered: ‘Oh, if only I could learn to shudder, if only I could learn to shudder.'

The Landlord, who heard him, laughed, and said: 'If that's what you want, there should be plenty of opportunity for you here.'

'I will have nothing to say to it,' said the Landlady. 'So many a prying fellow has already paid the penalty with his life. It would be a sin and a shame if those bright eyes should not see the light of day again.'

But the Youth said: 'I will learn it somehow, however hard it may be. I have been driven out for not knowing it.'

He gave the Landlord no peace till he told him that there was an enchanted castle a little way off, where any one could be made to shudder, if he would pass three nights in it.

The King had promised his daughter to wife to any one who dared do it, and she was the prettiest maiden the sun had ever shone on.

There were also great treasures hidden in the castle, watched over by evil spirits, enough to make any poor man rich who could break the spell.

Already many had gone in, but none had ever come out.

Next morning the Youth went to the King, and said: 'By your leave, I should like to pass three nights in the enchanted castle.'

The King looked at him, and, as he took a fancy to him, he said: 'You may ask three things to take into the castle with you, but they must be lifeless things.'

He answered: 'Then I ask for a fire, a turning-lathe, and a cooper's bench with the knife.'

The King had all three carried into the castle for him.

When night fell, the Youth went up to the castle and made a bright fire in one of the rooms. He put the cooper's bench with the knife near the fire, and seated himself on the turning-lathe.

'Oh, if only I could shudder,' he said; 'but I shan't learn it here either.'

Towards midnight he wanted to make up the fire, and, as he was blowing it up, something in one corner began to shriek: 'Miau, miau, how cold we are!'

'You fools!' he cried. 'What do you shriek for? If you are cold, come and warm yourselves by the fire.'

As he spoke, two big black cats bounded up and sat down, one on each side of him, and stared at him with wild, fiery eyes.

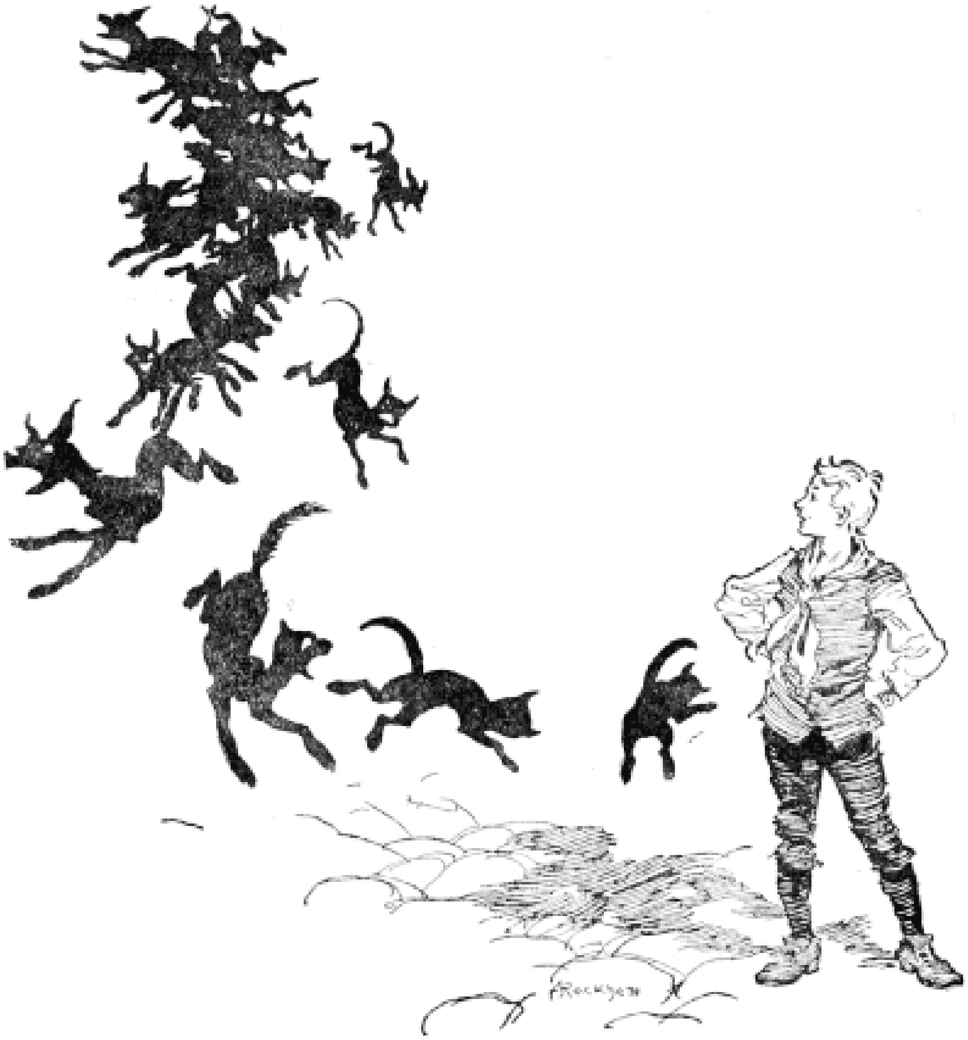
After a time, when they had warmed themselves, they said: 'Comrade, shall we have a game of cards?'

'Why not?' he answered; 'but show me your paws first.'

Then they stretched out their claws.

'Why,' he said, 'what long nails you've got. Wait a bit; I must cut them for you.'

He seized them by the scruff of their necks, lifted them on to the cooper's bench, and screwed their paws firmly to it.



Crowds of black cats and dogs swarmed out of every corner.

'I have looked at your fingers, and the desire to play cards with you has passed.'

Then he killed them and threw them out into the moat.

But no sooner had he got rid of these two cats, and was about to sit down by his fire again, than crowds of black cats and dogs swarmed out of every corner, more and more of them.

They howled horribly, and trampled on his fire, and tried to put it out.

For a time he looked quietly on, but when it grew too bad he seized his cooper's knife, and cried: 'Away with you, you rascally pack,' and let fly among them right and left. Some of them sprang away, the others he killed, and threw them out into the water.

When he came back he scraped the embers of his fire together again, and warmed himself. He could hardly keep his eyes open, and felt the greatest desire to go to sleep. He looked round, and in one corner he saw a big bed.

'That's the very thing,' he said, and lay down in it. As soon as he closed his eyes, the bed began to move, and soon it was tearing round and round the castle. 'Very good!' he said. 'The faster the better!' The bed rolled on as if it were dragged by six horses; over thresholds and stairs, up and down.

Suddenly it went hop, hop, hop, and turned topsy-turvy, so that it lay upon him like a mountain. But he pitched the pillows and blankets into the air, slipped out of it, and said: ‘Now any one may ride who likes.’

Then he lay down by his fire and slept till daylight.

In the morning the King came, and when he saw him lying on the floor, he thought the ghosts had killed him, and he was dead. So he said: ‘It’s a sad pity, for such a handsome fellow.’

But the Youth heard him, and sat up, saying: ‘It has not come to that yet.’

The King was surprised and delighted, and asked him how he had got on.

‘Pretty well!’ he answered. ‘One night is gone, I suppose I shall get through the others too.’

When the Landlord saw him he opened his eyes, and said: ‘I never thought I should see you alive again. Have you learnt how to shudder now?’

‘No,’ he answered; ‘it’s all in vain. If only some one would tell me how.’

The second night came, and up he went again and sat down by the fire, and began his old song: ‘Oh, if only I could learn to shudder.’

In the middle of the night a great noise and uproar began, first soft, and then growing louder; then for a short time there would be silence.

At last, with a loud scream, half the body of a man fell down the chimney in front of him.

‘Hullo!’ he said, ‘another half is wanting here; this is too little.’

The noise began again, and, amidst shrieks and howls, the other half fell down.

‘Wait a bit,’ he said; ‘I’ll blow up the fire.’

When this was done, and he looked round, the two halves had come together, and a hideous man sat in his place.

‘We didn’t bargain for that,’ said the Youth. ‘The bench is mine.’

The man wanted to push him out of the way, but the Youth would not have it, flung him aside, and took his own seat.

Then more men fell down the chimney, one after the other, and they fetched nine human shin bones and two skulls, and began to play skittles.

The Youth felt inclined to join them, and cried: ‘I say, can I play too?’

‘Yes, if you’ve got any money.’

‘Money enough,’ he answered, ‘but your balls aren’t quite round.’

Then he took the skulls and turned them on the lathe till they were quite round. ‘Now they will roll better,’ he said. ‘Here goes! The more, the merrier!’

So he played with them, and lost some money, but when it struck twelve everything disappeared. He lay down, and was soon fast asleep.

Next morning the King came again to look after him, and said: ‘Well, how did you get on this time?’

‘I played skittles,’ he answered, ‘and lost a few coins.’

‘Didn’t you learn to shudder?’

‘Not I. I only made merry. Oh, if I could but find out how to shudder.’

On the third night he again sat down on his bench, and said quite savagely: ‘If only I could shudder!’

When it grew late, six tall men came in, carrying a bier, and he said: 'Hullo there! That must be my cousin who died a few days ago.' And he beckoned and said: 'Come along, cousin, come along.'

The men put the coffin on the floor, and he went up and took the lid off, and there lay a dead man. He felt the face, and it was as cold as ice. 'Wait,' he said; 'I will warm him.'

Then he went to the fire and warmed his hand, and laid it on his face, but the dead man remained cold. He took him out of the coffin, sat down by the fire, and took him on his knees, and rubbed his arms to make the blood circulate.

But it was all no good. Next, it came into his head that if two people were in bed together, they warmed each other. So he put the dead man in the bed, covered him up, and lay down beside him.

After a time the dead man grew warm, and began to move.

Then the Youth said: 'There, you see, cousin mine, have I not warmed you?'

But the Man rose up, and cried: 'Now, I will strangle you!'

'What!' said he, 'are those all the thanks I get? Back you go into your coffin then.' So saying, he lifted him up, threw him in, and fastened down the lid. Then the six men came back and carried the coffin away.

'I cannot shudder,' he said; 'and I shall never learn it here.'

Just then a huge Man appeared. He was frightful to look at, old, and with a long white beard.

'Oh, you miserable wight!' he cried. 'You shall soon learn what shuddering is, for you shall die.'

'Not so fast,' said the Youth. 'If I am to die, I must be present.'

'I will make short work of you,' said the old monster.

'Softly! softly! don't you boast. I am as strong as you, and very likely much stronger.'

'We shall see about that,' said the Old Man. 'If you are the stronger, I will let you go. Come; we will try.'

Then he led him through numberless dark passages to a smithy, took an axe, and with one blow struck one of the anvils into the earth.

'I can better that,' said the Youth, and went to the other anvil. The Old Man placed himself near to see, and his white beard hung over.

Then the Youth took the axe and split the anvil with one blow, catching in the Old Man's beard at the same time.

'Now, I have you fast,' said the Youth, 'and you will be the one to die.'

Then he seized an iron rod, and belaboured the Old Man with it, till he shrieked for mercy, and promised him great riches if he would stop.

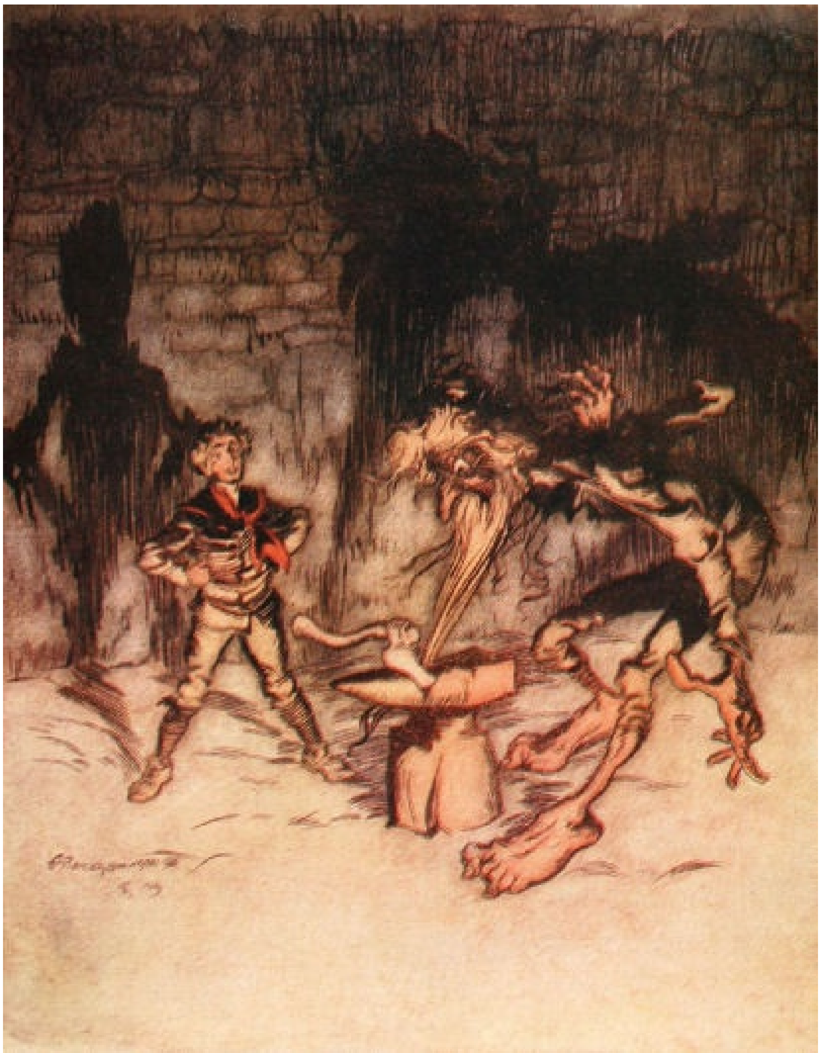
Then the Youth pulled out the axe and released him, and the Old Man led him back into the castle, and showed him three chests of gold in a cellar.

'One is for the poor,' he said, 'one for the King, and one for you.'

The clock struck twelve, and the ghost disappeared, leaving the Youth in the dark.

‘I must manage to get out somehow,’ he said, and groped about till he found his way back to his room, where he lay down by the fire and went to sleep.

Next morning the King came and said: ‘Now you must have learnt how to shudder.’



‘No,’ said he. ‘What can it be? My dead cousin was there, and an Old Man with a beard came and showed me a lot of gold. But what shuddering is, that no man can tell me.’

Then said the King: ‘You have broken the spell on the castle, and you shall marry my daughter.’

‘That is all very well,’ he said; ‘but still I don’t know what shuddering is.’

The gold was got out of the castle, and the marriage was celebrated, but, happy as the young King was, and much as he loved his wife, he was always saying: ‘Oh, if only I could learn to shudder, if only I could learn to shudder.’

At last his wife was vexed by it, and her waiting-woman said: ‘I can help you; he shall be taught the meaning of shuddering.’

And she went out to the brook which ran through the garden and got a pail full of cold water and little fishes.

At night, when the young King was asleep, his wife took the coverings off and poured the cold water over him, and all the little fishes flopped about him.

Then he woke up, and cried: ‘Oh, how I am shuddering, dear wife, how I am shuddering! Now I know what shuddering is!’

King Thrushbeard

THERE was once a King who had a Daughter. She was more beautiful than words can tell, but at the same time so proud and haughty that no man who came to woo her was good enough for her. She turned away one after another, and even mocked them.

One day her father ordered a great feast to be given, and invited to it all the marriageable young men from far and near.

They were all placed in a row, according to their rank and position. First came Kings, then Princes, then Dukes, Earls, and Barons.

The Princess was led through the ranks, but she had some fault to find with all of them.

One was too stout. ‘That barrel!’ she said. The next was too tall. ‘Long and lean is no good!’ The third was too short. ‘Short and stout, can’t turn about!’ The fourth was too white. ‘Pale as death!’ The fifth was too red. ‘Turkey-cock!’ The sixth was not straight. ‘Oven-dried!’

So there was something against each of them. But she made specially merry over one good King, who stood quite at the head of the row, and whose chin was a little hooked.

‘Why!’ she cried, ‘he has a chin like the beak of a thrush.’

After that, he was always called ‘King Thrushbeard.’

When the old King saw that his Daughter only made fun of them, and despised all the suitors who were assembled, he was very angry, and swore that the first beggar who came to the door should be her husband.

A few days after, a wandering Musician began to sing at the window, hoping to receive charity.

When the King heard him, he said: ‘Let him be brought in.’

The Musician came in, dressed in dirty rags, and sang to the King and his Daughter, and when he had finished, he begged alms of them.

The King said: ‘Your song has pleased me so much, that I will give you my Daughter to be your wife.’

The Princess was horror-stricken. But the King said: ‘I have sworn an oath to give you to the first beggar who came; and I will keep my word.’

No entreaties were of any avail. A Parson was brought, and she had to marry the Musician there and then.

When the marriage was completed, the King said: ‘Now you are a beggar-woman, you can’t stay in my castle any longer. You must go away with your Husband.’

The Beggar took her by the hand and led her away, and she was obliged to go with him on foot.

When they came to a big wood, she asked:

‘Ah! who is the Lord of this forest so fine?’ ‘It belongs to King Thrushbeard. It might have been thine, If his Queen you had been.’ ‘Ah! sad must I sing! I would I’d accepted the hand of the King.’

After that they reached a great meadow, and she asked again:

‘Ah! who is the Lord of these meadows so fine?’ ‘They belong to King Thrushbeard, and would have been thine, If his Queen you had been.’ ‘Ah! sad must I sing! I would I’d accepted the love of the King.’

Then they passed through a large town, and again she asked:

‘Ah! who is the Lord of this city so fine?’ ‘It belongs to King Thrushbeard, and it might have been thine, If his Queen you had been.’ ‘Ah! sad must I sing! I would I’d accepted the heart of the King.’

‘It doesn’t please me at all,’ said the Musician, ‘that you are always wishing for another husband. Am I not good enough for you?’

At last they came to a miserable little hovel, and she said:

‘Ah, heavens! what’s this house, so mean and small? This wretched little hut’s no house at all.’

The Musician answered: ‘This is my house, and yours; where we are to live together.’

The door was so low that she had to stoop to get in.

‘Where are the servants?’ asked the Princess.

‘Servants indeed!’ answered the Beggar. ‘Whatever you want done, you must do for yourself. Light the fire, and put the kettle on to make my supper. I am very tired.’

But the Princess knew nothing about lighting fires or cooking, and to get it done at all, the Beggar had to do it himself.

When they had finished their humble fare, they went to bed. But in the morning the Man made her get up very early to do the housework.

They lived like this for a few days, till they had eaten up all their store of food.

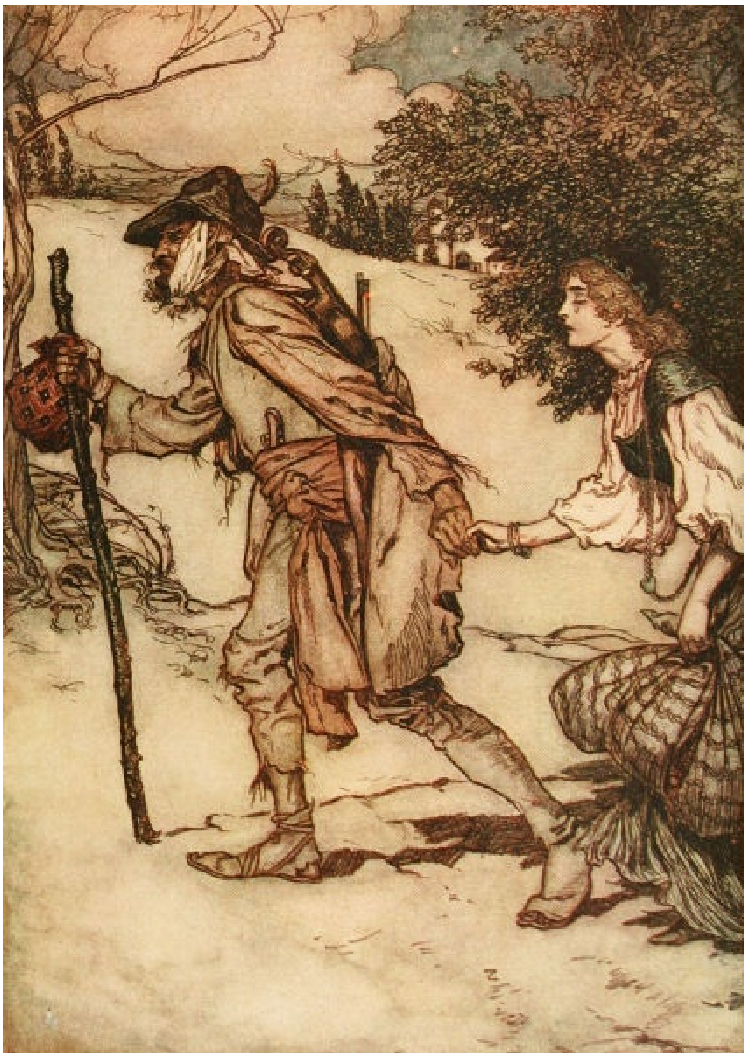
Then the Man said: ‘Wife, this won’t do any longer; we can’t live here without working. You shall make baskets.’

So he went out and cut some osiers, and brought them home. She began to weave them, but the hard osiers bruised her tender hands.

‘I see that won’t do,’ said the Beggar. ‘You had better spin; perhaps you can manage that.’

So she sat down and tried to spin, but the harsh yarn soon cut her delicate fingers and made them bleed.

‘Now you see,’ said the Man, ‘what a good-for-nothing you are. I have made a bad bargain in you. But I will try to start a trade in earthenware. You must sit in the market and offer your goods for sale.’



‘Alas!’ she thought, ‘if any of the people from my father’s kingdom come and see me sitting in the market-place, offering goods for sale, they will scoff at me.’ But it was no good. She had to obey, unless she meant to die of hunger.

All went well the first time. The people willingly bought her wares because she was so handsome, and they paid what she asked them — nay, some even gave her the money and left her the pots as well.

They lived on the gains as long as they lasted, and then the Man laid in a new stock of wares.

She took her seat in a corner of the market, set out her crockery about her, and began to cry her wares.

Suddenly, a drunken Hussar came galloping up, and rode right in among the pots, breaking them into thousands of bits.

She began to cry, and was so frightened that she did not know what to do. ‘Oh! what will become of me?’ she cried. ‘What will my Husband say to me?’ She ran home, and told him her misfortune.

‘Who would ever think of sitting at the corner of the market with crockery?’ he said. ‘Stop that crying. I see you are no manner of use for any decent kind of work. I have been to our King’s palace, and asked if they do not want a kitchen wench, and they have promised to try you. You will get your victuals free, at any rate.'

So the Princess became a kitchen wench, and had to wait upon the Cook and do all the dirty work. She fixed a pot into each of her pockets, and in them took home her share of the scraps and leavings, and upon these they lived.

It so happened that the marriage of the eldest Princess just then took place, and the poor Woman went upstairs and stood behind the door to peep at all the splendour.

When the rooms were lighted up, and she saw the guests streaming in, one more beautiful than the other, and the scene grew more and more brilliant, she thought, with a heavy heart, of her sad fate. She cursed the pride and haughtiness which had been the cause of her humiliation, and of her being brought to such depths.

Every now and then the Servants would throw her bits from the savoury dishes they were carrying away from the feast, and these she put into her pots to take home with her.

All at once the King's son came in. He was dressed in silk and velvet, and he had a golden chain round his neck.

When he saw the beautiful Woman standing at the door, he seized her by the hand, and wanted to dance with her.

But she shrank and refused, because she saw that it was King Thrushbeard, who had been one of the suitors for her hand, and whom she had most scornfully driven away.

Her resistance was no use, and he dragged her into the hall. The string by which her pockets were suspended broke. Down fell the pots, and the soup and savoury morsels were spilt all over the floor.

When the guests saw it, they burst into shouts of mocking laughter.

She was so ashamed, that she would gladly have sunk into the earth. She rushed to the door, and tried to escape, but on the stairs a Man stopped her and brought her back.

When she looked at him, it was no other than King Thrushbeard again.

He spoke kindly to her, and said: 'Do not be afraid. I and the Beggar-Man, who lived in the poor little hovel with you, are one and the same. For love of you I disguised myself; and I was also the Hussar who rode among your pots. All this I did to bend your proud spirit, and to punish you for the haughtiness with which you mocked me.'

She wept bitterly, and said: 'I was very wicked, and I am not worthy to be your wife.'

But he said: 'Be happy! Those evil days are over. Now we will celebrate our true wedding.'

The waiting-women came and put rich clothing upon her, and her Father, with all his Court, came and wished her joy on her marriage with King Thrushbeard.

Then, in truth, her happiness began. I wish we had been there to see it, you and I.

Iron Hans

THERE was once a King whose castle was surrounded by a forest full of game. One day he sent a Huntsman out to shoot a deer, but he never came back.

'Perhaps an accident has happened to him,' said the King.

Next day he sent out two more Huntsmen to look for him, but they did not return either. On the third day he sent for all his Huntsmen, and said to them, 'Search the whole forest without ceasing, until you have found all three.'

But not a single man of all these, or one of the pack of hounds they took with them, ever came back. From this time forth no one would venture into the forest; so there it lay, wrapped in silence and solitude, with only an occasional eagle or hawk circling over it.

This continued for several years, and then one day a strange Huntsman sought an audience of the King, and offered to penetrate into the dangerous wood. The King, however, would not give him permission, and said, 'It's not safe, and I am afraid if you go in that you will never come out again, any more than all the others.'

The Huntsman answered, 'Sire, I will take the risk upon myself. I do not know fear.'

So the Huntsman went into the wood with his Dog. Before long the Dog put up some game, and wanted to chase it; but hardly had he taken a few steps when he came to a deep pool, and could go no further. A naked arm appeared out of the water, seized him, and drew him down.

When the Huntsman saw this, he went back and fetched three men with pails to empty the pool. When they got to the bottom they found a Wild Man, whose body was as brown as rusty iron, and his hair hanging down over his face to his knees. They bound him with cords, and carried him away to the castle. There was great excitement over the Wild Man, and the King had an iron cage made for him in the courtyard. He forbade any one to open the door of the cage on pain of death, and the Queen had to keep the key in her own charge.

After this, anybody could walk in the forest with safety.

The King had a little son eight years old, and one day he was playing in the courtyard. In his play his golden ball fell into the cage. The boy ran up, and said, 'Give me back my ball.'

'Not until you have opened the door,' said the Wild Man.

'No; I can't do that,' said the boy. 'My father has forbidden it,' and then he ran away.

Next day he came again, and asked for his ball. The Man said, 'Open my door'; but he would not.

On the third day the King went out hunting, and the boy came again, and said, 'Even if I would, I could not open the door. I have not got the key.'

Then the Wild Man said, ‘It is lying under your mother’s pillow. You can easily get it.’

The boy, who was very anxious to have his ball back, threw his scruples to the winds, and fetched the key. The door was very stiff, and he pinched his fingers in opening it. As soon as it was open the Wild Man came out, gave the boy his ball, and hurried away. The boy was now very frightened, and cried out, ‘O Wild Man, don’t go away, or I shall be beaten!’

The Wild Man turned back, picked up the boy, put him on his shoulder, and walked hurriedly off into the wood.

When the King came home he saw at once the cage was empty, and asked the Queen how it had come about. She knew nothing about it, and went to look for the key, which was of course gone. They called the boy, but there was no answer. The King sent people out into the fields to look for him, but all in vain; he was gone. The King easily guessed what had happened, and great grief fell on the royal household.

When the Wild Man got back into the depths of the dark forest he took the boy down off his shoulder, and said, ‘You will never see your father and mother again; but I will keep you here with me, because you had pity on me and set me free. If you do as you are told, you will be well treated. I have treasures and gold enough and to spare, more than anybody in the world.’

He made a bed of moss for the boy, on which he went to sleep. Next morning the Man led him to a spring, and said, ‘You see this golden well is bright and clear as crystal? You must sit by it, and take care that nothing falls into it, or it will be contaminated. I shall come every evening to see if you have obeyed my orders.’

The boy sat down on the edge of the spring to watch it; sometimes he would see a gold fish or a golden snake darting through it, and he guarded it well, so that nothing should fall into it. One day as he was sitting like this his finger pained him so much that involuntarily he dipped it into the water. He drew it out very quickly, but saw that it was gilded, and although he tried hard to clean it, it remained golden. In the evening Iron Hans came back, looked at the boy, and said, ‘What has happened to the well to-day?’

‘Nothing, nothing!’ he answered, keeping his finger behind his back, so that Iron Hans should not see it.

But he said, ‘You have dipped your finger into the water. It does not matter this time, but take care that nothing of the kind occurs again.’

Early next morning the boy took his seat by the spring again to watch. His finger still hurt very much, and he put his hand up above his head; but, unfortunately, in so doing he brushed a hair into the well. He quickly took it out, but it was already gilded. When Iron Hans came in the evening, he knew very well what had happened.

‘You have let a hair fall into the well,’ he said. ‘I will overlook it once more, but if it happens for the third time, the well will be polluted, and you can no longer stay with me.’

On the third day the boy again sat by the well; but he took good care not to move a finger, however much it might hurt. The time seemed very long to him as he looked at his face reflected in the water. As he bent over further and further to look into his eyes, his long hair fell over his shoulder right into the water. He started up at once, but not before his whole head of hair had become golden, and glittered like the sun. You may imagine how frightened the poor boy was. He took his pocket-handkerchief and tied it over his head, so that Iron Hans should not see it. But he knew all about it before he came, and at once said, ‘Take that handkerchief off your head,’ and then all the golden hair tumbled out. All the poor boy’s excuses were no good. ‘You have not stood the test, and you can no longer stay here. You must go out into the world, and there you will learn the meaning of poverty. But as your heart is not bad, and as I wish you well, I will grant you one thing. When you are in great need, go to the forest and cry “Iron Hans,” and I will come and help you. My power is great, greater than you think, and I have gold and silver in abundance.’

So the King’s son left the forest, and wandered over trodden and untrodden paths till he reached a great city. He tried to get work, but he could not find any; besides, he knew no trade by which to make a living. At last he went to the castle and asked if they would employ him. The courtiers did not know what use they could make of him, but they were taken with his appearance, and said he might stay. At last the Cook took him into his service, and said he might carry wood and water for him, and sweep up the ashes.

One day, as there was no one else at hand, the Cook ordered him to carry the food up to the royal table. As he did not want his golden hair to be seen, he kept his cap on. Nothing of the sort had ever happened in the presence of the King before, and he said, ‘When you come into the royal presence, you must take your cap off.’

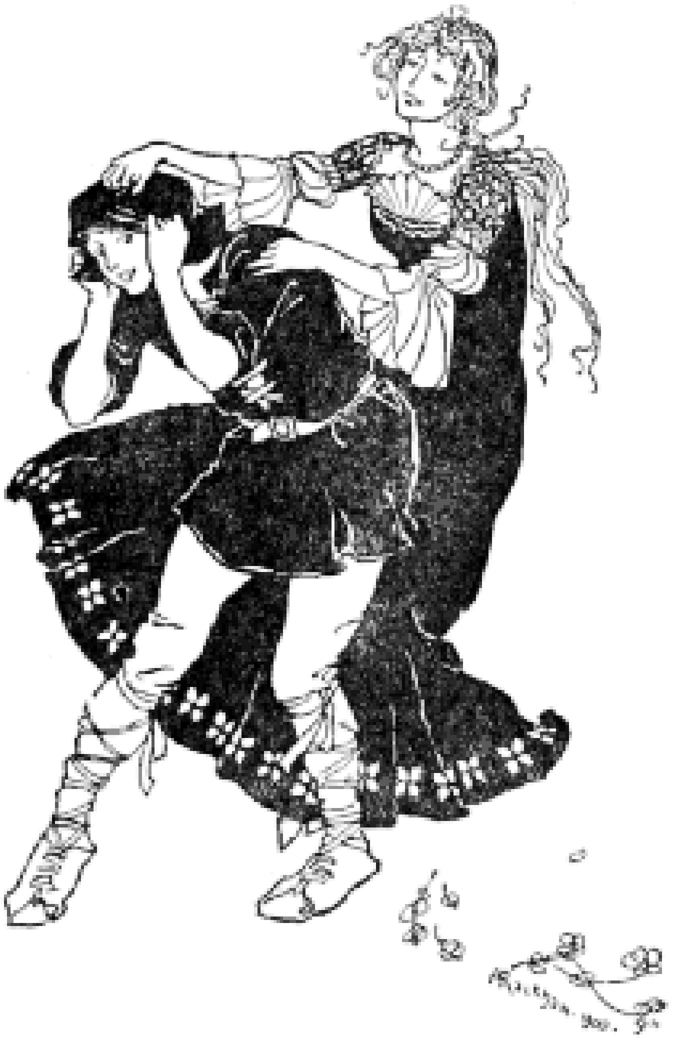
‘Alas, Sire,’ he said, ‘I cannot take it off, I have a bad wound on my head.’

Then the King ordered the Cook to be called, and asked how he could take such a boy into his service, and ordered him to be sent away at once. But the Cook was sorry for him, and exchanged him with the Gardener’s boy.

Now the boy had to dig and hoe, plant and water, in every kind of weather. One day in the summer, when he was working alone in the garden, it was very hot, and he took off his cap for the fresh air to cool his head. When the sun shone on his hair it glittered so that the beams penetrated right into the Princess’s bedroom, and she sprang up to see what it was. She discovered the youth, and called to him, ‘Bring me a nosegay, young man.’

He hurriedly put on his cap, picked a lot of wild flowers, and tied them up. On his way up to the Princess, the Gardener met him, and said, ‘How can you take such poor flowers to the Princess? Quickly cut another bouquet, and mind they are the choicest and rarest flowers.’

‘Oh no,’ said the youth. ‘The wild flowers have a sweeter scent, and will please her better.’



She immediately clutched at his cap to pull it off; but he held it on with both hands.

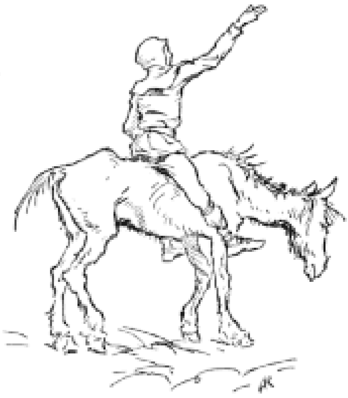
As soon as he went into the room the Princess said, ‘Take off your cap; it is not proper for you to wear it before me.’

He answered again, ‘I may not take it off, because I have a wound on my head.’

But she took hold of the cap, and pulled it off, and all his golden hair tumbled over his shoulders in a shower. It was quite a sight. He tried to get away, but she took hold of his arm, and gave him a handful of ducats. He took them, but he cared nothing for the gold, and gave it to the Gardener for his children to play with.

Next day the Princess again called him to bring her a bunch of wild flowers, and when he brought it she immediately clutched at his cap to pull it off; but he held it on with both hands. Again she gave him a handful of ducats, but he would not keep them, and gave them to the Gardener’s children. The third day the same thing happened, but she could not take off his cap, and he would not keep the gold.

Not long after this the kingdom was invaded. The King assembled his warriors. He did not know whether they would be able to conquer his enemies or not, as they were very powerful, and had a mighty army. Then the Gardener's assistant said, 'I have been brought up to fight; give me a horse, and I will go too.'



He called three times, 'Iron Hans,' as loud as he could.

The others laughed and said, 'When we are gone, find one for yourself. We will leave one behind in the stable for you.'

When they were gone, he went and got the horse out; it was lame in one leg, and hobbled along, humpety-hump, humpety-hump. Nevertheless, he mounted it and rode away to the dark forest. When he came to the edge of it, he called three times, 'Iron Hans,' as loud as he could, till the trees resounded with it.

The Wild Man appeared immediately, and said, 'What do you want?'

'I want a strong horse to go to the war.'

'You shall have it, and more besides.'

The Wild Man went back into the wood, and before long a Groom came out, leading a fiery charger with snorting nostrils. Behind him followed a great body of warriors, all in armour, and their swords gleaming in the sun. The youth handed over his three-legged steed to the Groom, mounted the other, and rode away at the head of the troop.

When he approached the battle-field a great many of the King's men had already fallen, and before long the rest must have given in. Then the youth, at the head of his iron troop, charged, and bore down the enemy like a mighty wind, smiting everything which came in their way. They tried to fly, but the youth fell upon them, and did not stop while one remained alive.

Instead of joining the King, he led his troop straight back to the wood and called Iron Hans again.

'What do you want?' asked the Wild Man.

'Take back your charger and your troop, and give me back my three-legged steed.'

His request was granted, and he rode his three-legged steed home.

When the King returned to the castle his daughter met him and congratulated him on his victory.

'It was not I who won it,' he said; 'but a strange Knight, who came to my assistance with his troop.' His daughter asked who the strange Knight was, but the King did not know, and said, 'He pursued the enemy, and I have not seen him since.'

She asked the Gardener about his assistant, but he laughed, and said, ‘He has just come home on his three-legged horse, and the others made fun of him, and said, “Here comes our hobbler back again,” and asked which hedge he had been sleeping under. He answered, “I did my best, and without me things would have gone badly.” Then they laughed at him more than ever.’

The King said to his daughter, ‘I will give a great feast lasting three days, and you shall throw a golden apple. Perhaps the unknown Knight will come among the others to try and catch it.’

When notice was given of the feast, the youth went to the wood and called Iron Hans.

‘What do you want?’ he asked.

‘I want to secure the King’s golden apple,’ he said.

‘It is as good as yours already,’ answered Iron Hans. ‘You shall have a tawny suit, and ride a proud chestnut.’

When the day arrived the youth took his place among the other Knights, but no one knew him. The Princess stepped forward and threw the apple among the Knights, and he was the only one who could catch it. As soon as he had it he rode away.

On the second day Iron Hans fitted him out as a White Knight, riding a gallant grey. Again he caught the apple; but he did not stay a minute, and, as before, hurried away.

The King now grew angry, and said, ‘This must not be; he must come before me and give me his name.’

He gave an order that if the Knight made off again he was to be pursued and brought back.

On the third day the youth received from Iron Hans a black outfit, and a fiery black charger.

Again he caught the apple; but as he was riding off with it the King’s people chased him, and one came so near that he wounded him in the leg. Still he escaped, but his horse galloped so fast that his helmet fell off, and they all saw that he had golden hair. So they rode back, and told the King what they had seen.

Next day the Princess asked the Gardener about his assistant.

‘He is working in the garden. The queer fellow went to the feast, and he only came back last night. He has shown my children three golden apples which he won.’

The King ordered him to be brought before him. When he appeared he still wore his cap. But the Princess went up to him and took it off; then all his golden hair fell over his shoulders, and it was so beautiful that they were all amazed by it.

‘Are you the Knight who came to the feast every day in a different colour, and who caught the three golden apples?’ asked the King.

‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘and here are the apples,’ bringing them out of his pocket, and giving them to the King. ‘If you want further proof, here is the wound in my leg given me by your people when they pursued me. But I am also the Knight who helped you to conquer the enemy.’

‘If you can do such deeds you are no Gardener’s boy. Tell me who is your father?’

‘My father is a powerful King, and I have plenty of gold — as much as ever I want.’

‘I see very well,’ said the King, ‘that we owe you many thanks. Can I do anything to please you?’

‘Yes,’ he answered; ‘indeed, you can. Give me your daughter to be my wife!’

The maiden laughed, and said, ‘He does not beat about the bush; but I saw long ago that he was no Gardener’s boy.’

Then she went up to him and kissed him.

His father and mother came to the wedding, and they were full of joy, for they had long given up all hope of ever seeing their dear son again. As they were all sitting at the wedding feast, the music suddenly stopped, the doors flew open, and a proud King walked in at the head of a great following. He went up to the Bridegroom, embraced him, and said, ‘I am Iron Hans, who was bewitched and changed into a Wild Man; but you have broken the spell and set me free. All the treasure that I have is now your own.’

MARIAN EDWARDES REVISION, 1912

Translated by Edgar Taylor and Revised by Marian Edwardes

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THE GOLDEN BIRD

A certain king had a beautiful garden, and in the garden stood a tree which bore golden apples. These apples were always counted, and about the time when they began to grow ripe it was found that every night one of them was gone. The king became very angry at this, and ordered the gardener to keep watch all night under the tree. The gardener set his eldest son to watch; but about twelve o'clock he fell asleep, and in the morning another of the apples was missing. Then the second son was ordered to watch; and at midnight he too fell asleep, and in the morning another apple was gone. Then the third son offered to keep watch; but the gardener at first would not let him, for fear some harm should come to him: however, at last he consented, and the young man laid himself under the tree to watch. As the clock struck twelve he heard a rustling noise in the air, and a bird came flying that was of pure gold; and as it was snapping at one of the apples with its beak, the gardener's son jumped up and shot an arrow at it. But the arrow did the bird no harm; only it dropped a golden feather from its tail, and then flew away. The golden feather was brought to the king in the morning, and all the council was called together. Everyone agreed that it was worth more than all the wealth of the kingdom: but the king said, 'One feather is of no use to me, I must have the whole bird.'

Then the gardener's eldest son set out and thought to find the golden bird very easily; and when he had gone but a little way, he came to a wood, and by the side of the wood he saw a fox sitting; so he took his bow and made ready to shoot at it. Then the fox said, 'Do not shoot me, for I will give you good counsel; I know what your business is, and that you want to find the golden bird. You will reach a village in the evening; and when you get there, you will see two inns opposite to each other, one of which is very pleasant and beautiful to look at: go not in there, but rest for the night in the other, though it may appear to you to be very poor and mean.' But the son thought to himself, 'What can such a beast as this know about the matter?' So he shot his arrow at the fox; but he missed it, and it set up its tail above its back and ran into the wood. Then he went his way, and in the evening came to the village where the two inns were; and in one of these were people singing, and dancing, and feasting; but the other looked very dirty, and poor. 'I should be very silly,' said he, 'if I went to that shabby house, and left this charming place'; so he went into the smart house, and ate and drank at his ease, and forgot the bird, and his country too.

Time passed on; and as the eldest son did not come back, and no tidings were heard of him, the second son set out, and the same thing happened to him. He met the fox, who gave him the good advice: but when he came to the two inns, his eldest brother was standing at the window where the merrymaking was, and called to him to come in; and he could not withstand the temptation, but went in, and forgot the golden bird and his country in the same manner.

Time passed on again, and the youngest son too wished to set out into the wide world to seek for the golden bird; but his father would not listen to it for a long while, for he was very fond of his son, and was afraid that some ill luck might happen to him also, and prevent his coming back. However, at last it was agreed he should go, for he would not rest at home; and as he came to the wood, he met the fox, and heard the same good counsel. But he was thankful to the fox, and did not attempt his life as his brothers had done; so the fox said, 'Sit upon my tail, and you will travel faster.' So he sat down, and the fox began to run, and away they went over stock and stone so quick that their hair whistled in the wind.

When they came to the village, the son followed the fox's counsel, and without looking about him went to the shabby inn and rested there all night at his ease. In the morning came the fox again and met him as he was beginning his journey, and said, 'Go straight forward, till you come to a castle, before which lie a whole troop of soldiers fast asleep and snoring: take no notice of them, but go into the castle and pass on and on till you come to a room, where the golden bird sits in a wooden cage; close by it stands a beautiful golden cage; but do not try to take the bird out of the shabby cage and put it into the handsome one, otherwise you will repent it.' Then the fox stretched out his tail again, and the young man sat himself down, and away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled in the wind.

Before the castle gate all was as the fox had said: so the son went in and found the chamber where the golden bird hung in a wooden cage, and below stood the golden cage, and the three golden apples that had been lost were lying close by it. Then thought he to himself, 'It will be a very droll thing to bring away such a fine bird in this shabby cage'; so he opened the door and took hold of it and put it into the golden cage. But the bird set up such a loud scream that all the soldiers awoke, and they took him prisoner and carried him before the king. The next morning the court sat to judge him; and when all was heard, it sentenced him to die, unless he should bring the king the golden horse which could run as swiftly as the wind; and if he did this, he was to have the golden bird given him for his own.

So he set out once more on his journey, sighing, and in great despair, when on a sudden his friend the fox met him, and said, 'You see now what has happened on account of your not listening to my counsel. I will still, however, tell you how to find the golden horse, if you will do as I bid you. You must go straight on till you come to the castle where the horse stands in his stall: by his side will lie the groom fast asleep and snoring: take away the horse quietly, but be sure to put the old leathern saddle upon him, and not the golden one that is close by it.' Then the son sat down on the fox's tail, and away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled in the wind.

All went right, and the groom lay snoring with his hand upon the golden saddle. But when the son looked at the horse, he thought it a great pity to put the leathern saddle upon it. 'I will give him the good one,' said he; 'I am sure he deserves it.' As he took up the golden saddle the groom awoke and cried out so loud, that all the guards ran in and took him prisoner, and in the morning he was again brought before the court to be judged, and was sentenced to die. But it was agreed, that, if he could bring thither the beautiful princess, he should live, and have the bird and the horse given him for his own.

Then he went his way very sorrowful; but the old fox came and said, ‘Why did not you listen to me? If you had, you would have carried away both the bird and the horse; yet will I once more give you counsel. Go straight on, and in the evening you will arrive at a castle. At twelve o’clock at night the princess goes to the bathing-house: go up to her and give her a kiss, and she will let you lead her away; but take care you do not suffer her to go and take leave of her father and mother.’ Then the fox stretched out his tail, and so away they went over stock and stone till their hair whistled again.

As they came to the castle, all was as the fox had said, and at twelve o’clock the young man met the princess going to the bath and gave her the kiss, and she agreed to run away with him, but begged with many tears that he would let her take leave of her father. At first he refused, but she wept still more and more, and fell at his feet, till at last he consented; but the moment she came to her father’s house the guards awoke and he was taken prisoner again.

Then he was brought before the king, and the king said, ‘You shall never have my daughter unless in eight days you dig away the hill that stops the view from my window.’ Now this hill was so big that the whole world could not take it away: and when he had worked for seven days, and had done very little, the fox came and said. ‘Lie down and go to sleep; I will work for you.’ And in the morning he awoke and the hill was gone; so he went merrily to the king, and told him that now that it was removed he must give him the princess.

Then the king was obliged to keep his word, and away went the young man and the princess; and the fox came and said to him, ‘We will have all three, the princess, the horse, and the bird.’ ‘Ah!’ said the young man, ‘that would be a great thing, but how can you contrive it?’

‘If you will only listen,’ said the fox, ‘it can be done. When you come to the king, and he asks for the beautiful princess, you must say, “Here she is!” Then he will be very joyful; and you will mount the golden horse that they are to give you, and put out your hand to take leave of them; but shake hands with the princess last. Then lift her quickly on to the horse behind you; clap your spurs to his side, and gallop away as fast as you can.’

All went right: then the fox said, ‘When you come to the castle where the bird is, I will stay with the princess at the door, and you will ride in and speak to the king; and when he sees that it is the right horse, he will bring out the bird; but you must sit still, and say that you want to look at it, to see whether it is the true golden bird; and when you get it into your hand, ride away.’

This, too, happened as the fox said; they carried off the bird, the princess mounted again, and they rode on to a great wood. Then the fox came, and said, ‘Pray kill me, and cut off my head and my feet.’ But the young man refused to do it: so the fox said, ‘I will at any rate give you good counsel: beware of two things; ransom no one from the gallows, and sit down by the side of no river.’ Then away he went. ‘Well,’ thought the young man, ‘it is no hard matter to keep that advice.’

He rode on with the princess, till at last he came to the village where he had left his two brothers. And there he heard a great noise and uproar; and when he asked what was the matter, the people said, ‘Two men are going to be hanged.’ As he came nearer, he saw that the two men were his brothers, who had turned robbers; so he said, ‘Cannot they in any way be saved?’ But the people said ‘No,’ unless he would bestow all his money upon the rascals and buy their liberty. Then he did not stay to think about the matter, but paid what was asked, and his brothers were given up, and went on with him towards their home.

And as they came to the wood where the fox first met them, it was so cool and pleasant that the two brothers said, ‘Let us sit down by the side of the river, and rest a while, to eat and drink.’ So he said, ‘Yes,’ and forgot the fox’s counsel, and sat down on the side of the river; and while he suspected nothing, they came behind, and threw him down the bank, and took the princess, the horse, and the bird, and went home to the king their master, and said. ‘All this have we won by our labour.’ Then there was great rejoicing made; but the horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the princess wept.

The youngest son fell to the bottom of the river’s bed: luckily it was nearly dry, but his bones were almost broken, and the bank was so steep that he could find no way to get out. Then the old fox came once more, and scolded him for not following his advice; otherwise no evil would have befallen him: ‘Yet,’ said he, ‘I cannot leave you here, so lay hold of my tail and hold fast.’ Then he pulled him out of the river, and said to him, as he got upon the bank, ‘Your brothers have set watch to kill you, if they find you in the kingdom.’ So he dressed himself as a poor man, and came secretly to the king’s court, and was scarcely within the doors when the horse began to eat, and the bird to sing, and the princess left off weeping. Then he went to the king, and told him all his brothers’ roguery; and they were seized and punished, and he had the princess given to him again; and after the king’s death he was heir to his kingdom.

A long while after, he went to walk one day in the wood, and the old fox met him, and besought him with tears in his eyes to kill him, and cut off his head and feet. And at last he did so, and in a moment the fox was changed into a man, and turned out to be the brother of the princess, who had been lost a great many many years.

HANS IN LUCK

Some men are born to good luck: all they do or try to do comes right — all that falls to them is so much gain — all their geese are swans — all their cards are trumps — toss them which way you will, they will always, like poor puss, alight upon their legs, and only move on so much the faster. The world may very likely not always think of them as they think of themselves, but what care they for the world? what can it know about the matter?

One of these lucky beings was neighbour Hans. Seven long years he had worked hard for his master. At last he said, ‘Master, my time is up; I must go home and see my poor mother once more: so pray pay me my wages and let me go.’ And the master said, ‘You have been a faithful and good servant, Hans, so your pay shall be handsome.’ Then he gave him a lump of silver as big as his head.

Hans took out his pocket-handkerchief, put the piece of silver into it, threw it over his shoulder, and jogged off on his road homewards. As he went lazily on, dragging one foot after another, a man came in sight, trotting gaily along on a capital horse. ‘Ah!’ said Hans aloud, ‘what a fine thing it is to ride on horseback! There he sits as easy and happy as if he was at home, in the chair by his fireside; he trips against no stones, saves shoe-leather, and gets on he hardly knows how.’ Hans did not speak so softly but the horseman heard it all, and said, ‘Well, friend, why do you go on foot then?’ ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘I have this load to carry: to be sure it is silver, but it is so heavy that I can’t hold up my head, and you must know it hurts my shoulder sadly.’ ‘What do you say of making an exchange?’ said the horseman. ‘I will give you my horse, and you shall give me the silver; which will save you a great deal of trouble in carrying such a heavy load about with you.’ ‘With all my heart,’ said Hans: ‘but as you are so kind to me, I must tell you one thing — you will have a weary task to draw that silver about with you.’ However, the horseman got off, took the silver, helped Hans up, gave him the bridle into one hand and the whip into the other, and said, ‘When you want to go very fast, smack your lips loudly together, and cry “Jip!”’

Hans was delighted as he sat on the horse, drew himself up, squared his elbows, turned out his toes, cracked his whip, and rode merrily off, one minute whistling a merry tune, and another singing,

‘No care and no sorrow,
A fig for the morrow!
We’ll laugh and be merry,
Sing neigh down derry!’

After a time he thought he should like to go a little faster, so he smacked his lips and cried ‘Jip!’ Away went the horse full gallop; and before Hans knew what he was about, he was thrown off, and lay on his back by the road-side. His horse would have ran off, if a shepherd who was coming by, driving a cow, had not stopped it. Hans soon came to himself, and got upon his legs again, sadly vexed, and said to the shepherd, ‘This riding is no joke, when a man has the luck to get upon a beast like this that stumbles and flings him off as if it would break his neck. However, I'm off now once for all: I like your cow now a great deal better than this smart beast that played me this trick, and has spoiled my best coat, you see, in this puddle; which, by the by, smells not very like a nosegay. One can walk along at one's leisure behind that cow — keep good company, and have milk, butter, and cheese, every day, into the bargain. What would I give to have such a prize!' 'Well,' said the shepherd, 'if you are so fond of her, I will change my cow for your horse; I like to do good to my neighbours, even though I lose by it myself.' 'Done!' said Hans, merrily. 'What a noble heart that good man has!' thought he. Then the shepherd jumped upon the horse, wished Hans and the cow good morning, and away he rode.

Hans brushed his coat, wiped his face and hands, rested a while, and then drove off his cow quietly, and thought his bargain a very lucky one. 'If I have only a piece of bread (and I certainly shall always be able to get that), I can, whenever I like, eat my butter and cheese with it; and when I am thirsty I can milk my cow and drink the milk: and what can I wish for more?' When he came to an inn, he halted, ate up all his bread, and gave away his last penny for a glass of beer. When he had rested himself he set off again, driving his cow towards his mother's village. But the heat grew greater as soon as noon came on, till at last, as he found himself on a wide heath that would take him more than an hour to cross, he began to be so hot and parched that his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. 'I can find a cure for this,' thought he; 'now I will milk my cow and quench my thirst': so he tied her to the stump of a tree, and held his leathern cap to milk into; but not a drop was to be had. Who would have thought that this cow, which was to bring him milk and butter and cheese, was all that time utterly dry? Hans had not thought of looking to that.

While he was trying his luck in milking, and managing the matter very clumsily, the uneasy beast began to think him very troublesome; and at last gave him such a kick on the head as knocked him down; and there he lay a long while senseless. Luckily a butcher soon came by, driving a pig in a wheelbarrow. 'What is the matter with you, my man?' said the butcher, as he helped him up. Hans told him what had happened, how he was dry, and wanted to milk his cow, but found the cow was dry too. Then the butcher gave him a flask of ale, saying, 'There, drink and refresh yourself; your cow will give you no milk: don't you see she is an old beast, good for nothing but the slaughter-house?' 'Alas, alas!' said Hans, 'who would have thought it? What a shame to take my horse, and give me only a dry cow! If I kill her, what will she be good for? I hate cow-beef; it is not tender enough for me. If it were a pig now — like that fat gentleman you are driving along at his ease — one could do something with it; it would at any rate make sausages.' 'Well,' said the butcher, 'I don't like to say no, when one is asked to do a kind, neighbourly thing. To please you I will change, and give you my fine fat pig for the cow.' 'Heaven reward you for your kindness and self-denial!' said Hans, as he gave the butcher the cow; and taking the pig off the wheel-barrow, drove it away, holding it by the string that was tied to its leg.

So on he jogged, and all seemed now to go right with him: he had met with some misfortunes, to be sure; but he was now well repaid for all. How could it be otherwise with such a travelling companion as he had at last got?

The next man he met was a countryman carrying a fine white goose. The countryman stopped to ask what was o'clock; this led to further chat; and Hans told him all his luck, how he had so many good bargains, and how all the world went gay and smiling with him. The countryman then began to tell his tale, and said he was going to take the goose to a christening. 'Feel,' said he, 'how heavy it is, and yet it is only eight weeks old. Whoever roasts and eats it will find plenty of fat upon it, it has lived so well!' 'You're right,' said Hans, as he weighed it in his hand; 'but if you talk of fat, my pig is no trifle.' Meantime the countryman began to look grave, and shook his head. 'Hark ye!' said he, 'my worthy friend, you seem a good sort of fellow, so I can't help doing you a kind turn. Your pig may get you into a scrape. In the village I just came from, the squire has had a pig stolen out of his sty. I was dreadfully afraid when I saw you that you had got the squire's pig. If you have, and they catch you, it will be a bad job for you. The least they will do will be to throw you into the horse-pond. Can you swim?'

Poor Hans was sadly frightened. 'Good man,' cried he, 'pray get me out of this scrape. I know nothing of where the pig was either bred or born; but he may have been the squire's for aught I can tell: you know this country better than I do, take my pig and give me the goose.' 'I ought to have something into the bargain,' said the countryman; 'give a fat goose for a pig, indeed! 'Tis not everyone would do so much for you as that. However, I will not be hard upon you, as you are in trouble.' Then he took the string in his hand, and drove off the pig by a side path; while Hans went on the way homewards free from care. 'After all,' thought he, 'that chap is pretty well taken in. I don't care whose pig it is, but wherever it came from it has been a very good friend to me. I have much the best of the bargain. First there will be a capital roast; then the fat will find me in goose-grease for six months; and then there are all the beautiful white feathers. I will put them into my pillow, and then I am sure I shall sleep soundly without rocking. How happy my mother will be! Talk of a pig, indeed! Give me a fine fat goose.'

As he came to the next village, he saw a scissor-grinder with his wheel, working and singing,

'O'er hill and o'er dale
So happy I roam,
Work light and live well,
All the world is my home;
Then who so blythe, so merry as I?'

Hans stood looking on for a while, and at last said, 'You must be well off, master grinder! you seem so happy at your work.' 'Yes,' said the other, 'mine is a golden trade; a good grinder never puts his hand into his pocket without finding money in it — but where did you get that beautiful goose?' 'I did not buy it, I gave a pig for it.' 'And where did you get the pig?' 'I gave a cow for it.’ ‘And the cow?’ ‘I gave a horse for it.’ ‘And the horse?’ ‘I gave a lump of silver as big as my head for it.’ ‘And the silver?’ ‘Oh! I worked hard for that seven long years.’ ‘You have thriven well in the world hitherto,’ said the grinder, ‘now if you could find money in your pocket whenever you put your hand in it, your fortune would be made.’ ‘Very true: but how is that to be managed?’ ‘How? Why, you must turn grinder like myself,’ said the other; ‘you only want a grindstone; the rest will come of itself. Here is one that is but little the worse for wear: I would not ask more than the value of your goose for it — will you buy?’ ‘How can you ask?’ said Hans; ‘I should be the happiest man in the world, if I could have money whenever I put my hand in my pocket: what could I want more? there’s the goose.’ ‘Now,’ said the grinder, as he gave him a common rough stone that lay by his side, ‘this is a most capital stone; do but work it well enough, and you can make an old nail cut with it.’

Hans took the stone, and went his way with a light heart: his eyes sparkled for joy, and he said to himself, ‘Surely I must have been born in a lucky hour; everything I could want or wish for comes of itself. People are so kind; they seem really to think I do them a favour in letting them make me rich, and giving me good bargains.’

Meantime he began to be tired, and hungry too, for he had given away his last penny in his joy at getting the cow.

At last he could go no farther, for the stone tired him sadly: and he dragged himself to the side of a river, that he might take a drink of water, and rest a while. So he laid the stone carefully by his side on the bank: but, as he stooped down to drink, he forgot it, pushed it a little, and down it rolled, plump into the stream.

For a while he watched it sinking in the deep clear water; then sprang up and danced for joy, and again fell upon his knees and thanked Heaven, with tears in his eyes, for its kindness in taking away his only plague, the ugly heavy stone.

‘How happy am I!’ cried he; ‘nobody was ever so lucky as I.’ Then up he got with a light heart, free from all his troubles, and walked on till he reached his mother’s house, and told her how very easy the road to good luck was.

JORINDA AND JORINDEL

There was once an old castle, that stood in the middle of a deep gloomy wood, and in the castle lived an old fairy. Now this fairy could take any shape she pleased. All the day long she flew about in the form of an owl, or crept about the country like a cat; but at night she always became an old woman again. When any young man came within a hundred paces of her castle, he became quite fixed, and could not move a step till she came and set him free; which she would not do till he had given her his word never to come there again: but when any pretty maiden came within that space she was changed into a bird, and the fairy put her into a cage, and hung her up in a chamber in the castle. There were seven hundred of these cages hanging in the castle, and all with beautiful birds in them.

Now there was once a maiden whose name was Jorinda. She was prettier than all the pretty girls that ever were seen before, and a shepherd lad, whose name was Jorindel, was very fond of her, and they were soon to be married. One day they went to walk in the wood, that they might be alone; and Jorindel said, ‘We must take care that we don’t go too near to the fairy’s castle.’ It was a beautiful evening; the last rays of the setting sun shone bright through the long stems of the trees upon the green underwood beneath, and the turtle-doves sang from the tall birches.

Jorinda sat down to gaze upon the sun; Jorindel sat by her side; and both felt sad, they knew not why; but it seemed as if they were to be parted from one another for ever. They had wandered a long way; and when they looked to see which way they should go home, they found themselves at a loss to know what path to take.

The sun was setting fast, and already half of its circle had sunk behind the hill: Jorindel on a sudden looked behind him, and saw through the bushes that they had, without knowing it, sat down close under the old walls of the castle. Then he shrank for fear, turned pale, and trembled. Jorinda was just singing,

‘The ring-dove sang from the willow spray,
Well-a-day! Well-a-day!
He mourn’d for the fate of his darling mate,
Well-a-day!’

when her song stopped suddenly. Jorindel turned to see the reason, and beheld his Jorinda changed into a nightingale, so that her song ended with a mournful *jug, jug*. An owl with fiery eyes flew three times round them, and three times screamed:

‘Tu whu! Tu whu! Tu whu!’

Jorindel could not move; he stood fixed as a stone, and could neither weep, nor speak, nor stir hand or foot. And now the sun went quite down; the gloomy night came; the owl flew into a bush; and a moment after the old fairy came forth pale and meagre, with staring eyes, and a nose and chin that almost met one another.

She mumbled something to herself, seized the nightingale, and went away with it in her hand. Poor Jorindel saw the nightingale was gone — but what could he do? He could not speak, he could not move from the spot where he stood. At last the fairy came back and sang with a hoarse voice:

‘Till the prisoner is fast,
And her doom is cast,
There stay! Oh, stay!
When the charm is around her,
And the spell has bound her,
Hie away! away!’

On a sudden Jorindel found himself free. Then he fell on his knees before the fairy, and prayed her to give him back his dear Jorinda: but she laughed at him, and said he should never see her again; then she went her way.

He prayed, he wept, he sorrowed, but all in vain. ‘Alas!’ he said, ‘what will become of me?’ He could not go back to his own home, so he went to a strange village, and employed himself in keeping sheep. Many a time did he walk round and round as near to the hated castle as he dared go, but all in vain; he heard or saw nothing of Jorinda.

At last he dreamt one night that he found a beautiful purple flower, and that in the middle of it lay a costly pearl; and he dreamt that he plucked the flower, and went with it in his hand into the castle, and that everything he touched with it was disenchanted, and that there he found his Jorinda again.

In the morning when he awoke, he began to search over hill and dale for this pretty flower; and eight long days he sought for it in vain: but on the ninth day, early in the morning, he found the beautiful purple flower; and in the middle of it was a large dewdrop, as big as a costly pearl. Then he plucked the flower, and set out and travelled day and night, till he came again to the castle.

He walked nearer than a hundred paces to it, and yet he did not become fixed as before, but found that he could go quite close up to the door. Jorindel was very glad indeed to see this. Then he touched the door with the flower, and it sprang open; so that he went in through the court, and listened when he heard so many birds singing. At last he came to the chamber where the fairy sat, with the seven hundred birds singing in the seven hundred cages. When she saw Jorindel she was very angry, and screamed with rage; but she could not come within two yards of him, for the flower he held in his hand was his safeguard. He looked around at the birds, but alas! there were many, many nightingales, and how then should he find out which was his Jorinda? While he was thinking what to do, he saw the fairy had taken down one of the cages, and was making the best of her way off through the door. He ran or flew after her, touched the cage with the flower, and Jorinda stood before him, and threw her arms round his neck looking as beautiful as ever, as beautiful as when they walked together in the wood.

Then he touched all the other birds with the flower, so that they all took their old forms again; and he took Jorinda home, where they were married, and lived happily together many years: and so did a good many other lads, whose maidens had been forced to sing in the old fairy’s cages by themselves, much longer than they liked.

THE TRAVELLING MUSICIANS

An honest farmer had once an ass that had been a faithful servant to him a great many years, but was now growing old and every day more and more unfit for work. His master therefore was tired of keeping him and began to think of putting an end to him; but the ass, who saw that some mischief was in the wind, took himself slyly off, and began his journey towards the great city, ‘For there,’ thought he, ‘I may turn musician.’

After he had travelled a little way, he spied a dog lying by the roadside and panting as if he were tired. ‘What makes you pant so, my friend?’ said the ass. ‘Alas!’ said the dog, ‘my master was going to knock me on the head, because I am old and weak, and can no longer make myself useful to him in hunting; so I ran away; but what can I do to earn my livelihood?’ ‘Hark ye!’ said the ass, ‘I am going to the great city to turn musician: suppose you go with me, and try what you can do in the same way?’ The dog said he was willing, and they jogged on together.

They had not gone far before they saw a cat sitting in the middle of the road and making a most rueful face. ‘Pray, my good lady,’ said the ass, ‘what’s the matter with you? You look quite out of spirits!’ ‘Ah, me!’ said the cat, ‘how can one be in good spirits when one’s life is in danger? Because I am beginning to grow old, and had rather lie at my ease by the fire than run about the house after the mice, my mistress laid hold of me, and was going to drown me; and though I have been lucky enough to get away from her, I do not know what I am to live upon.’ ‘Oh,’ said the ass, ‘by all means go with us to the great city; you are a good night singer, and may make your fortune as a musician.’ The cat was pleased with the thought, and joined the party.

Soon afterwards, as they were passing by a farmyard, they saw a cock perched upon a gate, and screaming out with all his might and main. ‘Bravo!’ said the ass; ‘upon my word, you make a famous noise; pray what is all this about?’ ‘Why,’ said the cock, ‘I was just now saying that we should have fine weather for our washing-day, and yet my mistress and the cook don’t thank me for my pains, but threaten to cut off my head tomorrow, and make broth of me for the guests that are coming on Sunday!’ ‘Heaven forbid!’ said the ass, ‘come with us Master Chanticleer; it will be better, at any rate, than staying here to have your head cut off! Besides, who knows? If we care to sing in tune, we may get up some kind of a concert; so come along with us.’ ‘With all my heart,’ said the cock: so they all four went on jollily together.

They could not, however, reach the great city the first day; so when night came on, they went into a wood to sleep. The ass and the dog laid themselves down under a great tree, and the cat climbed up into the branches; while the cock, thinking that the higher he sat the safer he should be, flew up to the very top of the tree, and then, according to his custom, before he went to sleep, looked out on all sides of him to see that everything was well. In doing this, he saw afar off something bright and shining and calling to his companions said, ‘There must be a house no great way off, for I see a light.’ ‘If that be the case,’ said the ass, ‘we had better change our quarters, for our lodging is not the best in the world!’ ‘Besides,’ added the dog, ‘I should not be the worse for a bone or two, or a bit of meat.’ So they walked off together towards the spot where Chanticleer had seen the light, and as they drew near it became larger and brighter, till they at last came close to a house in which a gang of robbers lived.

The ass, being the tallest of the company, marched up to the window and peeped in. ‘Well, Donkey,’ said Chanticleer, ‘what do you see?’ ‘What do I see?’ replied the ass. ‘Why, I see a table spread with all kinds of good things, and robbers sitting round it making merry.’ ‘That would be a noble lodging for us,’ said the cock. ‘Yes,’ said the ass, ‘if we could only get in’; so they consulted together how they should contrive to get the robbers out; and at last they hit upon a plan. The ass placed himself upright on his hind legs, with his forefeet resting against the window; the dog got upon his back; the cat scrambled up to the dog’s shoulders, and the cock flew up and sat upon the cat’s head. When all was ready a signal was given, and they began their music. The ass brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, and the cock screamed; and then they all broke through the window at once, and came tumbling into the room, amongst the broken glass, with a most hideous clatter! The robbers, who had been not a little frightened by the opening concert, had now no doubt that some frightful hobgoblin had broken in upon them, and scampered away as fast as they could.

The coast once clear, our travellers soon sat down and dispatched what the robbers had left, with as much eagerness as if they had not expected to eat again for a month. As soon as they had satisfied themselves, they put out the lights, and each once more sought out a resting-place to his own liking. The donkey laid himself down upon a heap of straw in the yard, the dog stretched himself upon a mat behind the door, the cat rolled herself up on the hearth before the warm ashes, and the cock perched upon a beam on the top of the house; and, as they were all rather tired with their journey, they soon fell asleep.

But about midnight, when the robbers saw from afar that the lights were out and that all seemed quiet, they began to think that they had been in too great a hurry to run away; and one of them, who was bolder than the rest, went to see what was going on. Finding everything still, he marched into the kitchen, and groped about till he found a match in order to light a candle; and then, espying the glittering fiery eyes of the cat, he mistook them for live coals, and held the match to them to light it. But the cat, not understanding this joke, sprang at his face, and spat, and scratched at him. This frightened him dreadfully, and away he ran to the back door; but there the dog jumped up and bit him in the leg; and as he was crossing over the yard the ass kicked him; and the cock, who had been awakened by the noise, crowed with all his might. At this the robber ran back as fast as he could to his comrades, and told the captain how a horrid witch had got into the house, and had spat at him and scratched his face with her long bony fingers; how a man with a knife in his hand had hidden himself behind the door, and stabbed him in the leg; how a black monster stood in the yard and struck him with a club, and how the devil had sat upon the top of the house and cried out, ‘Throw the rascal up here!’ After this the robbers never dared to go back to the house; but the musicians were so pleased with their quarters that they took up their abode there; and there they are, I dare say, at this very day.

OLD SULTAN

A shepherd had a faithful dog, called Sultan, who was grown very old, and had lost all his teeth. And one day when the shepherd and his wife were standing together before the house the shepherd said, ‘I will shoot old Sultan tomorrow morning, for he is of no use now.’ But his wife said, ‘Pray let the poor faithful creature live; he has served us well a great many years, and we ought to give him a livelihood for the rest of his days.’ ‘But what can we do with him?’ said the shepherd, ‘he has not a tooth in his head, and the thieves don’t care for him at all; to be sure he has served us, but then he did it to earn his livelihood; tomorrow shall be his last day, depend upon it.’

Poor Sultan, who was lying close by them, heard all that the shepherd and his wife said to one another, and was very much frightened to think tomorrow would be his last day; so in the evening he went to his good friend the wolf, who lived in the wood, and told him all his sorrows, and how his master meant to kill him in the morning. ‘Make yourself easy,’ said the wolf, ‘I will give you some good advice. Your master, you know, goes out every morning very early with his wife into the field; and they take their little child with them, and lay it down behind the hedge in the shade while they are at work. Now do you lie down close by the child, and pretend to be watching it, and I will come out of the wood and run away with it; you must run after me as fast as you can, and I will let it drop; then you may carry it back, and they will think you have saved their child, and will be so thankful to you that they will take care of you as long as you live.’ The dog liked this plan very well; and accordingly so it was managed. The wolf ran with the child a little way; the shepherd and his wife screamed out; but Sultan soon overtook him, and carried the poor little thing back to his master and mistress. Then the shepherd patted him on the head, and said, ‘Old Sultan has saved our child from the wolf, and therefore he shall live and be well taken care of, and have plenty to eat. Wife, go home, and give him a good dinner, and let him have my old cushion to sleep on as long as he lives.’ So from this time forward Sultan had all that he could wish for.

Soon afterwards the wolf came and wished him joy, and said, ‘Now, my good fellow, you must tell no tales, but turn your head the other way when I want to taste one of the old shepherd’s fine fat sheep.’ ‘No,’ said the Sultan; ‘I will be true to my master.’ However, the wolf thought he was in joke, and came one night to get a dainty morsel. But Sultan had told his master what the wolf meant to do; so he laid wait for him behind the barn door, and when the wolf was busy looking out for a good fat sheep, he had a stout cudgel laid about his back, that combed his locks for him finely.

Then the wolf was very angry, and called Sultan ‘an old rogue,’ and swore he would have his revenge. So the next morning the wolf sent the boar to challenge Sultan to come into the wood to fight the matter. Now Sultan had nobody he could ask to be his second but the shepherd’s old three-legged cat; so he took her with him, and as the poor thing limped along with some trouble, she stuck up her tail straight in the air.

The wolf and the wild boar were first on the ground; and when they espied their enemies coming, and saw the cat's long tail standing straight in the air, they thought she was carrying a sword for Sultan to fight with; and every time she limped, they thought she was picking up a stone to throw at them; so they said they should not like this way of fighting, and the boar lay down behind a bush, and the wolf jumped up into a tree. Sultan and the cat soon came up, and looked about and wondered that no one was there. The boar, however, had not quite hidden himself, for his ears stuck out of the bush; and when he shook one of them a little, the cat, seeing something move, and thinking it was a mouse, sprang upon it, and bit and scratched it, so that the boar jumped up and grunted, and ran away, roaring out, 'Look up in the tree, there sits the one who is to blame.' So they looked up, and espied the wolf sitting amongst the branches; and they called him a cowardly rascal, and would not suffer him to come down till he was heartily ashamed of himself, and had promised to be good friends again with old Sultan.

THE STRAW, THE COAL, AND THE BEAN

In a village dwelt a poor old woman, who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and that it might burn the quicker, she lighted it with a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two. Then the straw began and said: ‘Dear friends, from whence do you come here?’ The coal replied: ‘I fortunately sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by sheer force, my death would have been certain, — I should have been burnt to ashes.’ The bean said: ‘I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I should have been made into broth without any mercy, like my comrades.’ ‘And would a better fate have fallen to my lot?’ said the straw. ‘The old woman has destroyed all my brethren in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers.’

‘But what are we to do now?’ said the coal.

‘I think,’ answered the bean, ‘that as we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and lest a new mischance should overtake us here, we should go away together, and repair to a foreign country.’

The proposition pleased the two others, and they set out on their way together. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge or foot-plank, they did not know how they were to get over it. The straw hit on a good idea, and said: ‘I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over on me as on a bridge.’ The straw therefore stretched itself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of an impetuous disposition, tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was after all, afraid, and stood still, and ventured no farther. The straw, however, began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last. The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event, was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst. It would have been all over with her, likewise, if, by good fortune, a tailor who was travelling in search of work, had not sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a compassionate heart he pulled out his needle and thread, and sewed her together. The bean thanked him most prettily, but as the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

BRIAR ROSE

A king and queen once upon a time reigned in a country a great way off, where there were in those days fairies. Now this king and queen had plenty of money, and plenty of fine clothes to wear, and plenty of good things to eat and drink, and a coach to ride out in every day: but though they had been married many years they had no children, and this grieved them very much indeed. But one day as the queen was walking by the side of the river, at the bottom of the garden, she saw a poor little fish, that had thrown itself out of the water, and lay gasping and nearly dead on the bank. Then the queen took pity on the little fish, and threw it back again into the river; and before it swam away it lifted its head out of the water and said, ‘I know what your wish is, and it shall be fulfilled, in return for your kindness to me — you will soon have a daughter.’ What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass; and the queen had a little girl, so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on it for joy, and said he would hold a great feast and make merry, and show the child to all the land. So he asked his kinsmen, and nobles, and friends, and neighbours. But the queen said, ‘I will have the fairies also, that they might be kind and good to our little daughter.’ Now there were thirteen fairies in the kingdom; but as the king and queen had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, they were forced to leave one of the fairies without asking her. So twelve fairies came, each with a high red cap on her head, and red shoes with high heels on her feet, and a long white wand in her hand: and after the feast was over they gathered round in a ring and gave all their best gifts to the little princess. One gave her goodness, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was good in the world.

Just as eleven of them had done blessing her, a great noise was heard in the courtyard, and word was brought that the thirteenth fairy was come, with a black cap on her head, and black shoes on her feet, and a broomstick in her hand: and presently up she came into the dining-hall. Now, as she had not been asked to the feast she was very angry, and scolded the king and queen very much, and set to work to take her revenge. So she cried out, ‘The king’s daughter shall, in her fifteenth year, be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead.’ Then the twelfth of the friendly fairies, who had not yet given her gift, came forward, and said that the evil wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften its mischief; so her gift was, that the king’s daughter, when the spindle wounded her, should not really die, but should only fall asleep for a hundred years.

However, the king hoped still to save his dear child altogether from the threatened evil; so he ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and burnt. But all the gifts of the first eleven fairies were in the meantime fulfilled; for the princess was so beautiful, and well behaved, and good, and wise, that everyone who knew her loved her.

It happened that, on the very day she was fifteen years old, the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself, and looked at all the rooms and chambers, till at last she came to an old tower, to which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily. ‘Why, how now, good mother,’ said the princess; ‘what are you doing there?’ ‘Spinning,’ said the old lady, and nodded her head, humming a tune, while buzz! went the wheel. ‘How prettily that little thing turns round!’ said the princess, and took the spindle and began to try and spin. But scarcely had she touched it, before the fairy’s prophecy was fulfilled; the spindle wounded her, and she fell down lifeless on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep; and the king and the queen, who had just come home, and all their court, fell asleep too; and the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons on the house-top, and the very flies slept upon the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep; the jack stopped, and the spit that was turning about with a goose upon it for the king’s dinner stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen-boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep; the butler, who was slyly tasting the ale, fell asleep with the jug at his lips: and thus everything stood still, and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew round the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker; till at last the old palace was surrounded and hidden, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen. But there went a report through all the land of the beautiful sleeping Briar Rose (for so the king’s daughter was called): so that, from time to time, several kings’ sons came, and tried to break through the thicket into the palace. This, however, none of them could ever do; for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them, as it were with hands; and there they stuck fast, and died wretchedly.

After many, many years there came a king’s son into that land: and an old man told him the story of the thicket of thorns; and how a beautiful palace stood behind it, and how a wonderful princess, called Briar Rose, lay in it asleep, with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many, many princes had come, and had tried to break through the thicket, but that they had all stuck fast in it, and died. Then the young prince said, ‘All this shall not frighten me; I will go and see this Briar Rose.’ The old man tried to hinder him, but he was bent upon going.

Now that very day the hundred years were ended; and as the prince came to the thicket he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he went with ease, and they shut in after him as thick as ever. Then he came at last to the palace, and there in the court lay the dogs asleep; and the horses were standing in the stables; and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep, with their heads under their wings. And when he came into the palace, the flies were sleeping on the walls; the spit was standing still; the butler had the jug of ale at his lips, going to drink a draught; the maid sat with a fowl in her lap ready to be plucked; and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand, as if she was going to beat the boy.

Then he went on still farther, and all was so still that he could hear every breath he drew; till at last he came to the old tower, and opened the door of the little room in which Briar Rose was; and there she lay, fast asleep on a couch by the window. She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, so he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him; and they went out together; and soon the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and gazed on each other with great wonder. And the horses shook themselves, and the dogs jumped up and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked about and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed again; the fire in the kitchen blazed up; round went the jack, and round went the spit, with the goose for the king’s dinner upon it; the butler finished his draught of ale; the maid went on plucking the fowl; and the cook gave the boy the box on his ear.

And then the prince and Briar Rose were married, and the wedding feast was given; and they lived happily together all their lives long.

THE DOG AND THE SPARROW

A shepherd’s dog had a master who took no care of him, but often let him suffer the greatest hunger. At last he could bear it no longer; so he took to his heels, and off he ran in a very sad and sorrowful mood. On the road he met a sparrow that said to him, ‘Why are you so sad, my friend?’ ‘Because,’ said the dog, ‘I am very very hungry, and have nothing to eat.’ ‘If that be all,’ answered the sparrow, ‘come with me into the next town, and I will soon find you plenty of food.’ So on they went together into the town: and as they passed by a butcher’s shop, the sparrow said to the dog, ‘Stand there a little while till I peck you down a piece of meat.’ So the sparrow perched upon the shelf: and having first looked carefully about her to see if anyone was watching her, she pecked and scratched at a steak that lay upon the edge of the shelf, till at last down it fell. Then the dog snapped it up, and scrambled away with it into a corner, where he soon ate it all up. ‘Well,’ said the sparrow, ‘you shall have some more if you will; so come with me to the next shop, and I will peck you down another steak.’ When the dog had eaten this too, the sparrow said to him, ‘Well, my good friend, have you had enough now?’ ‘I have had plenty of meat,’ answered he, ‘but I should like to have a piece of bread to eat after it.’ ‘Come with me then,’ said the sparrow, ‘and you shall soon have that too.’ So she took him to a baker’s shop, and pecked at two rolls that lay in the window, till they fell down: and as the dog still wished for more, she took him to another shop and pecked down some more for him. When that was eaten, the sparrow asked him whether he had had enough now. ‘Yes,’ said he; ‘and now let us take a walk a little way out of the town.’ So they both went out upon the high road; but as the weather was warm, they had not gone far before the dog said, ‘I am very much tired — I should like to take a nap.’ ‘Very well,’ answered the sparrow, ‘do so, and in the meantime I will perch upon that bush.’ So the dog stretched himself out on the road, and fell fast asleep. Whilst he slept, there came by a carter with a cart drawn by three horses, and loaded with two casks of wine. The sparrow, seeing that the carter did not turn out of the way, but would go on in the track in which the dog lay, so as to drive over him, called out, ‘Stop! stop! Mr Carter, or it shall be the worse for you.’ But the carter, grumbling to himself, ‘You make it the worse for me, indeed! what can you do?’ cracked his whip, and drove his cart over the poor dog, so that the wheels crushed him to death. ‘There,’ cried the sparrow, ‘thou cruel villain, thou hast killed my friend the dog. Now mind what I say. This deed of thine shall cost thee all thou art worth.’ ‘Do your worst, and welcome,’ said the brute, ‘what harm can you do me?’ and passed on. But the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked at the bung of one of the casks till she loosened it; and then all the wine ran out, without the carter seeing it. At last he looked round, and saw that the cart was dripping, and the cask quite empty. ‘What an unlucky wretch I am!’ cried he. ‘Not wretch enough yet!’ said the sparrow, as she alighted upon the head of one of the horses, and pecked at him till he reared up and kicked. When the carter saw this, he drew out his hatchet and aimed a blow at the sparrow, meaning to kill her; but she flew away, and the blow fell upon the poor horse's head with such force, that he fell down dead. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow. And as the carter went on with the other two horses, she again crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked out the bung of the second cask, so that all the wine ran out. When the carter saw this, he again cried out, 'Miserable wretch that I am!' But the sparrow answered, 'Not wretch enough yet!' and perched on the head of the second horse, and pecked at him too. The carter ran up and struck at her again with his hatchet; but away she flew, and the blow fell upon the second horse and killed him on the spot. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' said he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; and perching upon the third horse, she began to peck him too. The carter was mad with fury; and without looking about him, or caring what he was about, struck again at the sparrow; but killed his third horse as he done the other two. 'Alas! miserable wretch that I am!' cried he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' answered the sparrow as she flew away; 'now will I plague and punish thee at thy own house.' The carter was forced at last to leave his cart behind him, and to go home overflowing with rage and vexation. 'Alas!' said he to his wife, 'what ill luck has befallen me! — my wine is all spilt, and my horses all three dead.' 'Alas! husband,' replied she, 'and a wicked bird has come into the house, and has brought with her all the birds in the world, I am sure, and they have fallen upon our corn in the loft, and are eating it up at such a rate!' Away ran the husband upstairs, and saw thousands of birds sitting upon the floor eating up his corn, with the sparrow in the midst of them. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried the carter; for he saw that the corn was almost all gone. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; 'thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life yet!' and away she flew.

The carter seeing that he had thus lost all that he had, went down into his kitchen; and was still not sorry for what he had done, but sat himself angrily and sulkily in the chimney corner. But the sparrow sat on the outside of the window, and cried 'Carter! thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life!' With that he jumped up in a rage, seized his hatchet, and threw it at the sparrow; but it missed her, and only broke the window. The sparrow now hopped in, perched upon the window-seat, and cried, 'Carter! it shall cost thee thy life!' Then he became mad and blind with rage, and struck the window-seat with such force that he cleft it in two: and as the sparrow flew from place to place, the carter and his wife were so furious, that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table, and at last the walls, without touching the bird at all. In the end, however, they caught her: and the wife said, 'Shall I kill her at once?' 'No,' cried he, 'that is letting her off too easily: she shall die a much more cruel death; I will eat her.' But the sparrow began to flutter about, and stretch out her neck and cried, 'Carter! it shall cost thee thy life yet!' With that he could wait no longer: so he gave his wife the hatchet, and cried, 'Wife, strike at the bird and kill her in my hand.' And the wife struck; but she missed her aim, and hit her husband on the head so that he fell down dead, and the sparrow flew quietly home to her nest.

THE TWELVE DANCING PRINCESSES

There was a king who had twelve beautiful daughters. They slept in twelve beds all in one room; and when they went to bed, the doors were shut and locked up; but every morning their shoes were found to be quite worn through as if they had been danced in all night; and yet nobody could find out how it happened, or where they had been.

Then the king made it known to all the land, that if any person could discover the secret, and find out where it was that the princesses danced in the night, he should have the one he liked best for his wife, and should be king after his death; but whoever tried and did not succeed, after three days and nights, should be put to death.

A king’s son soon came. He was well entertained, and in the evening was taken to the chamber next to the one where the princesses lay in their twelve beds. There he was to sit and watch where they went to dance; and, in order that nothing might pass without his hearing it, the door of his chamber was left open. But the king’s son soon fell asleep; and when he awoke in the morning he found that the princesses had all been dancing, for the soles of their shoes were full of holes. The same thing happened the second and third night: so the king ordered his head to be cut off. After him came several others; but they had all the same luck, and all lost their lives in the same manner.

Now it chanced that an old soldier, who had been wounded in battle and could fight no longer, passed through the country where this king reigned: and as he was travelling through a wood, he met an old woman, who asked him where he was going. ‘I hardly know where I am going, or what I had better do,’ said the soldier; ‘but I think I should like very well to find out where it is that the princesses dance, and then in time I might be a king.’ ‘Well,’ said the old dame, ‘that is no very hard task: only take care not to drink any of the wine which one of the princesses will bring to you in the evening; and as soon as she leaves you pretend to be fast asleep.’

Then she gave him a cloak, and said, ‘As soon as you put that on you will become invisible, and you will then be able to follow the princesses wherever they go.’ When the soldier heard all this good counsel, he determined to try his luck: so he went to the king, and said he was willing to undertake the task.

He was as well received as the others had been, and the king ordered fine royal robes to be given him; and when the evening came he was led to the outer chamber. Just as he was going to lie down, the eldest of the princesses brought him a cup of wine; but the soldier threw it all away secretly, taking care not to drink a drop. Then he laid himself down on his bed, and in a little while began to snore very loud as if he was fast asleep. When the twelve princesses heard this they laughed heartily; and the eldest said, ‘This fellow too might have done a wiser thing than lose his life in this way!’ Then they rose up and opened their drawers and boxes, and took out all their fine clothes, and dressed themselves at the glass, and skipped about as if they were eager to begin dancing. But the youngest said, ‘I don’t know how it is, while you are so happy I feel very uneasy; I am sure some mischance will befall us.’ ‘You simpleton,’ said the eldest, ‘you are always afraid; have you forgotten how many kings’ sons have already watched in vain? And as for this soldier, even if I had not given him his sleeping draught, he would have slept soundly enough.’

When they were all ready, they went and looked at the soldier; but he snored on, and did not stir hand or foot: so they thought they were quite safe; and the eldest went up to her own bed and clapped her hands, and the bed sank into the floor and a trap-door flew open. The soldier saw them going down through the trap-door one after another, the eldest leading the way; and thinking he had no time to lose, he jumped up, put on the cloak which the old woman had given him, and followed them; but in the middle of the stairs he trod on the gown of the youngest princess, and she cried out to her sisters, ‘All is not right; someone took hold of my gown.’ ‘You silly creature!’ said the eldest, ‘it is nothing but a nail in the wall.’ Then down they all went, and at the bottom they found themselves in a most delightful grove of trees; and the leaves were all of silver, and glittered and sparkled beautifully. The soldier wished to take away some token of the place; so he broke off a little branch, and there came a loud noise from the tree. Then the youngest daughter said again, ‘I am sure all is not right — did not you hear that noise? That never happened before.’ But the eldest said, ‘It is only our princes, who are shouting for joy at our approach.’

Then they came to another grove of trees, where all the leaves were of gold; and afterwards to a third, where the leaves were all glittering diamonds. And the soldier broke a branch from each; and every time there was a loud noise, which made the youngest sister tremble with fear; but the eldest still said, it was only the princes, who were crying for joy. So they went on till they came to a great lake; and at the side of the lake there lay twelve little boats with twelve handsome princes in them, who seemed to be waiting there for the princesses.

One of the princesses went into each boat, and the soldier stepped into the same boat with the youngest. As they were rowing over the lake, the prince who was in the boat with the youngest princess and the soldier said, ‘I do not know why it is, but though I am rowing with all my might we do not get on so fast as usual, and I am quite tired: the boat seems very heavy today.’ ‘It is only the heat of the weather,’ said the princess: ‘I feel it very warm too.’

On the other side of the lake stood a fine illuminated castle, from which came the merry music of horns and trumpets. There they all landed, and went into the castle, and each prince danced with his princess; and the soldier, who was all the time invisible, danced with them too; and when any of the princesses had a cup of wine set by her, he drank it all up, so that when she put the cup to her mouth it was empty. At this, too, the youngest sister was terribly frightened, but the eldest always silenced her. They danced on till three o’clock in the morning, and then all their shoes were worn out, so that they were obliged to leave off. The princes rowed them back again over the lake (but this time the soldier placed himself in the boat with the eldest princess); and on the opposite shore they took leave of each other, the princesses promising to come again the next night.

When they came to the stairs, the soldier ran on before the princesses, and laid himself down; and as the twelve sisters slowly came up very much tired, they heard him snoring in his bed; so they said, ‘Now all is quite safe’; then they undressed themselves, put away their fine clothes, pulled off their shoes, and went to bed. In the morning the soldier said nothing about what had happened, but determined to see more of this strange adventure, and went again the second and third night; and every thing happened just as before; the princesses danced each time till their shoes were worn to pieces, and then returned home. However, on the third night the soldier carried away one of the golden cups as a token of where he had been.

As soon as the time came when he was to declare the secret, he was taken before the king with the three branches and the golden cup; and the twelve princesses stood listening behind the door to hear what he would say. And when the king asked him. ‘Where do my twelve daughters dance at night?’ he answered, ‘With twelve princes in a castle under ground.’ And then he told the king all that had happened, and showed him the three branches and the golden cup which he had brought with him. Then the king called for the princesses, and asked them whether what the soldier said was true: and when they saw that they were discovered, and that it was of no use to deny what had happened, they confessed it all. And the king asked the soldier which of them he would choose for his wife; and he answered, ‘I am not very young, so I will have the eldest.’ — And they were married that very day, and the soldier was chosen to be the king’s heir.

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE

There was once a fisherman who lived with his wife in a pigsty, close by the seaside. The fisherman used to go out all day long a-fishing; and one day, as he sat on the shore with his rod, looking at the sparkling waves and watching his line, all on a sudden his float was dragged away deep into the water: and in drawing it up he pulled out a great fish. But the fish said, 'Pray let me live! I am not a real fish; I am an enchanted prince: put me in the water again, and let me go!' 'Oh, ho!' said the man, 'you need not make so many words about the matter; I will have nothing to do with a fish that can talk: so swim away, sir, as soon as you please!' Then he put him back into the water, and the fish darted straight down to the bottom, and left a long streak of blood behind him on the wave.

When the fisherman went home to his wife in the pigsty, he told her how he had caught a great fish, and how it had told him it was an enchanted prince, and how, on hearing it speak, he had let it go again. 'Did not you ask it for anything?' said the wife, 'we live very wretchedly here, in this nasty dirty pigsty; do go back and tell the fish we want a snug little cottage.'

The fisherman did not much like the business: however, he went to the seashore; and when he came back there the water looked all yellow and green. And he stood at the water's edge, and said:

'O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

Then the fish came swimming to him, and said, 'Well, what is her will? What does your wife want?' 'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'she says that when I had caught you, I ought to have asked you for something before I let you go; she does not like living any longer in the pigsty, and wants a snug little cottage.' 'Go home, then,' said the fish; 'she is in the cottage already!' So the man went home, and saw his wife standing at the door of a nice trim little cottage. 'Come in, come in!' said she; 'is not this much better than the filthy pigsty we had?' And there was a parlour, and a bedchamber, and a kitchen; and behind the cottage there was a little garden, planted with all sorts of flowers and fruits; and there was a courtyard behind, full of ducks and chickens. 'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'how happily we shall live now!' 'We will try to do so, at least,' said his wife.

Everything went right for a week or two, and then Dame Ilsabill said, 'Husband, there is not near room enough for us in this cottage; the courtyard and the garden are a great deal too small; I should like to have a large stone castle to live in: go to the fish again and tell him to give us a castle.' 'Wife,' said the fisherman, 'I don't like to go to him again, for perhaps he will be angry; we ought to be easy with this pretty cottage to live in.' 'Nonsense!' said the wife; 'he will do it very willingly, I know; go along and try!'

The fisherman went, but his heart was very heavy: and when he came to the sea, it looked blue and gloomy, though it was very calm; and he went close to the edge of the waves, and said:

'O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'Well, what does she want now?' said the fish. 'Ah!' said the man, dolefully, 'my wife wants to live in a stone castle.' 'Go home, then,' said the fish; 'she is standing at the gate of it already.' So away went the fisherman, and found his wife standing before the gate of a great castle. 'See,' said she, 'is not this grand?' With that they went into the castle together, and found a great many servants there, and the rooms all richly furnished, and full of golden chairs and tables; and behind the castle was a garden, and around it was a park half a mile long, full of sheep, and goats, and hares, and deer; and in the courtyard were stables and cow-houses. 'Well,' said the man, 'now we will live cheerful and happy in this beautiful castle for the rest of our lives.' 'Perhaps we may,' said the wife; 'but let us sleep upon it, before we make up our minds to that.' So they went to bed.

The next morning when Dame Ilsabill awoke it was broad daylight, and she jogged the fisherman with her elbow, and said, 'Get up, husband, and bestir yourself, for we must be king of all the land.' 'Wife, wife,' said the man, 'why should we wish to be the king? I will not be king.' 'Then I will,' said she. 'But, wife,' said the fisherman, 'how can you be king — the fish cannot make you a king?' 'Husband,' said she, 'say no more about it, but go and try! I will be king.' So the man went away quite sorrowful to think that his wife should want to be king. This time the sea looked a dark grey colour, and was overspread with curling waves and the ridges of foam as he cried out:

'O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'Well, what would she have now?' said the fish. 'Alas!' said the poor man, 'my wife wants to be king.' 'Go home,' said the fish; 'she is king already.'

Then the fisherman went home; and as he came close to the palace he saw a troop of soldiers, and heard the sound of drums and trumpets. And when he went in he saw his wife sitting on a throne of gold and diamonds, with a golden crown upon her head; and on each side of her stood six fair maidens, each a head taller than the other. 'Well, wife,' said the fisherman, 'are you king?' 'Yes,' said she, 'I am king.' And when he had looked at her for a long time, he said, 'Ah, wife! what a fine thing it is to be king! Now we shall never have anything more to wish for as long as we live.' 'I don't know how that may be,' said she; 'never is a long time. I am king, it is true; but I begin to be tired of that, and I think I should like to be emperor.' 'Alas, wife! why should you wish to be emperor?' said the fisherman. 'Husband,' said she, 'go to the fish! I say I will be emperor.' 'Ah, wife!' replied the fisherman, 'the fish cannot make an emperor, I am sure, and I should not like to ask him for such a thing.' 'I am king,' said Ilsabill, 'and you are my slave; so go at once!'

So the fisherman was forced to go; and he muttered as he went along, 'This will come to no good, it is too much to ask; the fish will be tired at last, and then we shall be sorry for what we have done.' He soon came to the seashore; and the water was quite black and muddy, and a mighty whirlwind blew over the waves and rolled them about, but he went as near as he could to the water's brink, and said:

'O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'What would she have now?' said the fish. 'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'she wants to be emperor.' 'Go home,' said the fish; 'she is emperor already.'

So he went home again; and as he came near he saw his wife Ilsabill sitting on a very lofty throne made of solid gold, with a great crown on her head full two yards high; and on each side of her stood her guards and attendants in a row, each one smaller than the other, from the tallest giant down to a little dwarf no bigger than my finger. And before her stood princes, and dukes, and earls: and the fisherman went up to her and said, 'Wife, are you emperor?' 'Yes,' said she, 'I am emperor.' 'Ah!' said the man, as he gazed upon her, 'what a fine thing it is to be emperor!' 'Husband,' said she, 'why should we stop at being emperor? I will be pope next.' 'O wife, wife!' said he, 'how can you be pope? there is but one pope at a time in Christendom.' 'Husband,' said she, 'I will be pope this very day.' 'But,' replied the husband, 'the fish cannot make you pope.' 'What nonsense!' said she; 'if he can make an emperor, he can make a pope: go and try him.'

So the fisherman went. But when he came to the shore the wind was raging and the sea was tossed up and down in boiling waves, and the ships were in trouble, and rolled fearfully upon the tops of the billows. In the middle of the heavens there was a little piece of blue sky, but towards the south all was red, as if a dreadful storm was rising. At this sight the fisherman was dreadfully frightened, and he trembled so that his knees knocked together: but still he went down near to the shore, and said:

'O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

‘What does she want now?’ said the fish. ‘Ah!’ said the fisherman, ‘my wife wants to be pope.’ ‘Go home,’ said the fish; ‘she is pope already.’

Then the fisherman went home, and found Ilsabill sitting on a throne that was two miles high. And she had three great crowns on her head, and around her stood all the pomp and power of the Church. And on each side of her were two rows of burning lights, of all sizes, the greatest as large as the highest and biggest tower in the world, and the least no larger than a small rushlight. ‘Wife,’ said the fisherman, as he looked at all this greatness, ‘are you pope?’ ‘Yes,’ said she, ‘I am pope.’ ‘Well, wife,’ replied he, ‘it is a grand thing to be pope; and now you must be easy, for you can be nothing greater.’ ‘I will think about that,’ said the wife. Then they went to bed: but Dame Ilsabill could not sleep all night for thinking what she should be next. At last, as she was dropping asleep, morning broke, and the sun rose. ‘Ha!’ thought she, as she woke up and looked at it through the window, ‘after all I cannot prevent the sun rising.’ At this thought she was very angry, and wakened her husband, and said, ‘Husband, go to the fish and tell him I must be lord of the sun and moon.’ The fisherman was half asleep, but the thought frightened him so much that he started and fell out of bed. ‘Alas, wife!’ said he, ‘cannot you be easy with being pope?’ ‘No,’ said she, ‘I am very uneasy as long as the sun and moon rise without my leave. Go to the fish at once!’

Then the man went shivering with fear; and as he was going down to the shore a dreadful storm arose, so that the trees and the very rocks shook. And all the heavens became black with stormy clouds, and the lightnings played, and the thunders rolled; and you might have seen in the sea great black waves, swelling up like mountains with crowns of white foam upon their heads. And the fisherman crept towards the sea, and cried out, as well as he could:

‘O man of the sea!
 Hearken to me!
 My wife Ilsabill
 Will have her own will,
 And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!’

‘What does she want now?’ said the fish. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘she wants to be lord of the sun and moon.’ ‘Go home,’ said the fish, ‘to your pigsty again.’

And there they live to this very day.

THE WILLOW-WREN AND THE BEAR

Once in summer-time the bear and the wolf were walking in the forest, and the bear heard a bird singing so beautifully that he said: ‘Brother wolf, what bird is it that sings so well?’ ‘That is the King of birds,’ said the wolf, ‘before whom we must bow down.’ In reality the bird was the willow-wren. ‘IF that’s the case,’ said the bear, ‘I should very much like to see his royal palace; come, take me thither.’ ‘That is not done quite as you seem to think,’ said the wolf; ‘you must wait until the Queen comes,’ Soon afterwards, the Queen arrived with some food in her beak, and the lord King came too, and they began to feed their young ones. The bear would have liked to go at once, but the wolf held him back by the sleeve, and said: ‘No, you must wait until the lord and lady Queen have gone away again.’ So they took stock of the hole where the nest lay, and trotted away. The bear, however, could not rest until he had seen the royal palace, and when a short time had passed, went to it again. The King and Queen had just flown out, so he peeped in and saw five or six young ones lying there. ‘Is that the royal palace?’ cried the bear; ‘it is a wretched palace, and you are not King’s children, you are disreputable children!’ When the young wrens heard that, they were frightfully angry, and screamed: ‘No, that we are not! Our parents are honest people! Bear, you will have to pay for that!’

The bear and the wolf grew uneasy, and turned back and went into their holes. The young willow-wrens, however, continued to cry and scream, and when their parents again brought food they said: ‘We will not so much as touch one fly’s leg, no, not if we were dying of hunger, until you have settled whether we are respectable children or not; the bear has been here and has insulted us!’ Then the old King said: ‘Be easy, he shall be punished,’ and he at once flew with the Queen to the bear’s cave, and called in: ‘Old Growler, why have you insulted my children? You shall suffer for it — we will punish you by a bloody war.’ Thus war was announced to the Bear, and all four-footed animals were summoned to take part in it, oxen, asses, cows, deer, and every other animal the earth contained. And the willow-wren summoned everything which flew in the air, not only birds, large and small, but midges, and hornets, bees and flies had to come.

When the time came for the war to begin, the willow-wren sent out spies to discover who was the enemy’s commander-in-chief. The gnat, who was the most crafty, flew into the forest where the enemy was assembled, and hid herself beneath a leaf of the tree where the password was to be announced. There stood the bear, and he called the fox before him and said: ‘Fox, you are the most cunning of all animals, you shall be general and lead us.’ ‘Good,’ said the fox, ‘but what signal shall we agree upon?’ No one knew that, so the fox said: ‘I have a fine long bushy tail, which almost looks like a plume of red feathers. When I lift my tail up quite high, all is going well, and you must charge; but if I let it hang down, run away as fast as you can.’ When the gnat had heard that, she flew away again, and revealed everything, down to the minutest detail, to the willow-wren. When day broke, and the battle was to begin, all the four-footed animals came running up with such a noise that the earth trembled. The willow-wren with his army also came flying through the air with such a humming, and whirring, and swarming that every one was uneasy and afraid, and on both sides they advanced against each other. But the willow-wren sent down the hornet, with orders to settle beneath the fox's tail, and sting with all his might. When the fox felt the first string, he started so that he lifted one leg, from pain, but he bore it, and still kept his tail high in the air; at the second sting, he was forced to put it down for a moment; at the third, he could hold out no longer, screamed, and put his tail between his legs. When the animals saw that, they thought all was lost, and began to flee, each into his hole, and the birds had won the battle.

Then the King and Queen flew home to their children and cried: 'Children, rejoice, eat and drink to your heart's content, we have won the battle!' But the young wrens said: 'We will not eat yet, the bear must come to the nest, and beg for pardon and say that we are honourable children, before we will do that.' Then the willow-wren flew to the bear's hole and cried: 'Growler, you are to come to the nest to my children, and beg their pardon, or else every rib of your body shall be broken.' So the bear crept thither in the greatest fear, and begged their pardon. And now at last the young wrens were satisfied, and sat down together and ate and drank, and made merry till quite late into the night.

THE FROG-PRINCE

One fine evening a young princess put on her bonnet and clogs, and went out to take a walk by herself in a wood; and when she came to a cool spring of water, that rose in the midst of it, she sat herself down to rest a while. Now she had a golden ball in her hand, which was her favourite plaything; and she was always tossing it up into the air, and catching it again as it fell. After a time she threw it up so high that she missed catching it as it fell; and the ball bounded away, and rolled along upon the ground, till at last it fell down into the spring. The princess looked into the spring after her ball, but it was very deep, so deep that she could not see the bottom of it. Then she began to bewail her loss, and said, ‘Alas! if I could only get my ball again, I would give all my fine clothes and jewels, and everything that I have in the world.’

Whilst she was speaking, a frog put its head out of the water, and said, ‘Princess, why do you weep so bitterly?’ ‘Alas!’ said she, ‘what can you do for me, you nasty frog? My golden ball has fallen into the spring.’ The frog said, ‘I want not your pearls, and jewels, and fine clothes; but if you will love me, and let me live with you and eat from off your golden plate, and sleep upon your bed, I will bring you your ball again.’ ‘What nonsense,’ thought the princess, ‘this silly frog is talking! He can never even get out of the spring to visit me, though he may be able to get my ball for me, and therefore I will tell him he shall have what he asks.’ So she said to the frog, ‘Well, if you will bring me my ball, I will do all you ask.’ Then the frog put his head down, and dived deep under the water; and after a little while he came up again, with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the edge of the spring. As soon as the young princess saw her ball, she ran to pick it up; and she was so overjoyed to have it in her hand again, that she never thought of the frog, but ran home with it as fast as she could. The frog called after her, ‘Stay, princess, and take me with you as you said,’ But she did not stop to hear a word.

The next day, just as the princess had sat down to dinner, she heard a strange noise — tap, tap — plash, plash — as if something was coming up the marble staircase: and soon afterwards there was a gentle knock at the door, and a little voice cried out and said:

‘Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.’

Then the princess ran to the door and opened it, and there she saw the frog, whom she had quite forgotten. At this sight she was sadly frightened, and shutting the door as fast as she could came back to her seat. The king, her father, seeing that something had frightened her, asked her what was the matter. ‘There is a nasty frog,’ said she, ‘at the door, that lifted my ball for me out of the spring this morning: I told him that he should live with me here, thinking that he could never get out of the spring; but there he is at the door, and he wants to come in.'

While she was speaking the frog knocked again at the door, and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

Then the king said to the young princess, 'As you have given your word you must keep it; so go and let him in.' She did so, and the frog hopped into the room, and then straight on — tap, tap — plash, plash — from the bottom of the room to the top, till he came up close to the table where the princess sat. 'Pray lift me upon chair,' said he to the princess, 'and let me sit next to you.' As soon as she had done this, the frog said, 'Put your plate nearer to me, that I may eat out of it.' This she did, and when he had eaten as much as he could, he said, 'Now I am tired; carry me upstairs, and put me into your bed.' And the princess, though very unwilling, took him up in her hand, and put him upon the pillow of her own bed, where he slept all night long. As soon as it was light he jumped up, hopped downstairs, and went out of the house. 'Now, then,' thought the princess, 'at last he is gone, and I shall be troubled with him no more.'

But she was mistaken; for when night came again she heard the same tapping at the door; and the frog came once more, and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

And when the princess opened the door the frog came in, and slept upon her pillow as before, till the morning broke. And the third night he did the same. But when the princess awoke on the following morning she was astonished to see, instead of the frog, a handsome prince, gazing on her with the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, and standing at the head of her bed.

He told her that he had been enchanted by a spiteful fairy, who had changed him into a frog; and that he had been fated so to abide till some princess should take him out of the spring, and let him eat from her plate, and sleep upon her bed for three nights. 'You,' said the prince, 'have broken his cruel charm, and now I have nothing to wish for but that you should go with me into my father's kingdom, where I will marry you, and love you as long as you live.'

The young princess, you may be sure, was not long in saying 'Yes' to all this; and as they spoke a gay coach drove up, with eight beautiful horses, decked with plumes of feathers and a golden harness; and behind the coach rode the prince's servant, faithful Heinrich, who had bewailed the misfortunes of his dear master during his enchantment so long and so bitterly, that his heart had well-nigh burst.

They then took leave of the king, and got into the coach with eight horses, and all set out, full of joy and merriment, for the prince’s kingdom, which they reached safely; and there they lived happily a great many years.

CAT AND MOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP

A certain cat had made the acquaintance of a mouse, and had said so much to her about the great love and friendship she felt for her, that at length the mouse agreed that they should live and keep house together. ‘But we must make a provision for winter, or else we shall suffer from hunger,’ said the cat; ‘and you, little mouse, cannot venture everywhere, or you will be caught in a trap some day.’ The good advice was followed, and a pot of fat was bought, but they did not know where to put it. At length, after much consideration, the cat said: ‘I know no place where it will be better stored up than in the church, for no one dares take anything away from there. We will set it beneath the altar, and not touch it until we are really in need of it.’ So the pot was placed in safety, but it was not long before the cat had a great yearning for it, and said to the mouse: ‘I want to tell you something, little mouse; my cousin has brought a little son into the world, and has asked me to be godmother; he is white with brown spots, and I am to hold him over the font at the christening. Let me go out today, and you look after the house by yourself.’ ‘Yes, yes,’ answered the mouse, ‘by all means go, and if you get anything very good to eat, think of me. I should like a drop of sweet red christening wine myself.’ All this, however, was untrue; the cat had no cousin, and had not been asked to be godmother. She went straight to the church, stole to the pot of fat, began to lick at it, and licked the top of the fat off. Then she took a walk upon the roofs of the town, looked out for opportunities, and then stretched herself in the sun, and licked her lips whenever she thought of the pot of fat, and not until it was evening did she return home. ‘Well, here you are again,’ said the mouse, ‘no doubt you have had a merry day.’ ‘All went off well,’ answered the cat. ‘What name did they give the child?’ ‘Top off!’ said the cat quite coolly. ‘Top off!’ cried the mouse, ‘that is a very odd and uncommon name, is it a usual one in your family?’ ‘What does that matter,’ said the cat, ‘it is no worse than Crumb-stealer, as your godchildren are called.’

Before long the cat was seized by another fit of yearning. She said to the mouse: ‘You must do me a favour, and once more manage the house for a day alone. I am again asked to be godmother, and, as the child has a white ring round its neck, I cannot refuse.’ The good mouse consented, but the cat crept behind the town walls to the church, and devoured half the pot of fat. ‘Nothing ever seems so good as what one keeps to oneself,’ said she, and was quite satisfied with her day’s work. When she went home the mouse inquired: ‘And what was the child christened?’ ‘Half-done,’ answered the cat. ‘Half-done! What are you saying? I never heard the name in my life, I’ll wager anything it is not in the calendar!’

The cat’s mouth soon began to water for some more licking. ‘All good things go in threes,’ said she, ‘I am asked to stand godmother again. The child is quite black, only it has white paws, but with that exception, it has not a single white hair on its whole body; this only happens once every few years, you will let me go, won't you?' 'Top-off! Half-done!' answered the mouse, 'they are such odd names, they make me very thoughtful.' 'You sit at home,' said the cat, 'in your dark-grey fur coat and long tail, and are filled with fancies, that's because you do not go out in the daytime.' During the cat's absence the mouse cleaned the house, and put it in order, but the greedy cat entirely emptied the pot of fat. 'When everything is eaten up one has some peace,' said she to herself, and well filled and fat she did not return home till night. The mouse at once asked what name had been given to the third child. 'It will not please you more than the others,' said the cat. 'He is called All-gone.' 'All-gone,' cried the mouse 'that is the most suspicious name of all! I have never seen it in print. All-gone; what can that mean?' and she shook her head, curled herself up, and lay down to sleep.

From this time forth no one invited the cat to be godmother, but when the winter had come and there was no longer anything to be found outside, the mouse thought of their provision, and said: 'Come, cat, we will go to our pot of fat which we have stored up for ourselves — we shall enjoy that.' 'Yes,' answered the cat, 'you will enjoy it as much as you would enjoy sticking that dainty tongue of yours out of the window.' They set out on their way, but when they arrived, the pot of fat certainly was still in its place, but it was empty. 'Alas!' said the mouse, 'now I see what has happened, now it comes to light! You are a true friend! You have devoured all when you were standing godmother. First top off, then half-done, then—' 'Will you hold your tongue,' cried the cat, 'one word more, and I will eat you too.' 'All-gone' was already on the poor mouse's lips; scarcely had she spoken it before the cat sprang on her, seized her, and swallowed her down. Verily, that is the way of the world.

THE GOOSE-GIRL

The king of a great land died, and left his queen to take care of their only child. This child was a daughter, who was very beautiful; and her mother loved her dearly, and was very kind to her. And there was a good fairy too, who was fond of the princess, and helped her mother to watch over her. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen her mother, packed up a great many costly things; jewels, and gold, and silver; trinkets, fine dresses, and in short everything that became a royal bride. And she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her, and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess's horse was the fairy's gift, and it was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the fairy went into her bed-chamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to the princess, and said, 'Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road.' Then they all took a sorrowful leave of the princess; and she put the lock of hair into her bosom, got upon her horse, and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom.

One day, as they were riding along by a brook, the princess began to feel very thirsty: and she said to her maid, 'Pray get down, and fetch me some water in my golden cup out of yonder brook, for I want to drink.' 'Nay,' said the maid, 'if you are thirsty, get off yourself, and stoop down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer.' Then she was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the little brook, and drank; for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and she wept and said, 'Alas! what will become of me?' And the lock answered her, and said:

'Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
 Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

But the princess was very gentle and meek, so she said nothing to her maid's ill behaviour, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode farther on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last, when they came to a river, she forgot her maid's rude speech, and said, 'Pray get down, and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup.' But the maid answered her, and even spoke more haughtily than before: 'Drink if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid.' Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse, and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried and said, 'What will become of me?' And the lock of hair answered her again:

'Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
 Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

And as she leaned down to drink, the lock of hair fell from her bosom, and floated away with the water. Now she was so frightened that she did not see it; but her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew the charm; and she saw that the poor bride would be in her power, now that she had lost the hair. So when the bride had done drinking, and would have got upon Falada again, the maid said, ‘I shall ride upon Falada, and you may have my horse instead’; so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes and put on her maid’s shabby ones.

At last, as they drew near the end of their journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told anyone what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well.

Then the waiting-maid got upon Falada, and the real bride rode upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, and the prince flew to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber; but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.

Now the old king happened just then to have nothing else to do; so he amused himself by sitting at his kitchen window, looking at what was going on; and he saw her in the courtyard. As she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went up into the royal chamber to ask the bride who it was she had brought with her, that was thus left standing in the court below. ‘I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road,’ said she; ‘pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle.’ The old king could not for some time think of any work for her to do; but at last he said, ‘I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him.’ Now the name of this lad, that the real bride was to help in watching the king’s geese, was Curdken.

But the false bride said to the prince, ‘Dear husband, pray do me one piece of kindness.’ ‘That I will,’ said the prince. ‘Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road’; but the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should some day or other speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She carried her point, and the faithful Falada was killed; but when the true princess heard of it, she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada’s head against a large dark gate of the city, through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished; and cut off the head, and nailed it up under the dark gate.

Early the next morning, as she and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully:

‘Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!’

and the head answered:

‘Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.’

Then they went out of the city, and drove the geese on. And when she came to the meadow, she sat down upon a bank there, and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure silver; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out, but she cried:

'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

Then there came a wind, so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat; and away it flew over the hills: and he was forced to turn and run after it; till, by the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and had put it up again safe. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.

The next morning, as they were going through the dark gate, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried:

'Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!'

and the head answered:

'Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

Then she drove on the geese, and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before; and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take hold of it; but she cried out quickly:

'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

Then the wind came and blew away his hat; and off it flew a great way, over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it; and when he came back she had bound up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, 'I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer.' 'Why?' said the king. 'Because, instead of doing any good, she does nothing but tease me all day long.' Then the king made him tell him what had happened. And Curdken said, 'When we go in the morning through the dark gate with our flock of geese, she cries and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says:

'Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!'

and the head answers:

'Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

And Curdken went on telling the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed; how his hat was blown away; and how he was forced to run after it, and to leave his flock of geese to themselves. But the old king told the boy to go out again the next day: and when morning came, he placed himself behind the dark gate, and heard how she spoke to Falada, and how Falada answered. Then he went into the field, and hid himself in a bush by the meadow's side; and he soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese; and how, after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun. And then he heard her say:

'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken's hat, and away went Curdken after it, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair. All this the old king saw: so he went home without being seen; and when the little goose-girl came back in the evening he called her aside, and asked her why she did so: but she burst into tears, and said, 'That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life.'

But the old king begged so hard, that she had no peace till she had told him all the tale, from beginning to end, word for word. And it was very lucky for her that she did so, for when she had done the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and gazed on her with wonder, she was so beautiful. Then he called his son and told him that he had only a false bride; for that she was merely a waiting-maid, while the true bride stood by. And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and without saying anything to the false bride, the king ordered a great feast to be got ready for all his court. The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody knew her again, for her beauty was quite dazzling to their eyes; and she did not seem at all like the little goose-girl, now that she had her brilliant dress on.

When they had eaten and drank, and were very merry, the old king said he would tell them a tale. So he began, and told all the story of the princess, as if it was one that he had once heard; and he asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to anyone who would behave thus. 'Nothing better,' said this false bride, 'than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck round with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she was dead.' 'Thou art she!' said the old king; 'and as thou has judged thyself, so shall it be done to thee.' And the young king was then married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives; and the good fairy came to see them, and restored the faithful Falada to life again.

THE ADVENTURES OF CHANTICLEER AND PARTLET

1. HOW THEY WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS TO EAT NUTS

‘The nuts are quite ripe now,’ said Chanticleer to his wife Partlet, ‘suppose we go together to the mountains, and eat as many as we can, before the squirrel takes them all away.’ ‘With all my heart,’ said Partlet, ‘let us go and make a holiday of it together.’

So they went to the mountains; and as it was a lovely day, they stayed there till the evening. Now, whether it was that they had eaten so many nuts that they could not walk, or whether they were lazy and would not, I do not know: however, they took it into their heads that it did not become them to go home on foot. So Chanticleer began to build a little carriage of nutshells: and when it was finished, Partlet jumped into it and sat down, and bid Chanticleer harness himself to it and draw her home. ‘That’s a good joke!’ said Chanticleer; ‘no, that will never do; I had rather by half walk home; I’ll sit on the box and be coachman, if you like, but I’ll not draw.’ While this was passing, a duck came quacking up and cried out, ‘You thieving vagabonds, what business have you in my grounds? I’ll give it you well for your insolence!’ and upon that she fell upon Chanticleer most lustily. But Chanticleer was no coward, and returned the duck’s blows with his sharp spurs so fiercely that she soon began to cry out for mercy; which was only granted her upon condition that she would draw the carriage home for them. This she agreed to do; and Chanticleer got upon the box, and drove, crying, ‘Now, duck, get on as fast as you can.’ And away they went at a pretty good pace.

After they had travelled along a little way, they met a needle and a pin walking together along the road: and the needle cried out, ‘Stop, stop!’ and said it was so dark that they could hardly find their way, and such dirty walking they could not get on at all: he told them that he and his friend, the pin, had been at a public-house a few miles off, and had sat drinking till they had forgotten how late it was; he begged therefore that the travellers would be so kind as to give them a lift in their carriage. Chanticleer observing that they were but thin fellows, and not likely to take up much room, told them they might ride, but made them promise not to dirty the wheels of the carriage in getting in, nor to tread on Partlet’s toes.

Late at night they arrived at an inn; and as it was bad travelling in the dark, and the duck seemed much tired, and waddled about a good deal from one side to the other, they made up their minds to fix their quarters there: but the landlord at first was unwilling, and said his house was full, thinking they might not be very respectable company: however, they spoke civilly to him, and gave him the egg which Partlet had laid by the way, and said they would give him the duck, who was in the habit of laying one every day: so at last he let them come in, and they bespoke a handsome supper, and spent the evening very jollily.

Early in the morning, before it was quite light, and when nobody was stirring in the inn, Chanticleer awakened his wife, and, fetching the egg, they pecked a hole in it, ate it up, and threw the shells into the fireplace: they then went to the pin and needle, who were fast asleep, and seizing them by the heads, stuck one into the landlord's easy chair and the other into his handkerchief; and, having done this, they crept away as softly as possible. However, the duck, who slept in the open air in the yard, heard them coming, and jumping into the brook which ran close by the inn, soon swam out of their reach.

An hour or two afterwards the landlord got up, and took his handkerchief to wipe his face, but the pin ran into him and pricked him: then he walked into the kitchen to light his pipe at the fire, but when he stirred it up the eggshells flew into his eyes, and almost blinded him. 'Bless me!' said he, 'all the world seems to have a design against my head this morning': and so saying, he threw himself sulkily into his easy chair; but, oh dear! the needle ran into him; and this time the pain was not in his head. He now flew into a very great passion, and, suspecting the company who had come in the night before, he went to look after them, but they were all off; so he swore that he never again would take in such a troop of vagabonds, who ate a great deal, paid no reckoning, and gave him nothing for his trouble but their apish tricks.

2. HOW CHANTICLEER AND PARTLET WENT TO VISIT MR KORBES

Another day, Chanticleer and Partlet wished to ride out together; so Chanticleer built a handsome carriage with four red wheels, and harnessed six mice to it; and then he and Partlet got into the carriage, and away they drove. Soon afterwards a cat met them, and said, 'Where are you going?' And Chanticleer replied,

'All on our way
A visit to pay
To Mr Korbes, the fox, today.'

Then the cat said, 'Take me with you,' Chanticleer said, 'With all my heart: get up behind, and be sure you do not fall off.'

'Take care of this handsome coach of mine,
Nor dirty my pretty red wheels so fine!
Now, mice, be ready,
And, wheels, run steady!
For we are going a visit to pay
To Mr Korbes, the fox, today.'

Soon after came up a millstone, an egg, a duck, and a pin; and Chanticleer gave them all leave to get into the carriage and go with them.

When they arrived at Mr Korbes's house, he was not at home; so the mice drew the carriage into the coach-house, Chanticleer and Partlet flew upon a beam, the cat sat down in the fireplace, the duck got into the washing cistern, the pin stuck himself into the bed pillow, the millstone laid himself over the house door, and the egg rolled himself up in the towel.

When Mr Korbes came home, he went to the fireplace to make a fire; but the cat threw all the ashes in his eyes: so he ran to the kitchen to wash himself; but there the duck splashed all the water in his face; and when he tried to wipe himself, the egg broke to pieces in the towel all over his face and eyes. Then he was very angry, and went without his supper to bed; but when he laid his head on the pillow, the pin ran into his cheek: at this he became quite furious, and, jumping up, would have run out of the house; but when he came to the door, the millstone fell down on his head, and killed him on the spot.

3. HOW PARTLET DIED AND WAS BURIED, AND HOW CHANTICLEER DIED OF GRIEF

Another day Chanticleer and Partlet agreed to go again to the mountains to eat nuts; and it was settled that all the nuts which they found should be shared equally between them. Now Partlet found a very large nut; but she said nothing about it to Chanticleer, and kept it all to herself: however, it was so big that she could not swallow it, and it stuck in her throat. Then she was in a great fright, and cried out to Chanticleer, 'Pray run as fast as you can, and fetch me some water, or I shall be choked.' Chanticleer ran as fast as he could to the river, and said, 'River, give me some water, for Partlet lies in the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.' The river said, 'Run first to the bride, and ask her for a silken cord to draw up the water.' Chanticleer ran to the bride, and said, 'Bride, you must give me a silken cord, for then the river will give me water, and the water I will carry to Partlet, who lies on the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.' But the bride said, 'Run first, and bring me my garland that is hanging on a willow in the garden.' Then Chanticleer ran to the garden, and took the garland from the bough where it hung, and brought it to the bride; and then the bride gave him the silken cord, and he took the silken cord to the river, and the river gave him water, and he carried the water to Partlet; but in the meantime she was choked by the great nut, and lay quite dead, and never moved any more.

Then Chanticleer was very sorry, and cried bitterly; and all the beasts came and wept with him over poor Partlet. And six mice built a little hearse to carry her to her grave; and when it was ready they harnessed themselves before it, and Chanticleer drove them. On the way they met the fox. 'Where are you going, Chanticleer?' said he. 'To bury my Partlet,' said the other. 'May I go with you?' said the fox. 'Yes; but you must get up behind, or my horses will not be able to draw you.' Then the fox got up behind; and presently the wolf, the bear, the goat, and all the beasts of the wood, came and climbed upon the hearse.

So on they went till they came to a rapid stream. 'How shall we get over?' said Chanticleer. Then said a straw, 'I will lay myself across, and you may pass over upon me.' But as the mice were going over, the straw slipped away and fell into the water, and the six mice all fell in and were drowned. What was to be done? Then a large log of wood came and said, 'I am big enough; I will lay myself across the stream, and you shall pass over upon me.' So he laid himself down; but they managed so clumsily, that the log of wood fell in and was carried away by the stream. Then a stone, who saw what had happened, came up and kindly offered to help poor Chanticleer by laying himself across the stream; and this time he got safely to the other side with the hearse, and managed to get Partlet out of it; but the fox and the other mourners, who were sitting behind, were too heavy, and fell back into the water and were all carried away by the stream and drowned.

Thus Chanticleer was left alone with his dead Partlet; and having dug a grave for her, he laid her in it, and made a little hillock over her. Then he sat down by the grave, and wept and mourned, till at last he died too; and so all were dead.

RAPUNZEL

There were once a man and a woman who had long in vain wished for a child. At length the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire. These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen, which was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to an enchantress, who had great power and was dreaded by all the world. One day the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (rapunzel), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, she quite pined away, and began to look pale and miserable. Then her husband was alarmed, and asked: 'What ails you, dear wife?' 'Ah,' she replied, 'if I can't eat some of the rampion, which is in the garden behind our house, I shall die.' The man, who loved her, thought: 'Sooner than let your wife die, bring her some of the rampion yourself, let it cost what it will.' At twilight, he clambered down over the wall into the garden of the enchantress, hastily clutched a handful of rampion, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it greedily. It tasted so good to her — so very good, that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening therefore, he let himself down again; but when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the enchantress standing before him. 'How can you dare,' said she with angry look, 'descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? You shall suffer for it!' 'Ah,' answered he, 'let mercy take the place of justice, I only made up my mind to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not got some to eat.' Then the enchantress allowed her anger to be softened, and said to him: 'If the case be as you say, I will allow you to take away with you as much rampion as you will, only I make one condition, you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world; it shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother.' The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman was brought to bed, the enchantress appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was twelve years old, the enchantress shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door, but quite at the top was a little window. When the enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath it and cried:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair to me.'

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress she unfastened her braided tresses, wound them round one of the hooks of the window above, and then the hair fell twenty ells down, and the enchantress climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the king's son rode through the forest and passed by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound. The king's son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it. Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair to me.'

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the enchantress climbed up to her. 'If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I too will try my fortune,' said he, and the next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair to me.'

Immediately the hair fell down and the king's son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man, such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her; but the king's son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred that it had let him have no rest, and he had been forced to see her. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought: 'He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does'; and she said yes, and laid her hand in his. She said: 'I will willingly go away with you, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with you a skein of silk every time that you come, and I will weave a ladder with it, and when that is ready I will descend, and you will take me on your horse.' They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day. The enchantress remarked nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said to her: 'Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up than the young king's son — he is with me in a moment.' 'Ah! you wicked child,' cried the enchantress. 'What do I hear you say! I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me!' In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day that she cast out Rapunzel, however, the enchantress fastened the braids of hair, which she had cut off, to the hook of the window, and when the king's son came and cried:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair to me.'

she let the hair down. The king's son ascended, but instead of finding his dearest Rapunzel, he found the enchantress, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks. 'Aha!' she cried mockingly, 'you would fetch your dearest, but the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest; the cat has got it, and will scratch out your eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to you; you will never see her again.' The king's son was beside himself with pain, and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did naught but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife. Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and when he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before. He led her to his kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time afterwards, happy and contented.

FUNDEVOGEL

There was once a forester who went into the forest to hunt, and as he entered it he heard a sound of screaming as if a little child were there. He followed the sound, and at last came to a high tree, and at the top of this a little child was sitting, for the mother had fallen asleep under the tree with the child, and a bird of prey had seen it in her arms, had flown down, snatched it away, and set it on the high tree.

The forester climbed up, brought the child down, and thought to himself: 'You will take him home with you, and bring him up with your Lina.' He took it home, therefore, and the two children grew up together. And the one, which he had found on a tree was called Fundevogel, because a bird had carried it away. Fundevogel and Lina loved each other so dearly that when they did not see each other they were sad.

Now the forester had an old cook, who one evening took two pails and began to fetch water, and did not go once only, but many times, out to the spring. Lina saw this and said, 'Listen, old Sanna, why are you fetching so much water?' 'If you will never repeat it to anyone, I will tell you why.' So Lina said, no, she would never repeat it to anyone, and then the cook said: 'Early tomorrow morning, when the forester is out hunting, I will heat the water, and when it is boiling in the kettle, I will throw in Fundevogel, and will boil him in it.'

Early next morning the forester got up and went out hunting, and when he was gone the children were still in bed. Then Lina said to Fundevogel: 'If you will never leave me, I too will never leave you.' Fundevogel said: 'Neither now, nor ever will I leave you.' Then said Lina: 'Then will I tell you. Last night, old Sanna carried so many buckets of water into the house that I asked her why she was doing that, and she said that if I would promise not to tell anyone, and she said that early tomorrow morning when father was out hunting, she would set the kettle full of water, throw you into it and boil you; but we will get up quickly, dress ourselves, and go away together.'

The two children therefore got up, dressed themselves quickly, and went away. When the water in the kettle was boiling, the cook went into the bedroom to fetch Fundevogel and throw him into it. But when she came in, and went to the beds, both the children were gone. Then she was terribly alarmed, and she said to herself: 'What shall I say now when the forester comes home and sees that the children are gone? They must be followed instantly to get them back again.'

Then the cook sent three servants after them, who were to run and overtake the children. The children, however, were sitting outside the forest, and when they saw from afar the three servants running, Lina said to Fundevogel: 'Never leave me, and I will never leave you.' Fundevogel said: 'Neither now, nor ever.' Then said Lina: 'Do you become a rose-tree, and I the rose upon it.' When the three servants came to the forest, nothing was there but a rose-tree and one rose on it, but the children were nowhere. Then said they: ‘There is nothing to be done here,’ and they went home and told the cook that they had seen nothing in the forest but a little rose-bush with one rose on it. Then the old cook scolded and said: ‘You simpletons, you should have cut the rose-bush in two, and have broken off the rose and brought it home with you; go, and do it at once.’ They had therefore to go out and look for the second time. The children, however, saw them coming from a distance. Then Lina said: ‘Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave you.’ Fundevogel said: ‘Neither now; nor ever.’ Said Lina: ‘Then do you become a church, and I’ll be the chandelier in it.’ So when the three servants came, nothing was there but a church, with a chandelier in it. They said therefore to each other: ‘What can we do here, let us go home.’ When they got home, the cook asked if they had not found them; so they said no, they had found nothing but a church, and there was a chandelier in it. And the cook scolded them and said: ‘You fools! why did you not pull the church to pieces, and bring the chandelier home with you?’ And now the old cook herself got on her legs, and went with the three servants in pursuit of the children. The children, however, saw from afar that the three servants were coming, and the cook waddling after them. Then said Lina: ‘Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave you.’ Then said Fundevogel: ‘Neither now, nor ever.’ Said Lina: ‘Be a fishpond, and I will be the duck upon it.’ The cook, however, came up to them, and when she saw the pond she lay down by it, and was about to drink it up. But the duck swam quickly to her, seized her head in its beak and drew her into the water, and there the old witch had to drown. Then the children went home together, and were heartily delighted, and if they have not died, they are living still.

THE VALIANT LITTLE TAILOR

One summer’s morning a little tailor was sitting on his table by the window; he was in good spirits, and sewed with all his might. Then came a peasant woman down the street crying: ‘Good jams, cheap! Good jams, cheap!’ This rang pleasantly in the tailor’s ears; he stretched his delicate head out of the window, and called: ‘Come up here, dear woman; here you will get rid of your goods.’ The woman came up the three steps to the tailor with her heavy basket, and he made her unpack all the pots for him. He inspected each one, lifted it up, put his nose to it, and at length said: ‘The jam seems to me to be good, so weigh me out four ounces, dear woman, and if it is a quarter of a pound that is of no consequence.’ The woman who had hoped to find a good sale, gave him what he desired, but went away quite angry and grumbling. ‘Now, this jam shall be blessed by God,’ cried the little tailor, ‘and give me health and strength’; so he brought the bread out of the cupboard, cut himself a piece right across the loaf and spread the jam over it. ‘This won’t taste bitter,’ said he, ‘but I will just finish the jacket before I take a bite.’ He laid the bread near him, sewed on, and in his joy, made bigger and bigger stitches. In the meantime the smell of the sweet jam rose to where the flies were sitting in great numbers, and they were attracted and descended on it in hosts. ‘Hi! who invited you?’ said the little tailor, and drove the unbidden guests away. The flies, however, who understood no German, would not be turned away, but came back again in ever-increasing companies. The little tailor at last lost all patience, and drew a piece of cloth from the hole under his work-table, and saying: ‘Wait, and I will give it to you,’ struck it mercilessly on them. When he drew it away and counted, there lay before him no fewer than seven, dead and with legs stretched out. ‘Are you a fellow of that sort?’ said he, and could not help admiring his own bravery. ‘The whole town shall know of this!’ And the little tailor hastened to cut himself a girdle, stitched it, and embroidered on it in large letters: ‘Seven at one stroke!’ ‘What, the town!’ he continued, ‘the whole world shall hear of it!’ and his heart wagged with joy like a lamb’s tail. The tailor put on the girdle, and resolved to go forth into the world, because he thought his workshop was too small for his valour. Before he went away, he sought about in the house to see if there was anything which he could take with him; however, he found nothing but an old cheese, and that he put in his pocket. In front of the door he observed a bird which had caught itself in the thicket. It had to go into his pocket with the cheese. Now he took to the road boldly, and as he was light and nimble, he felt no fatigue. The road led him up a mountain, and when he had reached the highest point of it, there sat a powerful giant looking peacefully about him. The little tailor went bravely up, spoke to him, and said: ‘Good day, comrade, so you are sitting there overlooking the wide-spread world! I am just on my way thither, and want to try my luck. Have you any inclination to go with me?’ The giant looked contemptuously at the tailor, and said: ‘You ragamuffin! You miserable creature!’

‘Oh, indeed?’ answered the little tailor, and unbuttoned his coat, and showed the giant the girdle, ‘there may you read what kind of a man I am!’ The giant read: ‘Seven at one stroke,’ and thought that they had been men whom the tailor had killed, and began to feel a little respect for the tiny fellow. Nevertheless, he wished to try him first, and took a stone in his hand and squeezed it together so that water dropped out of it. ‘Do that likewise,’ said the giant, ‘if you have strength.’ ‘Is that all?’ said the tailor, ‘that is child’s play with us!’ and put his hand into his pocket, brought out the soft cheese, and pressed it until the liquid ran out of it. ‘Faith,’ said he, ‘that was a little better, wasn’t it?’ The giant did not know what to say, and could not believe it of the little man. Then the giant picked up a stone and threw it so high that the eye could scarcely follow it. ‘Now, little mite of a man, do that likewise,’ ‘Well thrown,’ said the tailor, ‘but after all the stone came down to earth again; I will throw you one which shall never come back at all,’ and he put his hand into his pocket, took out the bird, and threw it into the air. The bird, delighted with its liberty, rose, flew away and did not come back. ‘How does that shot please you, comrade?’ asked the tailor. ‘You can certainly throw,’ said the giant, ‘but now we will see if you are able to carry anything properly.’ He took the little tailor to a mighty oak tree which lay there felled on the ground, and said: ‘If you are strong enough, help me to carry the tree out of the forest.’ ‘Readily,’ answered the little man; ‘take you the trunk on your shoulders, and I will raise up the branches and twigs; after all, they are the heaviest.’ The giant took the trunk on his shoulder, but the tailor seated himself on a branch, and the giant, who could not look round, had to carry away the whole tree, and the little tailor into the bargain: he behind, was quite merry and happy, and whistled the song: ‘Three tailors rode forth from the gate,’ as if carrying the tree were child’s play. The giant, after he had dragged the heavy burden part of the way, could go no further, and cried: ‘Hark you, I shall have to let the tree fall!’ The tailor sprang nimbly down, seized the tree with both arms as if he had been carrying it, and said to the giant: ‘You are such a great fellow, and yet cannot even carry the tree!’

They went on together, and as they passed a cherry-tree, the giant laid hold of the top of the tree where the ripest fruit was hanging, bent it down, gave it into the tailor’s hand, and bade him eat. But the little tailor was much too weak to hold the tree, and when the giant let it go, it sprang back again, and the tailor was tossed into the air with it. When he had fallen down again without injury, the giant said: ‘What is this? Have you not strength enough to hold the weak twig?’ ‘There is no lack of strength,’ answered the little tailor. ‘Do you think that could be anything to a man who has struck down seven at one blow? I leapt over the tree because the huntsmen are shooting down there in the thicket. Jump as I did, if you can do it.’ The giant made the attempt but he could not get over the tree, and remained hanging in the branches, so that in this also the tailor kept the upper hand.

The giant said: ‘If you are such a valiant fellow, come with me into our cavern and spend the night with us.’ The little tailor was willing, and followed him. When they went into the cave, other giants were sitting there by the fire, and each of them had a roasted sheep in his hand and was eating it. The little tailor looked round and thought: ‘It is much more spacious here than in my workshop.’ The giant showed him a bed, and said he was to lie down in it and sleep. The bed, however, was too big for the little tailor; he did not lie down in it, but crept into a corner. When it was midnight, and the giant thought that the little tailor was lying in a sound sleep, he got up, took a great iron bar, cut through the bed with one blow, and thought he had finished off the grasshopper for good. With the earliest dawn the giants went into the forest, and had quite forgotten the little tailor, when all at once he walked up to them quite merrily and boldly. The giants were terrified, they were afraid that he would strike them all dead, and ran away in a great hurry.

The little tailor went onwards, always following his own pointed nose. After he had walked for a long time, he came to the courtyard of a royal palace, and as he felt weary, he lay down on the grass and fell asleep. Whilst he lay there, the people came and inspected him on all sides, and read on his girdle: ‘Seven at one stroke.’ ‘Ah!’ said they, ‘what does the great warrior want here in the midst of peace? He must be a mighty lord.’ They went and announced him to the king, and gave it as their opinion that if war should break out, this would be a weighty and useful man who ought on no account to be allowed to depart. The counsel pleased the king, and he sent one of his courtiers to the little tailor to offer him military service when he awoke. The ambassador remained standing by the sleeper, waited until he stretched his limbs and opened his eyes, and then conveyed to him this proposal. ‘For this very reason have I come here,’ the tailor replied, ‘I am ready to enter the king’s service.’ He was therefore honourably received, and a special dwelling was assigned him.

The soldiers, however, were set against the little tailor, and wished him a thousand miles away. ‘What is to be the end of this?’ they said among themselves. ‘If we quarrel with him, and he strikes about him, seven of us will fall at every blow; not one of us can stand against him.’ They came therefore to a decision, betook themselves in a body to the king, and begged for their dismissal. ‘We are not prepared,’ said they, ‘to stay with a man who kills seven at one stroke.’ The king was sorry that for the sake of one he should lose all his faithful servants, wished that he had never set eyes on the tailor, and would willingly have been rid of him again. But he did not venture to give him his dismissal, for he dreaded lest he should strike him and all his people dead, and place himself on the royal throne. He thought about it for a long time, and at last found good counsel. He sent to the little tailor and caused him to be informed that as he was a great warrior, he had one request to make to him. In a forest of his country lived two giants, who caused great mischief with their robbing, murdering, ravaging, and burning, and no one could approach them without putting himself in danger of death. If the tailor conquered and killed these two giants, he would give him his only daughter to wife, and half of his kingdom as a dowry, likewise one hundred horsemen should go with him to assist him. ‘That would indeed be a fine thing for a man like me!’ thought the little tailor. ‘One is not offered a beautiful princess and half a kingdom every day of one's life!' 'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'I will soon subdue the giants, and do not require the help of the hundred horsemen to do it; he who can hit seven with one blow has no need to be afraid of two.'

The little tailor went forth, and the hundred horsemen followed him. When he came to the outskirts of the forest, he said to his followers: 'Just stay waiting here, I alone will soon finish off the giants.' Then he bounded into the forest and looked about right and left. After a while he perceived both giants. They lay sleeping under a tree, and snored so that the branches waved up and down. The little tailor, not idle, gathered two pocketsful of stones, and with these climbed up the tree. When he was halfway up, he slipped down by a branch, until he sat just above the sleepers, and then let one stone after another fall on the breast of one of the giants. For a long time the giant felt nothing, but at last he awoke, pushed his comrade, and said: 'Why are you knocking me?' 'You must be dreaming,' said the other, 'I am not knocking you.' They laid themselves down to sleep again, and then the tailor threw a stone down on the second. 'What is the meaning of this?' cried the other 'Why are you pelting me?' 'I am not pelting you,' answered the first, growling. They disputed about it for a time, but as they were weary they let the matter rest, and their eyes closed once more. The little tailor began his game again, picked out the biggest stone, and threw it with all his might on the breast of the first giant. 'That is too bad!' cried he, and sprang up like a madman, and pushed his companion against the tree until it shook. The other paid him back in the same coin, and they got into such a rage that they tore up trees and belaboured each other so long, that at last they both fell down dead on the ground at the same time. Then the little tailor leapt down. 'It is a lucky thing,' said he, 'that they did not tear up the tree on which I was sitting, or I should have had to sprint on to another like a squirrel; but we tailors are nimble.' He drew out his sword and gave each of them a couple of thrusts in the breast, and then went out to the horsemen and said: 'The work is done; I have finished both of them off, but it was hard work! They tore up trees in their sore need, and defended themselves with them, but all that is to no purpose when a man like myself comes, who can kill seven at one blow.' 'But are you not wounded?' asked the horsemen. 'You need not concern yourself about that,' answered the tailor, 'they have not bent one hair of mine.' The horsemen would not believe him, and rode into the forest; there they found the giants swimming in their blood, and all round about lay the torn-up trees.

The little tailor demanded of the king the promised reward; he, however, repented of his promise, and again bethought himself how he could get rid of the hero. 'Before you receive my daughter, and the half of my kingdom,' said he to him, 'you must perform one more heroic deed. In the forest roams a unicorn which does great harm, and you must catch it first.' 'I fear one unicorn still less than two giants. Seven at one blow, is my kind of affair.' He took a rope and an axe with him, went forth into the forest, and again bade those who were sent with him to wait outside. He had not long to seek. The unicorn soon came towards him, and rushed directly on the tailor, as if it would gore him with its horn without more ado. ‘Softly, softly; it can’t be done as quickly as that,’ said he, and stood still and waited until the animal was quite close, and then sprang nimbly behind the tree. The unicorn ran against the tree with all its strength, and stuck its horn so fast in the trunk that it had not the strength enough to draw it out again, and thus it was caught. ‘Now, I have got the bird,’ said the tailor, and came out from behind the tree and put the rope round its neck, and then with his axe he hewed the horn out of the tree, and when all was ready he led the beast away and took it to the king.

The king still would not give him the promised reward, and made a third demand. Before the wedding the tailor was to catch him a wild boar that made great havoc in the forest, and the huntsmen should give him their help. ‘Willingly,’ said the tailor, ‘that is child’s play!’ He did not take the huntsmen with him into the forest, and they were well pleased that he did not, for the wild boar had several times received them in such a manner that they had no inclination to lie in wait for him. When the boar perceived the tailor, it ran on him with foaming mouth and whetted tusks, and was about to throw him to the ground, but the hero fled and sprang into a chapel which was near and up to the window at once, and in one bound out again. The boar ran after him, but the tailor ran round outside and shut the door behind it, and then the raging beast, which was much too heavy and awkward to leap out of the window, was caught. The little tailor called the huntsmen thither that they might see the prisoner with their own eyes. The hero, however, went to the king, who was now, whether he liked it or not, obliged to keep his promise, and gave his daughter and the half of his kingdom. Had he known that it was no warlike hero, but a little tailor who was standing before him, it would have gone to his heart still more than it did. The wedding was held with great magnificence and small joy, and out of a tailor a king was made.

After some time the young queen heard her husband say in his dreams at night: ‘Boy, make me the doublet, and patch the pantaloons, or else I will rap the yard-measure over your ears.’ Then she discovered in what state of life the young lord had been born, and next morning complained of her wrongs to her father, and begged him to help her to get rid of her husband, who was nothing else but a tailor. The king comforted her and said: ‘Leave your bedroom door open this night, and my servants shall stand outside, and when he has fallen asleep shall go in, bind him, and take him on board a ship which shall carry him into the wide world.’ The woman was satisfied with this; but the king’s armour-bearer, who had heard all, was friendly with the young lord, and informed him of the whole plot. ‘I’ll put a screw into that business,’ said the little tailor. At night he went to bed with his wife at the usual time, and when she thought that he had fallen asleep, she got up, opened the door, and then lay down again. The little tailor, who was only pretending to be asleep, began to cry out in a clear voice: ‘Boy, make me the doublet and patch me the pantaloons, or I will rap the yard-measure over your ears. I smote seven at one blow. I killed two giants, I brought away one unicorn, and caught a wild boar, and am I to fear those who are standing outside the room.' When these men heard the tailor speaking thus, they were overcome by a great dread, and ran as if the wild huntsman were behind them, and none of them would venture anything further against him. So the little tailor was and remained a king to the end of his life.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Hard by a great forest dwelt a poor wood-cutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Gretel. He had little to bite and to break, and once when great dearth fell on the land, he could no longer procure even daily bread. Now when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety, he groaned and said to his wife: ‘What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?’ ‘I’ll tell you what, husband,’ answered the woman, ‘early tomorrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest; there we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one more piece of bread, and then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them.’ ‘No, wife,’ said the man, ‘I will not do that; how can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest? — the wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces.’ ‘O, you fool!’ said she, ‘then we must all four die of hunger, you may as well plane the planks for our coffins,’ and she left him no peace until he consented. ‘But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same,’ said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their stepmother had said to their father. Gretel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel: ‘Now all is over with us.’ ‘Be quiet, Gretel,’ said Hansel, ‘do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us.’ And when the old folks had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and stuffed the little pocket of his coat with as many as he could get in. Then he went back and said to Gretel: ‘Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace, God will not forsake us,’ and he lay down again in his bed. When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying: ‘Get up, you sluggards! we are going into the forest to fetch wood.’ She gave each a little piece of bread, and said: ‘There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else.’ Gretel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the pebbles in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. When they had walked a short time, Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said: ‘Hansel, what are you looking at there and staying behind for? Pay attention, and do not forget how to use your legs.’ ‘Ah, father,’ said Hansel, ‘I am looking at my little white cat, which is sitting up on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me.’ The wife said: ‘Fool, that is not your little cat, that is the morning sun which is shining on the chimneys.’ Hansel, however, had not been looking back at the cat, but had been constantly throwing one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said: 'Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold.' Hansel and Gretel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said: 'Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest, we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away.'

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread, and as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe they believed that their father was near. It was not the axe, however, but a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backwards and forwards. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Gretel began to cry and said: 'How are we to get out of the forest now?' But Hansel comforted her and said: 'Just wait a little, until the moon has risen, and then we will soon find the way.' And when the full moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said: 'You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest? — we thought you were never coming back at all!' The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great dearth throughout the land, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father: 'Everything is eaten again, we have one half loaf left, and that is the end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again; there is no other means of saving ourselves!' The man's heart was heavy, and he thought: 'It would be better for you to share the last mouthful with your children.' The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.

The children, however, were still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folks were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said: 'Do not cry, Gretel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us.'

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their piece of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground. 'Hansel, why do you stop and look round?' said the father, 'go on.' 'I am looking back at my little pigeon which is sitting on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me,' answered Hansel. 'Fool!' said the woman, 'that is not your little pigeon, that is the morning sun that is shining on the chimney.' Hansel, however little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before. Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said: 'Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little; we are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening when we are done, we will come and fetch you away.' When it was noon, Gretel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children. They did not awake until it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister and said: 'Just wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn about, they will show us our way home again.' When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel said to Gretel: 'We shall soon find the way,' but they did not find it. They walked the whole night and all the next day too from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs would carry them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

It was now three mornings since they had left their father's house. They began to walk again, but they always came deeper into the forest, and if help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness. When it was mid-day, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when its song was over, it spread its wings and flew away before them, and they followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted; and when they approached the little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar. 'We will set to work on that,' said Hansel, 'and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window, it will taste sweet.' Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the parlour:

'Nibble, nibble, gnaw,
Who is nibbling at my little house?'

The children answered:

'The wind, the wind,
The heaven-born wind,'

and went on eating without disturbing themselves. Hansel, who liked the taste of the roof, tore down a great piece of it, and Gretel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it. Suddenly the door opened, and a woman as old as the hills, who supported herself on crutches, came creeping out. Hansel and Gretel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said: ‘Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you.’ She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then good food was set before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterwards two pretty little beds were covered with clean white linen, and Hansel and Gretel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.

The old woman had only pretended to be so kind; she was in reality a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Hansel and Gretel came into her neighbourhood, she laughed with malice, and said mockingly: ‘I have them, they shall not escape me again!’ Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up, and when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump and rosy cheeks she muttered to herself: ‘That will be a dainty mouthful!’ Then she seized Hansel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and locked him in behind a grated door. Scream as he might, it would not help him. Then she went to Gretel, shook her till she awoke, and cried: ‘Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother, he is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him.’ Gretel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain, for she was forced to do what the wicked witch commanded.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried: ‘Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel if you will soon be fat.’ Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and thought it was Hansel’s finger, and was astonished that there was no way of fattening him. When four weeks had gone by, and Hansel still remained thin, she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer. ‘Now, then, Gretel,’ she cried to the girl, ‘stir yourself, and bring some water. Let Hansel be fat or lean, tomorrow I will kill him, and cook him.’ Ah, how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down her cheeks! ‘Dear God, do help us,’ she cried. ‘If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together.’ ‘Just keep your noise to yourself,’ said the old woman, ‘it won’t help you at all.’

Early in the morning, Gretel had to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire. ‘We will bake first,’ said the old woman, ‘I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough.’ She pushed poor Gretel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were already darting. ‘Creep in,’ said the witch, ‘and see if it is properly heated, so that we can put the bread in.’ And once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then she would eat her, too. But Gretel saw what she had in mind, and said: ‘I do not know how I am to do it; how do I get in?’ ‘Silly goose,’ said the old woman. ‘The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!’ and she crept up and thrust her head into the oven. Then Gretel gave her a push that drove her far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh! then she began to howl quite horribly, but Gretel ran away and the godless witch was miserably burnt to death.

Gretel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried: ‘Hansel, we are saved! The old witch is dead!’ Then Hansel sprang like a bird from its cage when the door is opened. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch’s house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels. ‘These are far better than pebbles!’ said Hansel, and thrust into his pockets whatever could be got in, and Gretel said: ‘I, too, will take something home with me,’ and filled her pinafore full. ‘But now we must be off,’ said Hansel, ‘that we may get out of the witch’s forest.’

When they had walked for two hours, they came to a great stretch of water. ‘We cannot cross,’ said Hansel, ‘I see no foot-plank, and no bridge.’ ‘And there is also no ferry,’ answered Gretel, ‘but a white duck is swimming there: if I ask her, she will help us over.’ Then she cried:

‘Little duck, little duck, dost thou see,
Hansel and Gretel are waiting for thee?
There’s never a plank, or bridge in sight,
Take us across on thy back so white.’

The duck came to them, and Hansel seated himself on its back, and told his sister to sit by him. ‘No,’ replied Gretel, ‘that will be too heavy for the little duck; she shall take us across, one after the other.’ The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw from afar their father’s house. Then they began to run, rushed into the parlour, and threw themselves round their father’s neck. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; the woman, however, was dead. Gretel emptied her pinafore until pearls and precious stones ran about the room, and Hansel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them. Then all anxiety was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness. My tale is done, there runs a mouse; whosoever catches it, may make himself a big fur cap out of it.

THE MOUSE, THE BIRD, AND THE SAUSAGE

Once upon a time, a mouse, a bird, and a sausage, entered into partnership and set up house together. For a long time all went well; they lived in great comfort, and prospered so far as to be able to add considerably to their stores. The bird's duty was to fly daily into the wood and bring in fuel; the mouse fetched the water, and the sausage saw to the cooking.

When people are too well off they always begin to long for something new. And so it came to pass, that the bird, while out one day, met a fellow bird, to whom he boastfully expatiated on the excellence of his household arrangements. But the other bird sneered at him for being a poor simpleton, who did all the hard work, while the other two stayed at home and had a good time of it. For, when the mouse had made the fire and fetched in the water, she could retire into her little room and rest until it was time to set the table. The sausage had only to watch the pot to see that the food was properly cooked, and when it was near dinner-time, he just threw himself into the broth, or rolled in and out among the vegetables three or four times, and there they were, buttered, and salted, and ready to be served. Then, when the bird came home and had laid aside his burden, they sat down to table, and when they had finished their meal, they could sleep their fill till the following morning: and that was really a very delightful life.

Influenced by those remarks, the bird next morning refused to bring in the wood, telling the others that he had been their servant long enough, and had been a fool into the bargain, and that it was now time to make a change, and to try some other way of arranging the work. Beg and pray as the mouse and the sausage might, it was of no use; the bird remained master of the situation, and the venture had to be made. They therefore drew lots, and it fell to the sausage to bring in the wood, to the mouse to cook, and to the bird to fetch the water.

And now what happened? The sausage started in search of wood, the bird made the fire, and the mouse put on the pot, and then these two waited till the sausage returned with the fuel for the following day. But the sausage remained so long away, that they became uneasy, and the bird flew out to meet him. He had not flown far, however, when he came across a dog who, having met the sausage, had regarded him as his legitimate booty, and so seized and swallowed him. The bird complained to the dog of this bare-faced robbery, but nothing he said was of any avail, for the dog answered that he found false credentials on the sausage, and that was the reason his life had been forfeited.

He picked up the wood, and flew sadly home, and told the mouse all he had seen and heard. They were both very unhappy, but agreed to make the best of things and to remain with one another.

So now the bird set the table, and the mouse looked after the food and, wishing to prepare it in the same way as the sausage, by rolling in and out among the vegetables to salt and butter them, she jumped into the pot; but she stopped short long before she reached the bottom, having already parted not only with her skin and hair, but also with life.

Presently the bird came in and wanted to serve up the dinner, but he could nowhere see the cook. In his alarm and flurry, he threw the wood here and there about the floor, called and searched, but no cook was to be found. Then some of the wood that had been carelessly thrown down, caught fire and began to blaze. The bird hastened to fetch some water, but his pail fell into the well, and he after it, and as he was unable to recover himself, he was drowned.

MOTHER HOLLE

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters; one of them was beautiful and industrious, the other ugly and lazy. The mother, however, loved the ugly and lazy one best, because she was her own daughter, and so the other, who was only her stepdaughter, was made to do all the work of the house, and was quite the Cinderella of the family. Her stepmother sent her out every day to sit by the well in the high road, there to spin until she made her fingers bleed. Now it chanced one day that some blood fell on to the spindle, and as the girl stopped over the well to wash it off, the spindle suddenly sprang out of her hand and fell into the well. She ran home crying to tell of her misfortune, but her stepmother spoke harshly to her, and after giving her a violent scolding, said unkindly, ‘As you have let the spindle fall into the well you may go yourself and fetch it out.’

The girl went back to the well not knowing what to do, and at last in her distress she jumped into the water after the spindle.

She remembered nothing more until she awoke and found herself in a beautiful meadow, full of sunshine, and with countless flowers blooming in every direction.

She walked over the meadow, and presently she came upon a baker’s oven full of bread, and the loaves cried out to her, ‘Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago.’ So she took the bread-shovel and drew them all out.

She went on a little farther, till she came to a tree full of apples. ‘Shake me, shake me, I pray,’ cried the tree; ‘my apples, one and all, are ripe.’ So she shook the tree, and the apples came falling down upon her like rain; but she continued shaking until there was not a single apple left upon it. Then she carefully gathered the apples together in a heap and walked on again.

The next thing she came to was a little house, and there she saw an old woman looking out, with such large teeth, that she was terrified, and turned to run away. But the old woman called after her, ‘What are you afraid of, dear child? Stay with me; if you will do the work of my house properly for me, I will make you very happy. You must be very careful, however, to make my bed in the right way, for I wish you always to shake it thoroughly, so that the feathers fly about; then they say, down there in the world, that it is snowing; for I am Mother Holle.’ The old woman spoke so kindly, that the girl summoned up courage and agreed to enter into her service.

She took care to do everything according to the old woman’s bidding and every time she made the bed she shook it with all her might, so that the feathers flew about like so many snowflakes. The old woman was as good as her word: she never spoke angrily to her, and gave her roast and boiled meats every day.

So she stayed on with Mother Holle for some time, and then she began to grow unhappy. She could not at first tell why she felt sad, but she became conscious at last of great longing to go home; then she knew she was homesick, although she was a thousand times better off with Mother Holle than with her mother and sister. After waiting awhile, she went to Mother Holle and said, ‘I am so homesick, that I cannot stay with you any longer, for although I am so happy here, I must return to my own people.’

Then Mother Holle said, ‘I am pleased that you should want to go back to your own people, and as you have served me so well and faithfully, I will take you home myself.’

Thereupon she led the girl by the hand up to a broad gateway. The gate was opened, and as the girl passed through, a shower of gold fell upon her, and the gold clung to her, so that she was covered with it from head to foot.

‘That is a reward for your industry,’ said Mother Holle, and as she spoke she handed her the spindle which she had dropped into the well.

The gate was then closed, and the girl found herself back in the old world close to her mother’s house. As she entered the courtyard, the cock who was perched on the well, called out:

‘Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your golden daughter’s come back to you.’

Then she went in to her mother and sister, and as she was so richly covered with gold, they gave her a warm welcome. She related to them all that had happened, and when the mother heard how she had come by her great riches, she thought she should like her ugly, lazy daughter to go and try her fortune. So she made the sister go and sit by the well and spin, and the girl pricked her finger and thrust her hand into a thorn-bush, so that she might drop some blood on to the spindle; then she threw it into the well, and jumped in herself.

Like her sister she awoke in the beautiful meadow, and walked over it till she came to the oven. ‘Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago,’ cried the loaves as before. But the lazy girl answered, ‘Do you think I am going to dirty my hands for you?’ and walked on.

Presently she came to the apple-tree. ‘Shake me, shake me, I pray; my apples, one and all, are ripe,’ it cried. But she only answered, ‘A nice thing to ask me to do, one of the apples might fall on my head,’ and passed on.

At last she came to Mother Holle’s house, and as she had heard all about the large teeth from her sister, she was not afraid of them, and engaged herself without delay to the old woman.

The first day she was very obedient and industrious, and exerted herself to please Mother Holle, for she thought of the gold she should get in return. The next day, however, she began to dawdle over her work, and the third day she was more idle still; then she began to lie in bed in the mornings and refused to get up. Worse still, she neglected to make the old woman’s bed properly, and forgot to shake it so that the feathers might fly about. So Mother Holle very soon got tired off her, and told her she might go. The lazy girl was delighted at this, and thought to herself, ‘The gold will soon be mine.’ Mother Holle led her, as she had led her sister, to the broad gateway; but as she was passing through, instead of the shower of gold, a great bucketful of pitch came pouring over her.

'That is in return for your services,' said the old woman, and she shut the gate.

So the lazy girl had to go home covered with pitch, and the cock on the well called out as she saw her:

'Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your dirty daughter's come back to you.'

But, try what she would, she could not get the pitch off and it stuck to her as long as she lived.

LITTLE RED-CAP [LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD]

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called 'Little Red-Cap.'

One day her mother said to her: 'Come, Little Red-Cap, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing; and when you go into her room, don't forget to say, "Good morning", and don't peep into every corner before you do it.'

'I will take great care,' said Little Red-Cap to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red-Cap entered the wood, a wolf met her. Red-Cap did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

'Good day, Little Red-Cap,' said he.

'Thank you kindly, wolf.'

'Whither away so early, Little Red-Cap?'

'To my grandmother's.'

'What have you got in your apron?'

'Cake and wine; yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger.'

'Where does your grandmother live, Little Red-Cap?'

'A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood; her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below; you surely must know it,' replied Little Red-Cap.

The wolf thought to himself: 'What a tender young creature! what a nice plump mouthful — she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both.' So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red-Cap, and then he said: 'See, Little Red-Cap, how pretty the flowers are about here — why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry.'

Little Red-Cap raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought: 'Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time'; and so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

'Who is there?'

'Little Red-Cap,' replied the wolf. 'She is bringing cake and wine; open the door.'

'Lift the latch,' called out the grandmother, 'I am too weak, and cannot get up.'

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red-Cap, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself: 'Oh dear! how uneasy I feel today, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.' She called out: 'Good morning,' but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

'Oh! grandmother,' she said, 'what big ears you have!'

'The better to hear you with, my child,' was the reply.

'But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!' she said.

'The better to see you with, my dear.'

'But, grandmother, what large hands you have!'

'The better to hug you with.'

'Oh! but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!'

'The better to eat you with!'

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Red-Cap.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself: 'How the old woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.' So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. 'Do I find you here, you old sinner!' said he. 'I have long sought you!' Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf. When he had made two snips, he saw the little Red-Cap shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying: 'Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf'; and after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Red-Cap, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf’s skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Red-Cap had brought, and revived, but Red-Cap thought to herself: ‘As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.’

It also related that once when Red-Cap was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Red-Cap, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said ‘good morning’ to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. ‘Well,’ said the grandmother, ‘we will shut the door, that he may not come in.’ Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried: ‘Open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red-Cap, and am bringing you some cakes.’ But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Red-Cap went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child: ‘Take the pail, Red-Cap; I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough.’ Red-Cap carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. But Red-Cap went joyously home, and no one ever did anything to harm her again.

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM

There was once a miller who had one beautiful daughter, and as she was grown up, he was anxious that she should be well married and provided for. He said to himself, ‘I will give her to the first suitable man who comes and asks for her hand.’ Not long after a suitor appeared, and as he appeared to be very rich and the miller could see nothing in him with which to find fault, he betrothed his daughter to him. But the girl did not care for the man as a girl ought to care for her betrothed husband. She did not feel that she could trust him, and she could not look at him nor think of him without an inward shudder. One day he said to her, ‘You have not yet paid me a visit, although we have been betrothed for some time.’ ‘I do not know where your house is,’ she answered. ‘My house is out there in the dark forest,’ he said. She tried to excuse herself by saying that she would not be able to find the way thither. Her betrothed only replied, ‘You must come and see me next Sunday; I have already invited guests for that day, and that you may not mistake the way, I will strew ashes along the path.’

When Sunday came, and it was time for the girl to start, a feeling of dread came over her which she could not explain, and that she might be able to find her path again, she filled her pockets with peas and lentils to sprinkle on the ground as she went along. On reaching the entrance to the forest she found the path strewed with ashes, and these she followed, throwing down some peas on either side of her at every step she took. She walked the whole day until she came to the deepest, darkest part of the forest. There she saw a lonely house, looking so grim and mysterious, that it did not please her at all. She stepped inside, but not a soul was to be seen, and a great silence reigned throughout. Suddenly a voice cried:

‘Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
 Linger not in this murderers’ lair.’

The girl looked up and saw that the voice came from a bird hanging in a cage on the wall. Again it cried:

‘Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
 Linger not in this murderers’ lair.’

The girl passed on, going from room to room of the house, but they were all empty, and still she saw no one. At last she came to the cellar, and there sat a very, very old woman, who could not keep her head from shaking. ‘Can you tell me,’ asked the girl, ‘if my betrothed husband lives here?’

‘Ah, you poor child,’ answered the old woman, ‘what a place for you to come to! This is a murderers’ den. You think yourself a promised bride, and that your marriage will soon take place, but it is with death that you will keep your marriage feast. Look, do you see that large cauldron of water which I am obliged to keep on the fire! As soon as they have you in their power they will kill you without mercy, and cook and eat you, for they are eaters of men. If I did not take pity on you and save you, you would be lost.’

Thereupon the old woman led her behind a large cask, which quite hid her from view. ‘Keep as still as a mouse,’ she said; ‘do not move or speak, or it will be all over with you. Tonight, when the robbers are all asleep, we will flee together. I have long been waiting for an opportunity to escape.’

The words were hardly out of her mouth when the godless crew returned, dragging another young girl along with them. They were all drunk, and paid no heed to her cries and lamentations. They gave her wine to drink, three glasses full, one of white wine, one of red, and one of yellow, and with that her heart gave way and she died. Then they tore off her dainty clothing, laid her on a table, and cut her beautiful body into pieces, and sprinkled salt upon it.

The poor betrothed girl crouched trembling and shuddering behind the cask, for she saw what a terrible fate had been intended for her by the robbers. One of them now noticed a gold ring still remaining on the little finger of the murdered girl, and as he could not draw it off easily, he took a hatchet and cut off the finger; but the finger sprang into the air, and fell behind the cask into the lap of the girl who was hiding there. The robber took a light and began looking for it, but he could not find it. ‘Have you looked behind the large cask?’ said one of the others. But the old woman called out, ‘Come and eat your suppers, and let the thing be till tomorrow; the finger won’t run away.’

‘The old woman is right,’ said the robbers, and they ceased looking for the finger and sat down.

The old woman then mixed a sleeping draught with their wine, and before long they were all lying on the floor of the cellar, fast asleep and snoring. As soon as the girl was assured of this, she came from behind the cask. She was obliged to step over the bodies of the sleepers, who were lying close together, and every moment she was filled with renewed dread lest she should awaken them. But God helped her, so that she passed safely over them, and then she and the old woman went upstairs, opened the door, and hastened as fast as they could from the murderers’ den. They found the ashes scattered by the wind, but the peas and lentils had sprouted, and grown sufficiently above the ground, to guide them in the moonlight along the path. All night long they walked, and it was morning before they reached the mill. Then the girl told her father all that had happened.

The day came that had been fixed for the marriage. The bridegroom arrived and also a large company of guests, for the miller had taken care to invite all his friends and relations. As they sat at the feast, each guest in turn was asked to tell a tale; the bride sat still and did not say a word.

‘And you, my love,’ said the bridegroom, turning to her, ’is there no tale you know? Tell us something.’

‘I will tell you a dream, then,’ said the bride. ‘I went alone through a forest and came at last to a house; not a soul could I find within, but a bird that was hanging in a cage on the wall cried:

‘Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
Linger not in this murderers’ lair.’

And again a second time it said these words.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'I went on through the house from room to room, but they were all empty, and everything was so grim and mysterious. At last I went down to the cellar, and there sat a very, very old woman, who could not keep her head still. I asked her if my betrothed lived here, and she answered, "Ah, you poor child, you are come to a murderers' den; your betrothed does indeed live here, but he will kill you without mercy and afterwards cook and eat you."'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'The old woman hid me behind a large cask, and scarcely had she done this when the robbers returned home, dragging a young girl along with them. They gave her three kinds of wine to drink, white, red, and yellow, and with that she died.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'Then they tore off her dainty clothing, and cut her beautiful body into pieces and sprinkled salt upon it.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'And one of the robbers saw that there was a gold ring still left on her finger, and as it was difficult to draw off, he took a hatchet and cut off her finger; but the finger sprang into the air and fell behind the great cask into my lap. And here is the finger with the ring.' And with these words the bride drew forth the finger and shewed it to the assembled guests.

The bridegroom, who during this recital had grown deadly pale, up and tried to escape, but the guests seized him and held him fast. They delivered him up to justice, and he and all his murderous band were condemned to death for their wicked deeds.

TOM THUMB

A poor woodman sat in his cottage one night, smoking his pipe by the fireside, while his wife sat by his side spinning. ‘How lonely it is, wife,’ said he, as he puffed out a long curl of smoke, ‘for you and me to sit here by ourselves, without any children to play about and amuse us while other people seem so happy and merry with their children!’ ‘What you say is very true,’ said the wife, sighing, and turning round her wheel; ‘how happy should I be if I had but one child! If it were ever so small — nay, if it were no bigger than my thumb — I should be very happy, and love it dearly.’ Now — odd as you may think it — it came to pass that this good woman’s wish was fulfilled, just in the very way she had wished it; for, not long afterwards, she had a little boy, who was quite healthy and strong, but was not much bigger than my thumb. So they said, ‘Well, we cannot say we have not got what we wished for, and, little as he is, we will love him dearly.’ And they called him Thomas Thumb.

They gave him plenty of food, yet for all they could do he never grew bigger, but kept just the same size as he had been when he was born. Still, his eyes were sharp and sparkling, and he soon showed himself to be a clever little fellow, who always knew well what he was about.

One day, as the woodman was getting ready to go into the wood to cut fuel, he said, ‘I wish I had someone to bring the cart after me, for I want to make haste.’ ‘Oh, father,’ cried Tom, ‘I will take care of that; the cart shall be in the wood by the time you want it.’ Then the woodman laughed, and said, ‘How can that be? you cannot reach up to the horse’s bridle.’ ‘Never mind that, father,’ said Tom; ‘if my mother will only harness the horse, I will get into his ear and tell him which way to go.’ ‘Well,’ said the father, ‘we will try for once.’

When the time came the mother harnessed the horse to the cart, and put Tom into his ear; and as he sat there the little man told the beast how to go, crying out, ‘Go on!’ and ‘Stop!’ as he wanted: and thus the horse went on just as well as if the woodman had driven it himself into the wood. It happened that as the horse was going a little too fast, and Tom was calling out, ‘Gently! gently!’ two strangers came up. ‘What an odd thing that is!’ said one: ‘there is a cart going along, and I hear a carter talking to the horse, but yet I can see no one.’ ‘That is queer, indeed,’ said the other; ‘let us follow the cart, and see where it goes.’ So they went on into the wood, till at last they came to the place where the woodman was. Then Tom Thumb, seeing his father, cried out, ‘See, father, here I am with the cart, all right and safe! now take me down!’ So his father took hold of the horse with one hand, and with the other took his son out of the horse’s ear, and put him down upon a straw, where he sat as merry as you please.

The two strangers were all this time looking on, and did not know what to say for wonder. At last one took the other aside, and said, ‘That little urchin will make our fortune, if we can get him, and carry him about from town to town as a show; we must buy him.’ So they went up to the woodman, and asked him what he would take for the little man. ‘He will be better off,’ said they, ‘with us than with you.’ ‘I won’t sell him at all,’ said the father; ‘my own flesh and blood is dearer to me than all the silver and gold in the world.’ But Tom, hearing of the bargain they wanted to make, crept up his father’s coat to his shoulder and whispered in his ear, ‘Take the money, father, and let them have me; I’ll soon come back to you.’

So the woodman at last said he would sell Tom to the strangers for a large piece of gold, and they paid the price. ‘Where would you like to sit?’ said one of them. ‘Oh, put me on the rim of your hat; that will be a nice gallery for me; I can walk about there and see the country as we go along.’ So they did as he wished; and when Tom had taken leave of his father they took him away with them.

They journeyed on till it began to be dusky, and then the little man said, ‘Let me get down, I’m tired.’ So the man took off his hat, and put him down on a clod of earth, in a ploughed field by the side of the road. But Tom ran about amongst the furrows, and at last slipped into an old mouse-hole. ‘Good night, my masters!’ said he, ‘I’m off! mind and look sharp after me the next time.’ Then they ran at once to the place, and poked the ends of their sticks into the mouse-hole, but all in vain; Tom only crawled farther and farther in; and at last it became quite dark, so that they were forced to go their way without their prize, as sulky as could be.

When Tom found they were gone, he came out of his hiding-place. ‘What dangerous walking it is,’ said he, ‘in this ploughed field! If I were to fall from one of these great clods, I should undoubtedly break my neck.’ At last, by good luck, he found a large empty snail-shell. ‘This is lucky,’ said he, ‘I can sleep here very well’; and in he crept.

Just as he was falling asleep, he heard two men passing by, chatting together; and one said to the other, ‘How can we rob that rich parson’s house of his silver and gold?’ ‘I’ll tell you!’ cried Tom. ‘What noise was that?’ said the thief, frightened; ‘I’m sure I heard someone speak.’ They stood still listening, and Tom said, ‘Take me with you, and I’ll soon show you how to get the parson’s money.’ ‘But where are you?’ said they. ‘Look about on the ground,’ answered he, ‘and listen where the sound comes from.’ At last the thieves found him out, and lifted him up in their hands. ‘You little urchin!’ they said, ‘what can you do for us?’ ‘Why, I can get between the iron window-bars of the parson’s house, and throw you out whatever you want.’ ‘That’s a good thought,’ said the thieves; ‘come along, we shall see what you can do.’

When they came to the parson’s house, Tom slipped through the window-bars into the room, and then called out as loud as he could bawl, ‘Will you have all that is here?’ At this the thieves were frightened, and said, ‘Softly, softly! Speak low, that you may not awaken anybody.’ But Tom seemed as if he did not understand them, and bawled out again, ‘How much will you have? Shall I throw it all out?’ Now the cook lay in the next room; and hearing a noise she raised herself up in her bed and listened. Meantime the thieves were frightened, and ran off a little way; but at last they plucked up their hearts, and said, ‘The little urchin is only trying to make fools of us.’ So they came back and whispered softly to him, saying, ‘Now let us have no more of your roguish jokes; but throw us out some of the money.’ Then Tom called out as loud as he could, ‘Very well! hold your hands! here it comes.’

The cook heard this quite plain, so she sprang out of bed, and ran to open the door. The thieves ran off as if a wolf was at their tails: and the maid, having groped about and found nothing, went away for a light. By the time she came back, Tom had slipped off into the barn; and when she had looked about and searched every hole and corner, and found nobody, she went to bed, thinking she must have been dreaming with her eyes open.

The little man crawled about in the hay-loft, and at last found a snug place to finish his night’s rest in; so he laid himself down, meaning to sleep till daylight, and then find his way home to his father and mother. But alas! how woefully he was undone! what crosses and sorrows happen to us all in this world! The cook got up early, before daybreak, to feed the cows; and going straight to the hay-loft, carried away a large bundle of hay, with the little man in the middle of it, fast asleep. He still, however, slept on, and did not awake till he found himself in the mouth of the cow; for the cook had put the hay into the cow’s rick, and the cow had taken Tom up in a mouthful of it. ‘Good lack-a-day!’ said he, ‘how came I to tumble into the mill?’ But he soon found out where he really was; and was forced to have all his wits about him, that he might not get between the cow’s teeth, and so be crushed to death. At last down he went into her stomach. ‘It is rather dark,’ said he; ‘they forgot to build windows in this room to let the sun in; a candle would be no bad thing.’

Though he made the best of his bad luck, he did not like his quarters at all; and the worst of it was, that more and more hay was always coming down, and the space left for him became smaller and smaller. At last he cried out as loud as he could, ‘Don’t bring me any more hay! Don’t bring me any more hay!’

The maid happened to be just then milking the cow; and hearing someone speak, but seeing nobody, and yet being quite sure it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so frightened that she fell off her stool, and overset the milk-pail. As soon as she could pick herself up out of the dirt, she ran off as fast as she could to her master the parson, and said, ‘Sir, sir, the cow is talking!’ But the parson said, ‘Woman, thou art surely mad!’ However, he went with her into the cow-house, to try and see what was the matter.

Scarcely had they set foot on the threshold, when Tom called out, ‘Don’t bring me any more hay!’ Then the parson himself was frightened; and thinking the cow was surely bewitched, told his man to kill her on the spot. So the cow was killed, and cut up; and the stomach, in which Tom lay, was thrown out upon a dunghill.

Tom soon set himself to work to get out, which was not a very easy task; but at last, just as he had made room to get his head out, fresh ill-luck befell him. A hungry wolf sprang out, and swallowed up the whole stomach, with Tom in it, at one gulp, and ran away.

Tom, however, was still not disheartened; and thinking the wolf would not dislike having some chat with him as he was going along, he called out, ‘My good friend, I can show you a famous treat.’ ‘Where’s that?’ said the wolf. ‘In such and such a house,’ said Tom, describing his own father’s house. ‘You can crawl through the drain into the kitchen and then into the pantry, and there you will find cakes, ham, beef, cold chicken, roast pig, apple-dumplings, and everything that your heart can wish.’

The wolf did not want to be asked twice; so that very night he went to the house and crawled through the drain into the kitchen, and then into the pantry, and ate and drank there to his heart’s content. As soon as he had had enough he wanted to get away; but he had eaten so much that he could not go out by the same way he came in.

This was just what Tom had reckoned upon; and now he began to set up a great shout, making all the noise he could. ‘Will you be easy?’ said the wolf; ‘you’ll awaken everybody in the house if you make such a clatter.’ ‘What’s that to me?’ said the little man; ‘you have had your frolic, now I’ve a mind to be merry myself’; and he began, singing and shouting as loud as he could.

The woodman and his wife, being awakened by the noise, peeped through a crack in the door; but when they saw a wolf was there, you may well suppose that they were sadly frightened; and the woodman ran for his axe, and gave his wife a scythe. ‘Do you stay behind,’ said the woodman, ‘and when I have knocked him on the head you must rip him up with the scythe.’ Tom heard all this, and cried out, ‘Father, father! I am here, the wolf has swallowed me.’ And his father said, ‘Heaven be praised! we have found our dear child again’; and he told his wife not to use the scythe for fear she should hurt him. Then he aimed a great blow, and struck the wolf on the head, and killed him on the spot! and when he was dead they cut open his body, and set Tommy free. ‘Ah!’ said the father, ‘what fears we have had for you!’ ‘Yes, father,’ answered he; ‘I have travelled all over the world, I think, in one way or other, since we parted; and now I am very glad to come home and get fresh air again.’ ‘Why, where have you been?’ said his father. ‘I have been in a mouse-hole — and in a snail-shell — and down a cow’s throat — and in the wolf’s belly; and yet here I am again, safe and sound.’

‘Well,’ said they, ‘you are come back, and we will not sell you again for all the riches in the world.’

Then they hugged and kissed their dear little son, and gave him plenty to eat and drink, for he was very hungry; and then they fetched new clothes for him, for his old ones had been quite spoiled on his journey. So Master Thumb stayed at home with his father and mother, in peace; for though he had been so great a traveller, and had done and seen so many fine things, and was fond enough of telling the whole story, he always agreed that, after all, there’s no place like HOME!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

By the side of a wood, in a country a long way off, ran a fine stream of water; and upon the stream there stood a mill. The miller's house was close by, and the miller, you must know, had a very beautiful daughter. She was, moreover, very shrewd and clever; and the miller was so proud of her, that he one day told the king of the land, who used to come and hunt in the wood, that his daughter could spin gold out of straw. Now this king was very fond of money; and when he heard the miller's boast his greediness was raised, and he sent for the girl to be brought before him. Then he led her to a chamber in his palace where there was a great heap of straw, and gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, 'All this must be spun into gold before morning, as you love your life.' It was in vain that the poor maiden said that it was only a silly boast of her father, for that she could do no such thing as spin straw into gold: the chamber door was locked, and she was left alone.

She sat down in one corner of the room, and began to bewail her hard fate; when on a sudden the door opened, and a droll-looking little man hobbled in, and said, 'Good morrow to you, my good lass; what are you weeping for?' 'Alas!' said she, 'I must spin this straw into gold, and I know not how.' 'What will you give me,' said the hobgoblin, 'to do it for you?' 'My necklace,' replied the maiden. He took her at her word, and sat himself down to the wheel, and whistled and sang:

'Round about, round about,
  Lo and behold!
 Reel away, reel away,
  Straw into gold!'

And round about the wheel went merrily; the work was quickly done, and the straw was all spun into gold.

When the king came and saw this, he was greatly astonished and pleased; but his heart grew still more greedy of gain, and he shut up the poor miller's daughter again with a fresh task. Then she knew not what to do, and sat down once more to weep; but the dwarf soon opened the door, and said, 'What will you give me to do your task?' 'The ring on my finger,' said she. So her little friend took the ring, and began to work at the wheel again, and whistled and sang:

'Round about, round about,
  Lo and behold!
 Reel away, reel away,
  Straw into gold!'

till, long before morning, all was done again.

The king was greatly delighted to see all this glittering treasure; but still he had not enough: so he took the miller's daughter to a yet larger heap, and said, 'All this must be spun tonight; and if it is, you shall be my queen.' As soon as she was alone that dwarf came in, and said, 'What will you give me to spin gold for you this third time?' 'I have nothing left,' said she. 'Then say you will give me,' said the little man, 'the first little child that you may have when you are queen.' 'That may never be,' thought the miller's daughter: and as she knew no other way to get her task done, she said she would do what he asked. Round went the wheel again to the old song, and the manikin once more spun the heap into gold. The king came in the morning, and, finding all he wanted, was forced to keep his word; so he married the miller's daughter, and she really became queen.

At the birth of her first little child she was very glad, and forgot the dwarf, and what she had said. But one day he came into her room, where she was sitting playing with her baby, and put her in mind of it. Then she grieved sorely at her misfortune, and said she would give him all the wealth of the kingdom if he would let her off, but in vain; till at last her tears softened him, and he said, 'I will give you three days' grace, and if during that time you tell me my name, you shall keep your child.'

Now the queen lay awake all night, thinking of all the odd names that she had ever heard; and she sent messengers all over the land to find out new ones. The next day the little man came, and she began with TIMOTHY, ICHABOD, BENJAMIN, JEREMIAH, and all the names she could remember; but to all and each of them he said, 'Madam, that is not my name.'

The second day she began with all the comical names she could hear of, BANDY-LEGS, HUNCHBACK, CROOK-SHANKS, and so on; but the little gentleman still said to every one of them, 'Madam, that is not my name.'

The third day one of the messengers came back, and said, 'I have travelled two days without hearing of any other names; but yesterday, as I was climbing a high hill, among the trees of the forest where the fox and the hare bid each other good night, I saw a little hut; and before the hut burnt a fire; and round about the fire a funny little dwarf was dancing upon one leg, and singing:

"Merrily the feast I'll make.
Today I'll brew, tomorrow bake;
Merrily I'll dance and sing,
For next day will a stranger bring.
Little does my lady dream
Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

When the queen heard this she jumped for joy, and as soon as her little friend came she sat down upon her throne, and called all her court round to enjoy the fun; and the nurse stood by her side with the baby in her arms, as if it was quite ready to be given up. Then the little man began to chuckle at the thought of having the poor child, to take home with him to his hut in the woods; and he cried out, 'Now, lady, what is my name?' 'Is it JOHN?' asked she. 'No, madam!' 'Is it TOM?' 'No, madam!' 'Is it JEMMY?' 'It is not.' 'Can your name be RUMPELSTILTSKIN?' said the lady slyly. 'Some witch told you that! — some witch told you that!' cried the little man, and dashed his right foot in a rage so deep into the floor, that he was forced to lay hold of it with both hands to pull it out.

Then he made the best of his way off, while the nurse laughed and the baby crowed; and all the court jeered at him for having had so much trouble for nothing, and said, ‘We wish you a very good morning, and a merry feast, Mr RUMPLESTILTSKIN!’

CLEVER GRETEL

There was once a cook named Gretel, who wore shoes with red heels, and when she walked out with them on, she turned herself this way and that, was quite happy and thought: ‘You certainly are a pretty girl!’ And when she came home she drank, in her gladness of heart, a draught of wine, and as wine excites a desire to eat, she tasted the best of whatever she was cooking until she was satisfied, and said: ‘The cook must know what the food is like.’

It came to pass that the master one day said to her: ‘Gretel, there is a guest coming this evening; prepare me two fowls very daintily.’ ‘I will see to it, master,’ answered Gretel. She killed two fowls, scalded them, plucked them, put them on the spit, and towards evening set them before the fire, that they might roast. The fowls began to turn brown, and were nearly ready, but the guest had not yet arrived. Then Gretel called out to her master: ‘If the guest does not come, I must take the fowls away from the fire, but it will be a sin and a shame if they are not eaten the moment they are at their juiciest.’ The master said: ‘I will run myself, and fetch the guest.’ When the master had turned his back, Gretel laid the spit with the fowls on one side, and thought: ‘Standing so long by the fire there, makes one sweat and thirsty; who knows when they will come? Meanwhile, I will run into the cellar, and take a drink.’ She ran down, set a jug, said: ‘God bless it for you, Gretel,’ and took a good drink, and thought that wine should flow on, and should not be interrupted, and took yet another hearty draught.

Then she went and put the fowls down again to the fire, basted them, and drove the spit merrily round. But as the roast meat smelt so good, Gretel thought: ‘Something might be wrong, it ought to be tasted!’ She touched it with her finger, and said: ‘Ah! how good fowls are! It certainly is a sin and a shame that they are not eaten at the right time!’ She ran to the window, to see if the master was not coming with his guest, but she saw no one, and went back to the fowls and thought: ‘One of the wings is burning! I had better take it off and eat it.’ So she cut it off, ate it, and enjoyed it, and when she had done, she thought: ‘The other must go down too, or else master will observe that something is missing.’ When the two wings were eaten, she went and looked for her master, and did not see him. It suddenly occurred to her: ‘Who knows? They are perhaps not coming at all, and have turned in somewhere.’ Then she said: ‘Well, Gretel, enjoy yourself, one fowl has been cut into, take another drink, and eat it up entirely; when it is eaten you will have some peace, why should God’s good gifts be spoilt?’ So she ran into the cellar again, took an enormous drink and ate up the one chicken in great glee. When one of the chickens was swallowed down, and still her master did not come, Gretel looked at the other and said: ‘What one is, the other should be likewise, the two go together; what’s right for the one is right for the other; I think if I were to take another draught it would do me no harm.’ So she took another hearty drink, and let the second chicken follow the first.

While she was making the most of it, her master came and cried: ‘Hurry up, Gretel, the guest is coming directly after me!’ ‘Yes, sir, I will soon serve up,’ answered Gretel. Meantime the master looked to see that the table was properly laid, and took the great knife, wherewith he was going to carve the chickens, and sharpened it on the steps. Presently the guest came, and knocked politely and courteously at the house-door. Gretel ran, and looked to see who was there, and when she saw the guest, she put her finger to her lips and said: ‘Hush! hush! go away as quickly as you can, if my master catches you it will be the worse for you; he certainly did ask you to supper, but his intention is to cut off your two ears. Just listen how he is sharpening the knife for it!’ The guest heard the sharpening, and hurried down the steps again as fast as he could. Gretel was not idle; she ran screaming to her master, and cried: ‘You have invited a fine guest!’ ‘Why, Gretel? What do you mean by that?’ ‘Yes,’ said she, ‘he has taken the chickens which I was just going to serve up, off the dish, and has run away with them!’ ‘That’s a nice trick!’ said her master, and lamented the fine chickens. ‘If he had but left me one, so that something remained for me to eat.’ He called to him to stop, but the guest pretended not to hear. Then he ran after him with the knife still in his hand, crying: ‘Just one, just one,’ meaning that the guest should leave him just one chicken, and not take both. The guest, however, thought no otherwise than that he was to give up one of his ears, and ran as if fire were burning under him, in order to take them both with him.

THE OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON

There was once a very old man, whose eyes had become dim, his ears dull of hearing, his knees trembled, and when he sat at table he could hardly hold the spoon, and spilt the broth upon the table-cloth or let it run out of his mouth. His son and his son's wife were disgusted at this, so the old grandfather at last had to sit in the corner behind the stove, and they gave him his food in an earthenware bowl, and not even enough of it. And he used to look towards the table with his eyes full of tears. Once, too, his trembling hands could not hold the bowl, and it fell to the ground and broke. The young wife scolded him, but he said nothing and only sighed. Then they brought him a wooden bowl for a few half-pence, out of which he had to eat.

They were once sitting thus when the little grandson of four years old began to gather together some bits of wood upon the ground. 'What are you doing there?' asked the father. 'I am making a little trough,' answered the child, 'for father and mother to eat out of when I am big.'

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while, and presently began to cry. Then they took the old grandfather to the table, and henceforth always let him eat with them, and likewise said nothing if he did spill a little of anything.

THE LITTLE PEASANT

There was a certain village wherein no one lived but really rich peasants, and just one poor one, whom they called the little peasant. He had not even so much as a cow, and still less money to buy one, and yet he and his wife did so wish to have one. One day he said to her: ‘Listen, I have a good idea, there is our gossip the carpenter, he shall make us a wooden calf, and paint it brown, so that it looks like any other, and in time it will certainly get big and be a cow.’ the woman also liked the idea, and their gossip the carpenter cut and planed the calf, and painted it as it ought to be, and made it with its head hanging down as if it were eating.

Next morning when the cows were being driven out, the little peasant called the cow-herd in and said: ‘Look, I have a little calf there, but it is still small and has to be carried.’ The cow-herd said: ‘All right,’ and took it in his arms and carried it to the pasture, and set it among the grass. The little calf always remained standing like one which was eating, and the cow-herd said: ‘It will soon run by itself, just look how it eats already!’ At night when he was going to drive the herd home again, he said to the calf: ‘If you can stand there and eat your fill, you can also go on your four legs; I don’t care to drag you home again in my arms.’ But the little peasant stood at his door, and waited for his little calf, and when the cow-herd drove the cows through the village, and the calf was missing, he inquired where it was. The cow-herd answered: ‘It is still standing out there eating. It would not stop and come with us.’ But the little peasant said: ‘Oh, but I must have my beast back again.’ Then they went back to the meadow together, but someone had stolen the calf, and it was gone. The cow-herd said: ‘It must have run away.’ The peasant, however, said: ‘Don’t tell me that,’ and led the cow-herd before the mayor, who for his carelessness condemned him to give the peasant a cow for the calf which had run away.

And now the little peasant and his wife had the cow for which they had so long wished, and they were heartily glad, but they had no food for it, and could give it nothing to eat, so it soon had to be killed. They salted the flesh, and the peasant went into the town and wanted to sell the skin there, so that he might buy a new calf with the proceeds. On the way he passed by a mill, and there sat a raven with broken wings, and out of pity he took him and wrapped him in the skin. But as the weather grew so bad and there was a storm of rain and wind, he could go no farther, and turned back to the mill and begged for shelter. The miller’s wife was alone in the house, and said to the peasant: ‘Lay yourself on the straw there,’ and gave him a slice of bread and cheese. The peasant ate it, and lay down with his skin beside him, and the woman thought: ‘He is tired and has gone to sleep.’ In the meantime came the parson; the miller’s wife received him well, and said: ‘My husband is out, so we will have a feast.’ The peasant listened, and when he heard them talk about feasting he was vexed that he had been forced to make shift with a slice of bread and cheese. Then the woman served up four different things, roast meat, salad, cakes, and wine.

Just as they were about to sit down and eat, there was a knocking outside. The woman said: ‘Oh, heavens! It is my husband!’ she quickly hid the roast meat inside the tiled stove, the wine under the pillow, the salad on the bed, the cakes under it, and the parson in the closet on the porch. Then she opened the door for her husband, and said: ‘Thank heaven, you are back again! There is such a storm, it looks as if the world were coming to an end.’ The miller saw the peasant lying on the straw, and asked, ‘What is that fellow doing there?’ ‘Ah,’ said the wife, ‘the poor knave came in the storm and rain, and begged for shelter, so I gave him a bit of bread and cheese, and showed him where the straw was.’ The man said: ‘I have no objection, but be quick and get me something to eat.’ The woman said: ‘But I have nothing but bread and cheese.’ ‘I am contented with anything,’ replied the husband, ‘so far as I am concerned, bread and cheese will do,’ and looked at the peasant and said: ‘Come and eat some more with me.’ The peasant did not require to be invited twice, but got up and ate. After this the miller saw the skin in which the raven was, lying on the ground, and asked: ‘What have you there?’ The peasant answered: ‘I have a soothsayer inside it.’ ‘Can he foretell anything to me?’ said the miller. ‘Why not?’ answered the peasant: ‘but he only says four things, and the fifth he keeps to himself.’ The miller was curious, and said: ‘Let him foretell something for once.’ Then the peasant pinched the raven’s head, so that he croaked and made a noise like krr, krr. The miller said: ‘What did he say?’ The peasant answered: ‘In the first place, he says that there is some wine hidden under the pillow.’ ‘Bless me!’ cried the miller, and went there and found the wine. ‘Now go on,’ said he. The peasant made the raven croak again, and said: ‘In the second place, he says that there is some roast meat in the tiled stove.’ ‘Upon my word!’ cried the miller, and went thither, and found the roast meat. The peasant made the raven prophesy still more, and said: ‘Thirdly, he says that there is some salad on the bed.’ ‘That would be a fine thing!’ cried the miller, and went there and found the salad. At last the peasant pinched the raven once more till he croaked, and said: ‘Fourthly, he says that there are some cakes under the bed.’ ‘That would be a fine thing!’ cried the miller, and looked there, and found the cakes.

And now the two sat down to the table together, but the miller’s wife was frightened to death, and went to bed and took all the keys with her. The miller would have liked much to know the fifth, but the little peasant said: ‘First, we will quickly eat the four things, for the fifth is something bad.’ So they ate, and after that they bargained how much the miller was to give for the fifth prophecy, until they agreed on three hundred talers. Then the peasant once more pinched the raven’s head till he croaked loudly. The miller asked: ‘What did he say?’ The peasant replied: ‘He says that the Devil is hiding outside there in the closet on the porch.’ The miller said: ‘The Devil must go out,’ and opened the house-door; then the woman was forced to give up the keys, and the peasant unlocked the closet. The parson ran out as fast as he could, and the miller said: ‘It was true; I saw the black rascal with my own eyes.' The peasant, however, made off next morning by daybreak with the three hundred talers.

At home the small peasant gradually launched out; he built a beautiful house, and the peasants said: 'The small peasant has certainly been to the place where golden snow falls, and people carry the gold home in shovels.' Then the small peasant was brought before the mayor, and bidden to say from whence his wealth came. He answered: 'I sold my cow's skin in the town, for three hundred talers.' When the peasants heard that, they too wished to enjoy this great profit, and ran home, killed all their cows, and stripped off their skins in order to sell them in the town to the greatest advantage. The mayor, however, said: 'But my servant must go first.' When she came to the merchant in the town, he did not give her more than two talers for a skin, and when the others came, he did not give them so much, and said: 'What can I do with all these skins?'

Then the peasants were vexed that the small peasant should have thus outwitted them, wanted to take vengeance on him, and accused him of this treachery before the mayor. The innocent little peasant was unanimously sentenced to death, and was to be rolled into the water, in a barrel pierced full of holes. He was led forth, and a priest was brought who was to say a mass for his soul. The others were all obliged to retire to a distance, and when the peasant looked at the priest, he recognized the man who had been with the miller's wife. He said to him: 'I set you free from the closet, set me free from the barrel.' At this same moment up came, with a flock of sheep, the very shepherd whom the peasant knew had long been wishing to be mayor, so he cried with all his might: 'No, I will not do it; if the whole world insists on it, I will not do it!' The shepherd hearing that, came up to him, and asked: 'What are you about? What is it that you will not do?' The peasant said: 'They want to make me mayor, if I will but put myself in the barrel, but I will not do it.' The shepherd said: 'If nothing more than that is needful in order to be mayor, I would get into the barrel at once.' The peasant said: 'If you will get in, you will be mayor.' The shepherd was willing, and got in, and the peasant shut the top down on him; then he took the shepherd's flock for himself, and drove it away. The parson went to the crowd, and declared that the mass had been said. Then they came and rolled the barrel towards the water. When the barrel began to roll, the shepherd cried: 'I am quite willing to be mayor.' They believed no otherwise than that it was the peasant who was saying this, and answered: 'That is what we intend, but first you shall look about you a little down below there,' and they rolled the barrel down into the water.

After that the peasants went home, and as they were entering the village, the small peasant also came quietly in, driving a flock of sheep and looking quite contented. Then the peasants were astonished, and said: 'Peasant, from whence do you come? Have you come out of the water?' 'Yes, truly,' replied the peasant, 'I sank deep, deep down, until at last I got to the bottom; I pushed the bottom out of the barrel, and crept out, and there were pretty meadows on which a number of lambs were feeding, and from thence I brought this flock away with me.’ Said the peasants: ‘Are there any more there?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ said he, ‘more than I could want.’ Then the peasants made up their minds that they too would fetch some sheep for themselves, a flock apiece, but the mayor said: ‘I come first.’ So they went to the water together, and just then there were some of the small fleecy clouds in the blue sky, which are called little lambs, and they were reflected in the water, whereupon the peasants cried: ‘We already see the sheep down below!’ The mayor pressed forward and said: ‘I will go down first, and look about me, and if things promise well I’ll call you.’ So he jumped in; splash! went the water; it sounded as if he were calling them, and the whole crowd plunged in after him as one man. Then the entire village was dead, and the small peasant, as sole heir, became a rich man.

FREDERICK AND CATHERINE

There was once a man called Frederick: he had a wife whose name was Catherine, and they had not long been married. One day Frederick said. 'Kate! I am going to work in the fields; when I come back I shall be hungry so let me have something nice cooked, and a good draught of ale.' 'Very well,' said she, 'it shall all be ready.' When dinner-time drew nigh, Catherine took a nice steak, which was all the meat she had, and put it on the fire to fry. The steak soon began to look brown, and to crackle in the pan; and Catherine stood by with a fork and turned it: then she said to herself, 'The steak is almost ready, I may as well go to the cellar for the ale.' So she left the pan on the fire and took a large jug and went into the cellar and tapped the ale cask. The beer ran into the jug and Catherine stood looking on. At last it popped into her head, 'The dog is not shut up — he may be running away with the steak; that's well thought of.' So up she ran from the cellar; and sure enough the rascally cur had got the steak in his mouth, and was making off with it.

Away ran Catherine, and away ran the dog across the field: but he ran faster than she, and stuck close to the steak. 'It's all gone, and "what can't be cured must be endured",' said Catherine. So she turned round; and as she had run a good way and was tired, she walked home leisurely to cool herself.

Now all this time the ale was running too, for Catherine had not turned the cock; and when the jug was full the liquor ran upon the floor till the cask was empty. When she got to the cellar stairs she saw what had happened. 'My stars!' said she, 'what shall I do to keep Frederick from seeing all this slopping about?' So she thought a while; and at last remembered that there was a sack of fine meal bought at the last fair, and that if she sprinkled this over the floor it would suck up the ale nicely. 'What a lucky thing,' said she, 'that we kept that meal! we have now a good use for it.' So away she went for it: but she managed to set it down just upon the great jug full of beer, and upset it; and thus all the ale that had been saved was set swimming on the floor also. 'Ah! well,' said she, 'when one goes another may as well follow.' Then she strewed the meal all about the cellar, and was quite pleased with her cleverness, and said, 'How very neat and clean it looks!'

At noon Frederick came home. 'Now, wife,' cried he, 'what have you for dinner?' 'O Frederick!' answered she, 'I was cooking you a steak; but while I went down to draw the ale, the dog ran away with it; and while I ran after him, the ale ran out; and when I went to dry up the ale with the sack of meal that we got at the fair, I upset the jug: but the cellar is now quite dry, and looks so clean!' 'Kate, Kate,' said he, 'how could you do all this?' Why did you leave the steak to fry, and the ale to run, and then spoil all the meal?' 'Why, Frederick,' said she, 'I did not know I was doing wrong; you should have told me before.'

The husband thought to himself, ‘If my wife manages matters thus, I must look sharp myself.’ Now he had a good deal of gold in the house: so he said to Catherine, ‘What pretty yellow buttons these are! I shall put them into a box and bury them in the garden; but take care that you never go near or meddle with them.’ ‘No, Frederick,’ said she, ‘that I never will.’ As soon as he was gone, there came by some pedlars with earthenware plates and dishes, and they asked her whether she would buy. ‘Oh dear me, I should like to buy very much, but I have no money: if you had any use for yellow buttons, I might deal with you.’ ‘Yellow buttons!’ said they: ‘let us have a look at them.’ ‘Go into the garden and dig where I tell you, and you will find the yellow buttons: I dare not go myself.’ So the rogues went: and when they found what these yellow buttons were, they took them all away, and left her plenty of plates and dishes. Then she set them all about the house for a show: and when Frederick came back, he cried out, ‘Kate, what have you been doing?’ ‘See,’ said she, ‘I have bought all these with your yellow buttons: but I did not touch them myself; the pedlars went themselves and dug them up.’ ‘Wife, wife,’ said Frederick, ‘what a pretty piece of work you have made! those yellow buttons were all my money: how came you to do such a thing?’ ‘Why,’ answered she, ‘I did not know there was any harm in it; you should have told me.’

Catherine stood musing for a while, and at last said to her husband, ‘Hark ye, Frederick, we will soon get the gold back: let us run after the thieves.’ ‘Well, we will try,’ answered he; ‘but take some butter and cheese with you, that we may have something to eat by the way.’ ‘Very well,’ said she; and they set out: and as Frederick walked the fastest, he left his wife some way behind. ‘It does not matter,’ thought she: ‘when we turn back, I shall be so much nearer home than he.’

Presently she came to the top of a hill, down the side of which there was a road so narrow that the cart wheels always chafed the trees on each side as they passed. ‘Ah, see now,’ said she, ‘how they have bruised and wounded those poor trees; they will never get well.’ So she took pity on them, and made use of the butter to grease them all, so that the wheels might not hurt them so much. While she was doing this kind office one of her cheeses fell out of the basket, and rolled down the hill. Catherine looked, but could not see where it had gone; so she said, ‘Well, I suppose the other will go the same way and find you; he has younger legs than I have.’ Then she rolled the other cheese after it; and away it went, nobody knows where, down the hill. But she said she supposed that they knew the road, and would follow her, and she could not stay there all day waiting for them.

At last she overtook Frederick, who desired her to give him something to eat. Then she gave him the dry bread. ‘Where are the butter and cheese?’ said he. ‘Oh!’ answered she, ‘I used the butter to grease those poor trees that the wheels chafed so: and one of the cheeses ran away so I sent the other after it to find it, and I suppose they are both on the road together somewhere.’ ‘What a goose you are to do such silly things!’ said the husband. ‘How can you say so?’ said she; ‘I am sure you never told me not.’

They ate the dry bread together; and Frederick said, ‘Kate, I hope you locked the door safe when you came away.’ ‘No,’ answered she, ‘you did not tell me.’ ‘Then go home, and do it now before we go any farther,’ said Frederick, ‘and bring with you something to eat.’

Catherine did as he told her, and thought to herself by the way, ‘Frederick wants something to eat; but I don’t think he is very fond of butter and cheese: I’ll bring him a bag of fine nuts, and the vinegar, for I have often seen him take some.’

When she reached home, she bolted the back door, but the front door she took off the hinges, and said, ‘Frederick told me to lock the door, but surely it can nowhere be so safe if I take it with me.’ So she took her time by the way; and when she overtook her husband she cried out, ‘There, Frederick, there is the door itself, you may watch it as carefully as you please.’ ‘Alas! alas!’ said he, ‘what a clever wife I have! I sent you to make the house fast, and you take the door away, so that everybody may go in and out as they please — however, as you have brought the door, you shall carry it about with you for your pains.’ ‘Very well,’ answered she, ‘I’ll carry the door; but I’ll not carry the nuts and vinegar bottle also — that would be too much of a load; so if you please, I’ll fasten them to the door.’

Frederick of course made no objection to that plan, and they set off into the wood to look for the thieves; but they could not find them: and when it grew dark, they climbed up into a tree to spend the night there. Scarcely were they up, than who should come by but the very rogues they were looking for. They were in truth great rascals, and belonged to that class of people who find things before they are lost; they were tired; so they sat down and made a fire under the very tree where Frederick and Catherine were. Frederick slipped down on the other side, and picked up some stones. Then he climbed up again, and tried to hit the thieves on the head with them: but they only said, ‘It must be near morning, for the wind shakes the fir-apples down.’

Catherine, who had the door on her shoulder, began to be very tired; but she thought it was the nuts upon it that were so heavy: so she said softly, ‘Frederick, I must let the nuts go.’ ‘No,’ answered he, ‘not now, they will discover us.’ ‘I can’t help that: they must go.’ ‘Well, then, make haste and throw them down, if you will.’ Then away rattled the nuts down among the boughs and one of the thieves cried, ‘Bless me, it is hailing.’

A little while after, Catherine thought the door was still very heavy: so she whispered to Frederick, ‘I must throw the vinegar down.’ ‘Pray don’t,’ answered he, ‘it will discover us.’ ‘I can’t help that,’ said she, ‘go it must.’ So she poured all the vinegar down; and the thieves said, ‘What a heavy dew there is!’

At last it popped into Catherine’s head that it was the door itself that was so heavy all the time: so she whispered, ‘Frederick, I must throw the door down soon.’ But he begged and prayed her not to do so, for he was sure it would betray them. ‘Here goes, however,’ said she: and down went the door with such a clatter upon the thieves, that they cried out ‘Murder!’ and not knowing what was coming, ran away as fast as they could, and left all the gold. So when Frederick and Catherine came down, there they found all their money safe and sound.

SWEETHEART ROLAND

There was once upon a time a woman who was a real witch and had two daughters, one ugly and wicked, and this one she loved because she was her own daughter, and one beautiful and good, and this one she hated, because she was her stepdaughter. The stepdaughter once had a pretty apron, which the other fancied so much that she became envious, and told her mother that she must and would have that apron. ‘Be quiet, my child,’ said the old woman, ‘and you shall have it. Your stepsister has long deserved death; tonight when she is asleep I will come and cut her head off. Only be careful that you are at the far side of the bed, and push her well to the front.’ It would have been all over with the poor girl if she had not just then been standing in a corner, and heard everything. All day long she dared not go out of doors, and when bedtime had come, the witch’s daughter got into bed first, so as to lie at the far side, but when she was asleep, the other pushed her gently to the front, and took for herself the place at the back, close by the wall. In the night, the old woman came creeping in, she held an axe in her right hand, and felt with her left to see if anyone were lying at the outside, and then she grasped the axe with both hands, and cut her own child’s head off.

When she had gone away, the girl got up and went to her sweetheart, who was called Roland, and knocked at his door. When he came out, she said to him: ‘Listen, dearest Roland, we must fly in all haste; my stepmother wanted to kill me, but has struck her own child. When daylight comes, and she sees what she has done, we shall be lost.’ ‘But,’ said Roland, ‘I counsel you first to take away her magic wand, or we cannot escape if she pursues us.’ The maiden fetched the magic wand, and she took the dead girl’s head and dropped three drops of blood on the ground, one in front of the bed, one in the kitchen, and one on the stairs. Then she hurried away with her lover.

When the old witch got up next morning, she called her daughter, and wanted to give her the apron, but she did not come. Then the witch cried: ‘Where are you?’ ‘Here, on the stairs, I am sweeping,’ answered the first drop of blood. The old woman went out, but saw no one on the stairs, and cried again: ‘Where are you?’ ‘Here in the kitchen, I am warming myself,’ cried the second drop of blood. She went into the kitchen, but found no one. Then she cried again: ‘Where are you?’ ‘Ah, here in the bed, I am sleeping,’ cried the third drop of blood. She went into the room to the bed. What did she see there? Her own child, whose head she had cut off, bathed in her blood. The witch fell into a passion, sprang to the window, and as she could look forth quite far into the world, she perceived her stepdaughter hurrying away with her sweetheart Roland. ‘That shall not help you,’ cried she, ‘even if you have got a long way off, you shall still not escape me.’ She put on her many-league boots, in which she covered an hour’s walk at every step, and it was not long before she overtook them. The girl, however, when she saw the old woman striding towards her, changed, with her magic wand, her sweetheart Roland into a lake, and herself into a duck swimming in the middle of it. The witch placed herself on the shore, threw breadcrumbs in, and went to endless trouble to entice the duck; but the duck did not let herself be enticed, and the old woman had to go home at night as she had come. At this the girl and her sweetheart Roland resumed their natural shapes again, and they walked on the whole night until daybreak. Then the maiden changed herself into a beautiful flower which stood in the midst of a briar hedge, and her sweetheart Roland into a fiddler. It was not long before the witch came striding up towards them, and said to the musician: ‘Dear musician, may I pluck that beautiful flower for myself?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ he replied, ‘I will play to you while you do it.’ As she was hastily creeping into the hedge and was just going to pluck the flower, knowing perfectly well who the flower was, he began to play, and whether she would or not, she was forced to dance, for it was a magical dance. The faster he played, the more violent springs was she forced to make, and the thorns tore her clothes from her body, and pricked her and wounded her till she bled, and as he did not stop, she had to dance till she lay dead on the ground.

As they were now set free, Roland said: ‘Now I will go to my father and arrange for the wedding.’ ‘Then in the meantime I will stay here and wait for you,’ said the girl, ‘and that no one may recognize me, I will change myself into a red stone landmark.’ Then Roland went away, and the girl stood like a red landmark in the field and waited for her beloved. But when Roland got home, he fell into the snares of another, who so fascinated him that he forgot the maiden. The poor girl remained there a long time, but at length, as he did not return at all, she was sad, and changed herself into a flower, and thought: ‘Someone will surely come this way, and trample me down.’

It befell, however, that a shepherd kept his sheep in the field and saw the flower, and as it was so pretty, plucked it, took it with him, and laid it away in his chest. From that time forth, strange things happened in the shepherd’s house. When he arose in the morning, all the work was already done, the room was swept, the table and benches cleaned, the fire in the hearth was lighted, and the water was fetched, and at noon, when he came home, the table was laid, and a good dinner served. He could not conceive how this came to pass, for he never saw a human being in his house, and no one could have concealed himself in it. He was certainly pleased with this good attendance, but still at last he was so afraid that he went to a wise woman and asked for her advice. The wise woman said: ‘There is some enchantment behind it, listen very early some morning if anything is moving in the room, and if you see anything, no matter what it is, throw a white cloth over it, and then the magic will be stopped.’

The shepherd did as she bade him, and next morning just as day dawned, he saw the chest open, and the flower come out. Swiftly he sprang towards it, and threw a white cloth over it. Instantly the transformation came to an end, and a beautiful girl stood before him, who admitted to him that she had been the flower, and that up to this time she had attended to his housekeeping. She told him her story, and as she pleased him he asked her if she would marry him, but she answered: ‘No,’ for she wanted to remain faithful to her sweetheart Roland, although he had deserted her. Nevertheless, she promised not to go away, but to continue keeping house for the shepherd.

And now the time drew near when Roland’s wedding was to be celebrated, and then, according to an old custom in the country, it was announced that all the girls were to be present at it, and sing in honour of the bridal pair. When the faithful maiden heard of this, she grew so sad that she thought her heart would break, and she would not go thither, but the other girls came and took her. When it came to her turn to sing, she stepped back, until at last she was the only one left, and then she could not refuse. But when she began her song, and it reached Roland’s ears, he sprang up and cried: ‘I know the voice, that is the true bride, I will have no other!’ Everything he had forgotten, and which had vanished from his mind, had suddenly come home again to his heart. Then the faithful maiden held her wedding with her sweetheart Roland, and grief came to an end and joy began.

SNOWDROP

It was the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that the queen of a country many thousand miles off sat working at her window. The frame of the window was made of fine black ebony, and as she sat looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully upon the red drops that sprinkled the white snow, and said, ‘Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as that blood, and as black as this ebony windowframe!’ And so the little girl really did grow up; her skin was as white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as the blood, and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snowdrop.

But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who became queen, and was very beautiful, but so vain that she could not bear to think that anyone could be handsomer than she was. She had a fairy looking-glass, to which she used to go, and then she would gaze upon herself in it, and say:

‘Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest, tell me, who?’

And the glass had always answered:

‘Thou, queen, art the fairest in all the land.’

But Snowdrop grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered the queen, when she went to look in it as usual:

‘Thou, queen, art fair, and beauteous to see,
But Snowdrop is lovelier far than thee!’

When she heard this she turned pale with rage and envy, and called to one of her servants, and said, ‘Take Snowdrop away into the wide wood, that I may never see her any more.’ Then the servant led her away; but his heart melted when Snowdrop begged him to spare her life, and he said, ‘I will not hurt you, thou pretty child.’ So he left her by herself; and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her in pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her but to leave her to her fate, with the chance of someone finding and saving her.

Then poor Snowdrop wandered along through the wood in great fear; and the wild beasts roared about her, but none did her any harm. In the evening she came to a cottage among the hills, and went in to rest, for her little feet would carry her no further. Everything was spruce and neat in the cottage: on the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven little plates, seven little loaves, and seven little glasses with wine in them; and seven knives and forks laid in order; and by the wall stood seven little beds. As she was very hungry, she picked a little piece of each loaf and drank a very little wine out of each glass; and after that she thought she would lie down and rest. So she tried all the little beds; but one was too long, and another was too short, till at last the seventh suited her: and there she laid herself down and went to sleep.

By and by in came the masters of the cottage. Now they were seven little dwarfs, that lived among the mountains, and dug and searched for gold. They lighted up their seven lamps, and saw at once that all was not right. The first said, ‘Who has been sitting on my stool?’ The second, ‘Who has been eating off my plate?’ The third, ‘Who has been picking my bread?’ The fourth, ‘Who has been meddling with my spoon?’ The fifth, ‘Who has been handling my fork?’ The sixth, ‘Who has been cutting with my knife?’ The seventh, ‘Who has been drinking my wine?’ Then the first looked round and said, ‘Who has been lying on my bed?’ And the rest came running to him, and everyone cried out that somebody had been upon his bed. But the seventh saw Snowdrop, and called all his brethren to come and see her; and they cried out with wonder and astonishment and brought their lamps to look at her, and said, ‘Good heavens! what a lovely child she is!’ And they were very glad to see her, and took care not to wake her; and the seventh dwarf slept an hour with each of the other dwarfs in turn, till the night was gone.

In the morning Snowdrop told them all her story; and they pitied her, and said if she would keep all things in order, and cook and wash and knit and spin for them, she might stay where she was, and they would take good care of her. Then they went out all day long to their work, seeking for gold and silver in the mountains: but Snowdrop was left at home; and they warned her, and said, ‘The queen will soon find out where you are, so take care and let no one in.’

But the queen, now that she thought Snowdrop was dead, believed that she must be the handsomest lady in the land; and she went to her glass and said:

‘Tell me, glass, tell me true!
 Of all the ladies in the land,
 Who is fairest, tell me, who?’

And the glass answered:

‘Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land:
 But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
 Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
 There Snowdrop is hiding her head; and she
 Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.’

Then the queen was very much frightened; for she knew that the glass always spoke the truth, and was sure that the servant had betrayed her. And she could not bear to think that anyone lived who was more beautiful than she was; so she dressed herself up as an old pedlar, and went her way over the hills, to the place where the dwarfs dwelt. Then she knocked at the door, and cried, ‘Fine wares to sell!’ Snowdrop looked out at the window, and said, ‘Good day, good woman! what have you to sell?’ ‘Good wares, fine wares,’ said she; ‘laces and bobbins of all colours.’ ‘I will let the old lady in;

she seems to be a very good sort of body,' thought Snowdrop, as she ran down and unbolted the door. 'Bless me!' said the old woman, 'how badly your stays are laced! Let me lace them up with one of my nice new laces.' Snowdrop did not dream of any mischief; so she stood before the old woman; but she set to work so nimbly, and pulled the lace so tight, that Snowdrop's breath was stopped, and she fell down as if she were dead. 'There's an end to all thy beauty,' said the spiteful queen, and went away home.

In the evening the seven dwarfs came home; and I need not say how grieved they were to see their faithful Snowdrop stretched out upon the ground, as if she was quite dead. However, they lifted her up, and when they found what ailed her, they cut the lace; and in a little time she began to breathe, and very soon came to life again. Then they said, 'The old woman was the queen herself; take care another time, and let no one in when we are away.'

When the queen got home, she went straight to her glass, and spoke to it as before; but to her great grief it still said:

'Thou, queen, art the fairest in all this land:
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snowdrop is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O queen! than thee.'

Then the blood ran cold in her heart with spite and malice, to see that Snowdrop still lived; and she dressed herself up again, but in quite another dress from the one she wore before, and took with her a poisoned comb. When she reached the dwarfs' cottage, she knocked at the door, and cried, 'Fine wares to sell!' But Snowdrop said, 'I dare not let anyone in.' Then the queen said, 'Only look at my beautiful combs!' and gave her the poisoned one. And it looked so pretty, that she took it up and put it into her hair to try it; but the moment it touched her head, the poison was so powerful that she fell down senseless. 'There you may lie,' said the queen, and went her way. But by good luck the dwarfs came in very early that evening; and when they saw Snowdrop lying on the ground, they thought what had happened, and soon found the poisoned comb. And when they took it away she got well, and told them all that had passed; and they warned her once more not to open the door to anyone.

Meantime the queen went home to her glass, and shook with rage when she read the very same answer as before; and she said, 'Snowdrop shall die, if it cost me my life.' So she went by herself into her chamber, and got ready a poisoned apple: the outside looked very rosy and tempting, but whoever tasted it was sure to die. Then she dressed herself up as a peasant's wife, and travelled over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage, and knocked at the door; but Snowdrop put her head out of the window and said, 'I dare not let anyone in, for the dwarfs have told me not.' 'Do as you please,' said the old woman, 'but at any rate take this pretty apple; I will give it you.' 'No,' said Snowdrop, 'I dare not take it.' 'You silly girl!' answered the other, 'what are you afraid of? Do you think it is poisoned? Come! do you eat one part, and I will eat the other.' Now the apple was so made up that one side was good, though the other side was poisoned. Then Snowdrop was much tempted to taste, for the apple looked so very nice; and when she saw the old woman eat, she could wait no longer. But she had scarcely put the piece into her mouth, when she fell down dead upon the ground. 'This time nothing will save thee,' said the queen; and she went home to her glass, and at last it said:

'Thou, queen, art the fairest of all the fair.'

And then her wicked heart was glad, and as happy as such a heart could be.

When evening came, and the dwarfs had gone home, they found Snowdrop lying on the ground: no breath came from her lips, and they were afraid that she was quite dead. They lifted her up, and combed her hair, and washed her face with wine and water; but all was in vain, for the little girl seemed quite dead. So they laid her down upon a bier, and all seven watched and bewailed her three whole days; and then they thought they would bury her: but her cheeks were still rosy; and her face looked just as it did while she was alive; so they said, 'We will never bury her in the cold ground.' And they made a coffin of glass, so that they might still look at her, and wrote upon it in golden letters what her name was, and that she was a king's daughter. And the coffin was set among the hills, and one of the dwarfs always sat by it and watched. And the birds of the air came too, and bemoaned Snowdrop; and first of all came an owl, and then a raven, and at last a dove, and sat by her side.

And thus Snowdrop lay for a long, long time, and still only looked as though she was asleep; for she was even now as white as snow, and as red as blood, and as black as ebony. At last a prince came and called at the dwarfs' house; and he saw Snowdrop, and read what was written in golden letters. Then he offered the dwarfs money, and prayed and besought them to let him take her away; but they said, 'We will not part with her for all the gold in the world.' At last, however, they had pity on him, and gave him the coffin; but the moment he lifted it up to carry it home with him, the piece of apple fell from between her lips, and Snowdrop awoke, and said, 'Where am I?' And the prince said, 'Thou art quite safe with me.'

Then he told her all that had happened, and said, 'I love you far better than all the world; so come with me to my father's palace, and you shall be my wife.' And Snowdrop consented, and went home with the prince; and everything was got ready with great pomp and splendour for their wedding.

To the feast was asked, among the rest, Snowdrop's old enemy the queen; and as she was dressing herself in fine rich clothes, she looked in the glass and said:

'Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest, tell me, who?'

And the glass answered:

'Thou, lady, art loveliest here, I ween;

But lovelier far is the new-made queen.’

When she heard this she started with rage; but her envy and curiosity were so great, that she could not help setting out to see the bride. And when she got there, and saw that it was no other than Snowdrop, who, as she thought, had been dead a long while, she choked with rage, and fell down and died: but Snowdrop and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land many, many years; and sometimes they went up into the mountains, and paid a visit to the little dwarfs, who had been so kind to Snowdrop in her time of need.

THE PINK

There was once upon a time a queen to whom God had given no children. Every morning she went into the garden and prayed to God in heaven to bestow on her a son or a daughter. Then an angel from heaven came to her and said: ‘Be at rest, you shall have a son with the power of wishing, so that whatsoever in the world he wishes for, that shall he have.’ Then she went to the king, and told him the joyful tidings, and when the time was come she gave birth to a son, and the king was filled with gladness.

Every morning she went with the child to the garden where the wild beasts were kept, and washed herself there in a clear stream. It happened once when the child was a little older, that it was lying in her arms and she fell asleep. Then came the old cook, who knew that the child had the power of wishing, and stole it away, and he took a hen, and cut it in pieces, and dropped some of its blood on the queen’s apron and on her dress. Then he carried the child away to a secret place, where a nurse was obliged to suckle it, and he ran to the king and accused the queen of having allowed her child to be taken from her by the wild beasts. When the king saw the blood on her apron, he believed this, fell into such a passion that he ordered a high tower to be built, in which neither sun nor moon could be seen and had his wife put into it, and walled up. Here she was to stay for seven years without meat or drink, and die of hunger. But God sent two angels from heaven in the shape of white doves, which flew to her twice a day, and carried her food until the seven years were over.

The cook, however, thought to himself: ‘If the child has the power of wishing, and I am here, he might very easily get me into trouble.’ So he left the palace and went to the boy, who was already big enough to speak, and said to him: ‘Wish for a beautiful palace for yourself with a garden, and all else that pertains to it.’ Scarcely were the words out of the boy’s mouth, when everything was there that he had wished for. After a while the cook said to him: ‘It is not well for you to be so alone, wish for a pretty girl as a companion.’ Then the king’s son wished for one, and she immediately stood before him, and was more beautiful than any painter could have painted her. The two played together, and loved each other with all their hearts, and the old cook went out hunting like a nobleman. The thought occurred to him, however, that the king’s son might some day wish to be with his father, and thus bring him into great peril. So he went out and took the maiden aside, and said: ‘Tonight when the boy is asleep, go to his bed and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if you do not do it, you shall lose your life.’ Thereupon he went away, and when he returned next day she had not done it, and said: ‘Why should I shed the blood of an innocent boy who has never harmed anyone?’ The cook once more said: ‘If you do not do it, it shall cost you your own life.’ When he had gone away, she had a little hind brought to her, and ordered her to be killed, and took her heart and tongue, and laid them on a plate, and when she saw the old man coming, she said to the boy: ‘Lie down in your bed, and draw the clothes over you.’ Then the wicked wretch came in and said: ‘Where are the boy’s heart and tongue?’ The girl reached the plate to him, but the king’s son threw off the quilt, and said: ‘You old sinner, why did you want to kill me? Now will I pronounce thy sentence. You shall become a black poodle and have a gold collar round your neck, and shall eat burning coals, till the flames burst forth from your throat.’ And when he had spoken these words, the old man was changed into a poodle dog, and had a gold collar round his neck, and the cooks were ordered to bring up some live coals, and these he ate, until the flames broke forth from his throat. The king’s son remained there a short while longer, and he thought of his mother, and wondered if she were still alive. At length he said to the maiden: ‘I will go home to my own country; if you will go with me, I will provide for you.’ ‘Ah,’ she replied, ‘the way is so long, and what shall I do in a strange land where I am unknown?’ As she did not seem quite willing, and as they could not be parted from each other, he wished that she might be changed into a beautiful pink, and took her with him. Then he went away to his own country, and the poodle had to run after him. He went to the tower in which his mother was confined, and as it was so high, he wished for a ladder which would reach up to the very top. Then he mounted up and looked inside, and cried: ‘Beloved mother, Lady Queen, are you still alive, or are you dead?’ She answered: ‘I have just eaten, and am still satisfied,’ for she thought the angels were there. Said he: ‘I am your dear son, whom the wild beasts were said to have torn from your arms; but I am alive still, and will soon set you free.’ Then he descended again, and went to his father, and caused himself to be announced as a strange huntsman, and asked if he could offer him service. The king said yes, if he was skilful and could get game for him, he should come to him, but that deer had never taken up their quarters in any part of the district or country. Then the huntsman promised to procure as much game for him as he could possibly use at the royal table. So he summoned all the huntsmen together, and bade them go out into the forest with him. And he went with them and made them form a great circle, open at one end where he stationed himself, and began to wish. Two hundred deer and more came running inside the circle at once, and the huntsmen shot them. Then they were all placed on sixty country carts, and driven home to the king, and for once he was able to deck his table with game, after having had none at all for years.

Now the king felt great joy at this, and commanded that his entire household should eat with him next day, and made a great feast. When they were all assembled together, he said to the huntsman: ‘As you are so clever, you shall sit by me.’ He replied: ‘Lord King, your majesty must excuse me, I am a poor huntsman.’ But the king insisted on it, and said: ‘You shall sit by me,’ until he did it. Whilst he was sitting there, he thought of his dearest mother, and wished that one of the king’s principal servants would begin to speak of her, and would ask how it was faring with the queen in the tower, and if she were alive still, or had perished. Hardly had he formed the wish than the marshal began, and said: ‘Your majesty, we live joyously here, but how is the queen living in the tower? Is she still alive, or has she died?' But the king replied: 'She let my dear son be torn to pieces by wild beasts; I will not have her named.' Then the huntsman arose and said: 'Gracious lord father she is alive still, and I am her son, and I was not carried away by wild beasts, but by that wretch the old cook, who tore me from her arms when she was asleep, and sprinkled her apron with the blood of a chicken.' Thereupon he took the dog with the golden collar, and said: 'That is the wretch!' and caused live coals to be brought, and these the dog was compelled to devour before the sight of all, until flames burst forth from its throat. On this the huntsman asked the king if he would like to see the dog in his true shape, and wished him back into the form of the cook, in the which he stood immediately, with his white apron, and his knife by his side. When the king saw him he fell into a passion, and ordered him to be cast into the deepest dungeon. Then the huntsman spoke further and said: 'Father, will you see the maiden who brought me up so tenderly and who was afterwards to murder me, but did not do it, though her own life depended on it?' The king replied: 'Yes, I would like to see her.' The son said: 'Most gracious father, I will show her to you in the form of a beautiful flower,' and he thrust his hand into his pocket and brought forth the pink, and placed it on the royal table, and it was so beautiful that the king had never seen one to equal it. Then the son said: 'Now will I show her to you in her own form,' and wished that she might become a maiden, and she stood there looking so beautiful that no painter could have made her look more so.

And the king sent two waiting-maids and two attendants into the tower, to fetch the queen and bring her to the royal table. But when she was led in she ate nothing, and said: 'The gracious and merciful God who has supported me in the tower, will soon set me free.' She lived three days more, and then died happily, and when she was buried, the two white doves which had brought her food to the tower, and were angels of heaven, followed her body and seated themselves on her grave. The aged king ordered the cook to be torn in four pieces, but grief consumed the king's own heart, and he soon died. His son married the beautiful maiden whom he had brought with him as a flower in his pocket, and whether they are still alive or not, is known to God.

CLEVER ELSIE

There was once a man who had a daughter who was called Clever Elsie. And when she had grown up her father said: ‘We will get her married.’ ‘Yes,’ said the mother, ‘if only someone would come who would have her.’ At length a man came from a distance and wooed her, who was called Hans; but he stipulated that Clever Elsie should be really smart. ‘Oh,’ said the father, ‘she has plenty of good sense’; and the mother said: ‘Oh, she can see the wind coming up the street, and hear the flies coughing.’ ‘Well,’ said Hans, ‘if she is not really smart, I won’t have her.’ When they were sitting at dinner and had eaten, the mother said: ‘Elsie, go into the cellar and fetch some beer.’ Then Clever Elsie took the pitcher from the wall, went into the cellar, and tapped the lid briskly as she went, so that the time might not appear long. When she was below she fetched herself a chair, and set it before the barrel so that she had no need to stoop, and did not hurt her back or do herself any unexpected injury. Then she placed the can before her, and turned the tap, and while the beer was running she would not let her eyes be idle, but looked up at the wall, and after much peering here and there, saw a pick-axe exactly above her, which the masons had accidentally left there.

Then Clever Elsie began to weep and said: ‘If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and we send him into the cellar here to draw beer, then the pick-axe will fall on his head and kill him.’ Then she sat and wept and screamed with all the strength of her body, over the misfortune which lay before her. Those upstairs waited for the drink, but Clever Elsie still did not come. Then the woman said to the servant: ‘Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is.’ The maid went and found her sitting in front of the barrel, screaming loudly. ‘Elsie why do you weep?’ asked the maid. ‘Ah,’ she answered, ‘have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pick-axe will perhaps fall on his head, and kill him.’ Then said the maid: ‘What a clever Elsie we have!’ and sat down beside her and began loudly to weep over the misfortune. After a while, as the maid did not come back, and those upstairs were thirsty for the beer, the man said to the boy: ‘Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie and the girl are.’ The boy went down, and there sat Clever Elsie and the girl both weeping together. Then he asked: ‘Why are you weeping?’ ‘Ah,’ said Elsie, ‘have I not reason to weep? If I get Hans, and we have a child, and he grows big, and has to draw beer here, the pick-axe will fall on his head and kill him.’ Then said the boy: ‘What a clever Elsie we have!’ and sat down by her, and likewise began to howl loudly. Upstairs they waited for the boy, but as he still did not return, the man said to the woman: ‘Just go down into the cellar and see where Elsie is!’ The woman went down, and found all three in the midst of their lamentations, and inquired what was the cause; then Elsie told her also that her future child was to be killed by the pick-axe, when it grew big and had to draw beer, and the pick-axe fell down. Then said the mother likewise: ‘What a clever Elsie we have!' and sat down and wept with them. The man upstairs waited a short time, but as his wife did not come back and his thirst grew ever greater, he said: 'I must go into the cellar myself and see where Elsie is.' But when he got into the cellar, and they were all sitting together crying, and he heard the reason, and that Elsie's child was the cause, and the Elsie might perhaps bring one into the world some day, and that he might be killed by the pick-axe, if he should happen to be sitting beneath it, drawing beer just at the very time when it fell down, he cried: 'Oh, what a clever Elsie!' and sat down, and likewise wept with them. The bridegroom stayed upstairs alone for a long time; then as no one would come back he thought: 'They must be waiting for me below: I too must go there and see what they are about.' When he got down, the five of them were sitting screaming and lamenting quite piteously, each out-doing the other. 'What misfortune has happened then?' asked he. 'Ah, dear Hans,' said Elsie, 'if we marry each other and have a child, and he is big, and we perhaps send him here to draw something to drink, then the pick-axe which has been left up there might dash his brains out if it were to fall down, so have we not reason to weep?' 'Come,' said Hans, 'more understanding than that is not needed for my household, as you are such a clever Elsie, I will have you,' and seized her hand, took her upstairs with him, and married her.

After Hans had had her some time, he said: 'Wife, I am going out to work and earn some money for us; go into the field and cut the corn that we may have some bread.' 'Yes, dear Hans, I will do that.' After Hans had gone away, she cooked herself some good broth and took it into the field with her. When she came to the field she said to herself: 'What shall I do; shall I cut first, or shall I eat first? Oh, I will eat first.' Then she drank her cup of broth and when she was fully satisfied, she once more said: 'What shall I do? Shall I cut first, or shall I sleep first? I will sleep first.' Then she lay down among the corn and fell asleep. Hans had been at home for a long time, but Elsie did not come; then said he: 'What a clever Elsie I have; she is so industrious that she does not even come home to eat.' But when evening came and she still stayed away, Hans went out to see what she had cut, but nothing was cut, and she was lying among the corn asleep. Then Hans hastened home and brought a fowler's net with little bells and hung it round about her, and she still went on sleeping. Then he ran home, shut the house-door, and sat down in his chair and worked. At length, when it was quite dark, Clever Elsie awoke and when she got up there was a jingling all round about her, and the bells rang at each step which she took. Then she was alarmed, and became uncertain whether she really was Clever Elsie or not, and said: 'Is it I, or is it not I?' But she knew not what answer to make to this, and stood for a time in doubt; at length she thought: 'I will go home and ask if it be I, or if it be not I, they will be sure to know.' She ran to the door of her own house, but it was shut; then she knocked at the window and cried: 'Hans, is Elsie within?' 'Yes,' answered Hans, 'she is within.' Hereupon she was terrified, and said: 'Ah, heavens! Then it is not I,' and went to another door; but when the people heard the jingling of the bells they would not open it, and she could get in nowhere. Then she ran out of the village, and no one has seen her since.

THE MISER IN THE BUSH

A farmer had a faithful and diligent servant, who had worked hard for him three years, without having been paid any wages. At last it came into the man's head that he would not go on thus without pay any longer; so he went to his master, and said, 'I have worked hard for you a long time, I will trust to you to give me what I deserve to have for my trouble.' The farmer was a sad miser, and knew that his man was very simple-hearted; so he took out threepence, and gave him for every year's service a penny. The poor fellow thought it was a great deal of money to have, and said to himself, 'Why should I work hard, and live here on bad fare any longer? I can now travel into the wide world, and make myself merry.' With that he put his money into his purse, and set out, roaming over hill and valley.

As he jogged along over the fields, singing and dancing, a little dwarf met him, and asked him what made him so merry. 'Why, what should make me down-hearted?' said he; 'I am sound in health and rich in purse, what should I care for? I have saved up my three years' earnings and have it all safe in my pocket.' 'How much may it come to?' said the little man. 'Full threepence,' replied the countryman. 'I wish you would give them to me,' said the other; 'I am very poor.' Then the man pitied him, and gave him all he had; and the little dwarf said in return, 'As you have such a kind honest heart, I will grant you three wishes — one for every penny; so choose whatever you like.' Then the countryman rejoiced at his good luck, and said, 'I like many things better than money: first, I will have a bow that will bring down everything I shoot at; secondly, a fiddle that will set everyone dancing that hears me play upon it; and thirdly, I should like that everyone should grant what I ask.' The dwarf said he should have his three wishes; so he gave him the bow and fiddle, and went his way.

Our honest friend journeyed on his way too; and if he was merry before, he was now ten times more so. He had not gone far before he met an old miser: close by them stood a tree, and on the topmost twig sat a thrush singing away most joyfully. 'Oh, what a pretty bird!' said the miser; 'I would give a great deal of money to have such a one.' 'If that's all,' said the countryman, 'I will soon bring it down.' Then he took up his bow, and down fell the thrush into the bushes at the foot of the tree. The miser crept into the bush to find it; but directly he had got into the middle, his companion took up his fiddle and played away, and the miser began to dance and spring about, capering higher and higher in the air. The thorns soon began to tear his clothes till they all hung in rags about him, and he himself was all scratched and wounded, so that the blood ran down. 'Oh, for heaven's sake!' cried the miser, 'Master! master! pray let the fiddle alone. What have I done to deserve this?' 'Thou hast shaved many a poor soul close enough,' said the other; 'thou art only meeting thy reward': so he played up another tune. Then the miser began to beg and promise, and offered money for his liberty; but he did not come up to the musician's price for some time, and he danced him along brisker and brisker, and the miser bid higher and higher, till at last he offered a round hundred of florins that he had in his purse, and had just gained by cheating some poor fellow. When the countryman saw so much money, he said, ‘I will agree to your proposal.’ So he took the purse, put up his fiddle, and travelled on very pleased with his bargain.

Meanwhile the miser crept out of the bush half-naked and in a piteous plight, and began to ponder how he should take his revenge, and serve his late companion some trick. At last he went to the judge, and complained that a rascal had robbed him of his money, and beaten him into the bargain; and that the fellow who did it carried a bow at his back and a fiddle hung round his neck. Then the judge sent out his officers to bring up the accused wherever they should find him; and he was soon caught and brought up to be tried.

The miser began to tell his tale, and said he had been robbed of his money. ‘No, you gave it me for playing a tune to you.’ said the countryman; but the judge told him that was not likely, and cut the matter short by ordering him off to the gallows.

So away he was taken; but as he stood on the steps he said, ‘My Lord Judge, grant me one last request.’ ‘Anything but thy life,’ replied the other. ‘No,’ said he, ‘I do not ask my life; only to let me play upon my fiddle for the last time.’ The miser cried out, ‘Oh, no! no! for heaven’s sake don’t listen to him! don’t listen to him!’ But the judge said, ‘It is only this once, he will soon have done.’ The fact was, he could not refuse the request, on account of the dwarf’s third gift.

Then the miser said, ‘Bind me fast, bind me fast, for pity’s sake.’ But the countryman seized his fiddle, and struck up a tune, and at the first note judge, clerks, and jailer were in motion; all began capering, and no one could hold the miser. At the second note the hangman let his prisoner go, and danced also, and by the time he had played the first bar of the tune, all were dancing together — judge, court, and miser, and all the people who had followed to look on. At first the thing was merry and pleasant enough; but when it had gone on a while, and there seemed to be no end of playing or dancing, they began to cry out, and beg him to leave off; but he stopped not a whit the more for their entreaties, till the judge not only gave him his life, but promised to return him the hundred florins.

Then he called to the miser, and said, ‘Tell us now, you vagabond, where you got that gold, or I shall play on for your amusement only,’ ‘I stole it,’ said the miser in the presence of all the people; ‘I acknowledge that I stole it, and that you earned it fairly.’ Then the countryman stopped his fiddle, and left the miser to take his place at the gallows.

ASHPUTTEL

The wife of a rich man fell sick; and when she felt that her end drew nigh, she called her only daughter to her bed-side, and said, ‘Always be a good girl, and I will look down from heaven and watch over you.’ Soon afterwards she shut her eyes and died, and was buried in the garden; and the little girl went every day to her grave and wept, and was always good and kind to all about her. And the snow fell and spread a beautiful white covering over the grave; but by the time the spring came, and the sun had melted it away again, her father had married another wife. This new wife had two daughters of her own, that she brought home with her; they were fair in face but foul at heart, and it was now a sorry time for the poor little girl. ‘What does the good-for-nothing want in the parlour?’ said they; ‘they who would eat bread should first earn it; away with the kitchen-maid!’ Then they took away her fine clothes, and gave her an old grey frock to put on, and laughed at her, and turned her into the kitchen.

There she was forced to do hard work; to rise early before daylight, to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and to wash. Besides that, the sisters plagued her in all sorts of ways, and laughed at her. In the evening when she was tired, she had no bed to lie down on, but was made to lie by the hearth among the ashes; and as this, of course, made her always dusty and dirty, they called her Ashputtel.

It happened once that the father was going to the fair, and asked his wife’s daughters what he should bring them. ‘Fine clothes,’ said the first; ‘Pearls and diamonds,’ cried the second. ‘Now, child,’ said he to his own daughter, ‘what will you have?’ ‘The first twig, dear father, that brushes against your hat when you turn your face to come homewards,’ said she. Then he bought for the first two the fine clothes and pearls and diamonds they had asked for: and on his way home, as he rode through a green copse, a hazel twig brushed against him, and almost pushed off his hat: so he broke it off and brought it away; and when he got home he gave it to his daughter. Then she took it, and went to her mother’s grave and planted it there; and cried so much that it was watered with her tears; and there it grew and became a fine tree. Three times every day she went to it and cried; and soon a little bird came and built its nest upon the tree, and talked with her, and watched over her, and brought her whatever she wished for.

Now it happened that the king of that land held a feast, which was to last three days; and out of those who came to it his son was to choose a bride for himself. Ashputtel’s two sisters were asked to come; so they called her up, and said, ‘Now, comb our hair, brush our shoes, and tie our sashes for us, for we are going to dance at the king’s feast.’ Then she did as she was told; but when all was done she could not help crying, for she thought to herself, she should so have liked to have gone with them to the ball; and at last she begged her mother very hard to let her go. ‘You, Ashputtel!’ said she; ‘you who have nothing to wear, no clothes at all, and who cannot even dance —

you want to go to the ball? And when she kept on begging, she said at last, to get rid of her, ‘I will throw this dishful of peas into the ash-heap, and if in two hours’ time you have picked them all out, you shall go to the feast too.’

Then she threw the peas down among the ashes, but the little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out:

‘Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all come help me, quick!
Haste ye, haste ye! — pick, pick, pick!’

Then first came two white doves, flying in at the kitchen window; next came two turtle-doves; and after them came all the little birds under heaven, chirping and fluttering in: and they flew down into the ashes. And the little doves stooped their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick: and among them all they soon picked out all the good grain, and put it into a dish but left the ashes. Long before the end of the hour the work was quite done, and all flew out again at the windows.

Then Ashputtel brought the dish to her mother, overjoyed at the thought that now she should go to the ball. But the mother said, ‘No, no! you slut, you have no clothes, and cannot dance; you shall not go.’ And when Ashputtel begged very hard to go, she said, ‘If you can in one hour’s time pick two of those dishes of peas out of the ashes, you shall go too.’ And thus she thought she should at least get rid of her. So she shook two dishes of peas into the ashes.

But the little maiden went out into the garden at the back of the house, and cried out as before:

‘Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all come help me, quick!
Haste ye, haste ye! — pick, pick, pick!’

Then first came two white doves in at the kitchen window; next came two turtle-doves; and after them came all the little birds under heaven, chirping and hopping about. And they flew down into the ashes; and the little doves put their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began pick, pick, pick; and they put all the good grain into the dishes, and left all the ashes. Before half an hour’s time all was done, and out they flew again. And then Ashputtel took the dishes to her mother, rejoicing to think that she should now go to the ball. But her mother said, ‘It is all of no use, you cannot go; you have no clothes, and cannot dance, and you would only put us to shame’: and off she went with her two daughters to the ball.

Now when all were gone, and nobody left at home, Ashputtel went sorrowfully and sat down under the hazel-tree, and cried out:

‘Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!’

Then her friend the bird flew out of the tree, and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk; and she put them on, and followed her sisters to the feast. But they did not know her, and thought it must be some strange princess, she looked so fine and beautiful in her rich clothes; and they never once thought of Ashputtel, taking it for granted that she was safe at home in the dirt.

The king’s son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her, and no one else: and he never left her hand; but when anyone else came to ask her to dance, he said, ‘This lady is dancing with me.’

Thus they danced till a late hour of the night; and then she wanted to go home: and the king’s son said, ‘I shall go and take care of you to your home’; for he wanted to see where the beautiful maiden lived. But she slipped away from him, unawares, and ran off towards home; and as the prince followed her, she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. Then he waited till her father came home, and told him that the unknown maiden, who had been at the feast, had hid herself in the pigeon-house. But when they had broken open the door they found no one within; and as they came back into the house, Ashputtel was lying, as she always did, in her dirty frock by the ashes, and her dim little lamp was burning in the chimney. For she had run as quickly as she could through the pigeon-house and on to the hazel-tree, and had there taken off her beautiful clothes, and put them beneath the tree, that the bird might carry them away, and had lain down again amid the ashes in her little grey frock.

The next day when the feast was again held, and her father, mother, and sisters were gone, Ashputtel went to the hazel-tree, and said:

‘Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!’

And the bird came and brought a still finer dress than the one she had worn the day before. And when she came in it to the ball, everyone wondered at her beauty: but the king’s son, who was waiting for her, took her by the hand, and danced with her; and when anyone asked her to dance, he said as before, ‘This lady is dancing with me.’

When night came she wanted to go home; and the king’s son followed here as before, that he might see into what house she went: but she sprang away from him all at once into the garden behind her father’s house. In this garden stood a fine large pear-tree full of ripe fruit; and Ashputtel, not knowing where to hide herself, jumped up into it without being seen. Then the king’s son lost sight of her, and could not find out where she was gone, but waited till her father came home, and said to him, ‘The unknown lady who danced with me has slipped away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear-tree.’ The father thought to himself, ‘Can it be Ashputtel?’ So he had an axe brought; and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. And when they came back into the kitchen, there lay Ashputtel among the ashes; for she had slipped down on the other side of the tree, and carried her beautiful clothes back to the bird at the hazel-tree, and then put on her little grey frock.

The third day, when her father and mother and sisters were gone, she went again into the garden, and said:

‘Shake, shake, hazel-tree,
Gold and silver over me!’

Then her kind friend the bird brought a dress still finer than the former one, and slippers which were all of gold: so that when she came to the feast no one knew what to say, for wonder at her beauty: and the king’s son danced with nobody but her; and when anyone else asked her to dance, he said, ‘This lady is *my* partner, sir.’

When night came she wanted to go home; and the king’s son would go with her, and said to himself, ‘I will not lose her this time’; but, however, she again slipped away from him, though in such a hurry that she dropped her left golden slipper upon the stairs.

The prince took the shoe, and went the next day to the king his father, and said, ‘I will take for my wife the lady that this golden slipper fits.’ Then both the sisters were overjoyed to hear it; for they had beautiful feet, and had no doubt that they could wear the golden slipper. The eldest went first into the room where the slipper was, and wanted to try it on, and the mother stood by. But her great toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. Then the mother gave her a knife, and said, ‘Never mind, cut it off; when you are queen you will not care about toes; you will not want to walk.’ So the silly girl cut off her great toe, and thus squeezed on the shoe, and went to the king’s son. Then he took her for his bride, and set her beside him on his horse, and rode away with her homewards.

But on their way home they had to pass by the hazel-tree that Ashputtel had planted; and on the branch sat a little dove singing:

‘Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she’s not the true one that sits by thy side.’

Then the prince got down and looked at her foot; and he saw, by the blood that streamed from it, what a trick she had played him. So he turned his horse round, and brought the false bride back to her home, and said, ‘This is not the right bride; let the other sister try and put on the slipper.’ Then she went into the room and got her foot into the shoe, all but the heel, which was too large. But her mother squeezed it in till the blood came, and took her to the king’s son: and he set her as his bride by his side on his horse, and rode away with her.

But when they came to the hazel-tree the little dove sat there still, and sang:

‘Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she’s not the true one that sits by thy side.’

Then he looked down, and saw that the blood streamed so much from the shoe, that her white stockings were quite red. So he turned his horse and brought her also back again. ‘This is not the true bride,’ said he to the father; ‘have you no other daughters?’ ‘No,’ said he; ‘there is only a little dirty Ashputtel here, the child of my first wife; I am sure she cannot be the bride.’ The prince told him to send her. But the mother said, ‘No, no, she is much too dirty; she will not dare to show herself.’ However, the prince would have her come; and she first washed her face and hands, and then went in and curtsied to him, and he reached her the golden slipper. Then she took her clumsy shoe off her left foot, and put on the golden slipper; and it fitted her as if it had been made for her. And when he drew near and looked at her face he knew her, and said, ‘This is the right bride.’ But the mother and both the sisters were frightened, and turned pale with anger as he took Ashputtel on his horse, and rode away with her. And when they came to the hazel-tree, the white dove sang:

‘Home! home! look at the shoe!
Princess! the shoe was made for you!
Prince! prince! take home thy bride,
For she is the true one that sits by thy side!’

And when the dove had done its song, it came flying, and perched upon her right shoulder, and so went home with her.

THE WHITE SNAKE

A long time ago there lived a king who was famed for his wisdom through all the land. Nothing was hidden from him, and it seemed as if news of the most secret things was brought to him through the air. But he had a strange custom; every day after dinner, when the table was cleared, and no one else was present, a trusty servant had to bring him one more dish. It was covered, however, and even the servant did not know what was in it, neither did anyone know, for the king never took off the cover to eat of it until he was quite alone.

This had gone on for a long time, when one day the servant, who took away the dish, was overcome with such curiosity that he could not help carrying the dish into his room. When he had carefully locked the door, he lifted up the cover, and saw a white snake lying on the dish. But when he saw it he could not deny himself the pleasure of tasting it, so he cut of a little bit and put it into his mouth. No sooner had it touched his tongue than he heard a strange whispering of little voices outside his window. He went and listened, and then noticed that it was the sparrows who were chattering together, and telling one another of all kinds of things which they had seen in the fields and woods. Eating the snake had given him power of understanding the language of animals.

Now it so happened that on this very day the queen lost her most beautiful ring, and suspicion of having stolen it fell upon this trusty servant, who was allowed to go everywhere. The king ordered the man to be brought before him, and threatened with angry words that unless he could before the morrow point out the thief, he himself should be looked upon as guilty and executed. In vain he declared his innocence; he was dismissed with no better answer.

In his trouble and fear he went down into the courtyard and took thought how to help himself out of his trouble. Now some ducks were sitting together quietly by a brook and taking their rest; and, whilst they were making their feathers smooth with their bills, they were having a confidential conversation together. The servant stood by and listened. They were telling one another of all the places where they had been waddling about all the morning, and what good food they had found; and one said in a pitiful tone: ‘Something lies heavy on my stomach; as I was eating in haste I swallowed a ring which lay under the queen’s window.’ The servant at once seized her by the neck, carried her to the kitchen, and said to the cook: ‘Here is a fine duck; pray, kill her.’ ‘Yes,’ said the cook, and weighed her in his hand; ‘she has spared no trouble to fatten herself, and has been waiting to be roasted long enough.’ So he cut off her head, and as she was being dressed for the spit, the queen’s ring was found inside her.

The servant could now easily prove his innocence; and the king, to make amends for the wrong, allowed him to ask a favour, and promised him the best place in the court that he could wish for. The servant refused everything, and only asked for a horse and some money for travelling, as he had a mind to see the world and go about a little. When his request was granted he set out on his way, and one day came to a pond, where he saw three fishes caught in the reeds and gasping for water. Now, though it is said that fishes are dumb, he heard them lamenting that they must perish so miserably, and, as he had a kind heart, he got off his horse and put the three prisoners back into the water. They leapt with delight, put out their heads, and cried to him: ‘We will remember you and repay you for saving us!’

He rode on, and after a while it seemed to him that he heard a voice in the sand at his feet. He listened, and heard an ant-king complain: ‘Why cannot folks, with their clumsy beasts, keep off our bodies? That stupid horse, with his heavy hoofs, has been treading down my people without mercy!’ So he turned on to a side path and the ant-king cried out to him: ‘We will remember you — one good turn deserves another!’

The path led him into a wood, and there he saw two old ravens standing by their nest, and throwing out their young ones. ‘Out with you, you idle, good-for-nothing creatures!’ cried they; ‘we cannot find food for you any longer; you are big enough, and can provide for yourselves.’ But the poor young ravens lay upon the ground, flapping their wings, and crying: ‘Oh, what helpless chicks we are! We must shift for ourselves, and yet we cannot fly! What can we do, but lie here and starve?’ So the good young fellow alighted and killed his horse with his sword, and gave it to them for food. Then they came hopping up to it, satisfied their hunger, and cried: ‘We will remember you — one good turn deserves another!’

And now he had to use his own legs, and when he had walked a long way, he came to a large city. There was a great noise and crowd in the streets, and a man rode up on horseback, crying aloud: ‘The king’s daughter wants a husband; but whoever seeks her hand must perform a hard task, and if he does not succeed he will forfeit his life.’ Many had already made the attempt, but in vain; nevertheless when the youth saw the king’s daughter he was so overcome by her great beauty that he forgot all danger, went before the king, and declared himself a suitor.

So he was led out to the sea, and a gold ring was thrown into it, before his eyes; then the king ordered him to fetch this ring up from the bottom of the sea, and added: ‘If you come up again without it you will be thrown in again and again until you perish amid the waves.’ All the people grieved for the handsome youth; then they went away, leaving him alone by the sea.

He stood on the shore and considered what he should do, when suddenly he saw three fishes come swimming towards him, and they were the very fishes whose lives he had saved. The one in the middle held a mussel in its mouth, which it laid on the shore at the youth’s feet, and when he had taken it up and opened it, there lay the gold ring in the shell. Full of joy he took it to the king and expected that he would grant him the promised reward.

But when the proud princess perceived that he was not her equal in birth, she scorned him, and required him first to perform another task. She went down into the garden and strewed with her own hands ten sacksful of millet-seed on the grass; then she said: ‘Tomorrow morning before sunrise these must be picked up, and not a single grain be wanting.’

The youth sat down in the garden and considered how it might be possible to perform this task, but he could think of nothing, and there he sat sorrowfully awaiting the break of day, when he should be led to death. But as soon as the first rays of the sun shone into the garden he saw all the ten sacks standing side by side, quite full, and not a single grain was missing. The ant-king had come in the night with thousands and thousands of ants, and the grateful creatures had by great industry picked up all the millet-seed and gathered them into the sacks.

Presently the king’s daughter herself came down into the garden, and was amazed to see that the young man had done the task she had given him. But she could not yet conquer her proud heart, and said: ‘Although he has performed both the tasks, he shall not be my husband until he had brought me an apple from the Tree of Life.’ The youth did not know where the Tree of Life stood, but he set out, and would have gone on for ever, as long as his legs would carry him, though he had no hope of finding it. After he had wandered through three kingdoms, he came one evening to a wood, and lay down under a tree to sleep. But he heard a rustling in the branches, and a golden apple fell into his hand. At the same time three ravens flew down to him, perched themselves upon his knee, and said: ‘We are the three young ravens whom you saved from starving; when we had grown big, and heard that you were seeking the Golden Apple, we flew over the sea to the end of the world, where the Tree of Life stands, and have brought you the apple.’ The youth, full of joy, set out homewards, and took the Golden Apple to the king’s beautiful daughter, who had now no more excuses left to make. They cut the Apple of Life in two and ate it together; and then her heart became full of love for him, and they lived in undisturbed happiness to a great age.

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE KIDS

There was once upon a time an old goat who had seven little kids, and loved them with all the love of a mother for her children. One day she wanted to go into the forest and fetch some food. So she called all seven to her and said: ‘Dear children, I have to go into the forest, be on your guard against the wolf; if he comes in, he will devour you all — skin, hair, and everything. The wretch often disguises himself, but you will know him at once by his rough voice and his black feet.’ The kids said: ‘Dear mother, we will take good care of ourselves; you may go away without any anxiety.’ Then the old one bleated, and went on her way with an easy mind.

It was not long before someone knocked at the house-door and called: ‘Open the door, dear children; your mother is here, and has brought something back with her for each of you.’ But the little kids knew that it was the wolf, by the rough voice. ‘We will not open the door,’ cried they, ‘you are not our mother. She has a soft, pleasant voice, but your voice is rough; you are the wolf!’ Then the wolf went away to a shopkeeper and bought himself a great lump of chalk, ate this and made his voice soft with it. Then he came back, knocked at the door of the house, and called: ‘Open the door, dear children, your mother is here and has brought something back with her for each of you.’ But the wolf had laid his black paws against the window, and the children saw them and cried: ‘We will not open the door, our mother has not black feet like you: you are the wolf!’ Then the wolf ran to a baker and said: ‘I have hurt my feet, rub some dough over them for me.’ And when the baker had rubbed his feet over, he ran to the miller and said: ‘Strew some white meal over my feet for me.’ The miller thought to himself: ‘The wolf wants to deceive someone,’ and refused; but the wolf said: ‘If you will not do it, I will devour you.’ Then the miller was afraid, and made his paws white for him. Truly, this is the way of mankind.

So now the wretch went for the third time to the house-door, knocked at it and said: ‘Open the door for me, children, your dear little mother has come home, and has brought every one of you something back from the forest with her.’ The little kids cried: ‘First show us your paws that we may know if you are our dear little mother.’ Then he put his paws in through the window and when the kids saw that they were white, they believed that all he said was true, and opened the door. But who should come in but the wolf! They were terrified and wanted to hide themselves. One sprang under the table, the second into the bed, the third into the stove, the fourth into the kitchen, the fifth into the cupboard, the sixth under the washing-bowl, and the seventh into the clock-case. But the wolf found them all, and used no great ceremony; one after the other he swallowed them down his throat. The youngest, who was in the clock-case, was the only one he did not find. When the wolf had satisfied his appetite he took himself off, laid himself down under a tree in the green meadow outside, and began to sleep. Soon afterwards the old goat came home again from the forest. Ah! what a sight she saw there! The house-door stood wide open. The table, chairs, and benches were thrown down, the washing-bowl lay broken to pieces, and the quilts and pillows were pulled off the bed. She sought her children, but they were nowhere to be found. She called them one after another by name, but no one answered. At last, when she came to the youngest, a soft voice cried: ‘Dear mother, I am in the clock-case.’ She took the kid out, and it told her that the wolf had come and had eaten all the others. Then you may imagine how she wept over her poor children.

At length in her grief she went out, and the youngest kid ran with her. When they came to the meadow, there lay the wolf by the tree and snored so loud that the branches shook. She looked at him on every side and saw that something was moving and struggling in his gorged belly. ‘Ah, heavens,’ she said, ’is it possible that my poor children whom he has swallowed down for his supper, can be still alive?’ Then the kid had to run home and fetch scissors, and a needle and thread, and the goat cut open the monster’s stomach, and hardly had she made one cut, than one little kid thrust its head out, and when she had cut farther, all six sprang out one after another, and were all still alive, and had suffered no injury whatever, for in his greediness the monster had swallowed them down whole. What rejoicing there was! They embraced their dear mother, and jumped like a tailor at his wedding. The mother, however, said: ‘Now go and look for some big stones, and we will fill the wicked beast’s stomach with them while he is still asleep.’ Then the seven kids dragged the stones thither with all speed, and put as many of them into this stomach as they could get in; and the mother sewed him up again in the greatest haste, so that he was not aware of anything and never once stirred.

When the wolf at length had had his fill of sleep, he got on his legs, and as the stones in his stomach made him very thirsty, he wanted to go to a well to drink. But when he began to walk and to move about, the stones in his stomach knocked against each other and rattled. Then cried he:

‘What rumbles and tumbles
Against my poor bones?
I thought ’twas six kids,
But it feels like big stones.’

And when he got to the well and stooped over the water to drink, the heavy stones made him fall in, and he drowned miserably. When the seven kids saw that, they came running to the spot and cried aloud: ‘The wolf is dead! The wolf is dead!’ and danced for joy round about the well with their mother.

THE QUEEN BEE

Two kings' sons once upon a time went into the world to seek their fortunes; but they soon fell into a wasteful foolish way of living, so that they could not return home again. Then their brother, who was a little insignificant dwarf, went out to seek for his brothers: but when he had found them they only laughed at him, to think that he, who was so young and simple, should try to travel through the world, when they, who were so much wiser, had been unable to get on. However, they all set out on their journey together, and came at last to an ant-hill. The two elder brothers would have pulled it down, in order to see how the poor ants in their fright would run about and carry off their eggs. But the little dwarf said, 'Let the poor things enjoy themselves, I will not suffer you to trouble them.'

So on they went, and came to a lake where many many ducks were swimming about. The two brothers wanted to catch two, and roast them. But the dwarf said, 'Let the poor things enjoy themselves, you shall not kill them.' Next they came to a bees'-nest in a hollow tree, and there was so much honey that it ran down the trunk; and the two brothers wanted to light a fire under the tree and kill the bees, so as to get their honey. But the dwarf held them back, and said, 'Let the pretty insects enjoy themselves, I cannot let you burn them.'

At length the three brothers came to a castle: and as they passed by the stables they saw fine horses standing there, but all were of marble, and no man was to be seen. Then they went through all the rooms, till they came to a door on which were three locks: but in the middle of the door was a wicket, so that they could look into the next room. There they saw a little grey old man sitting at a table; and they called to him once or twice, but he did not hear: however, they called a third time, and then he rose and came out to them.

He said nothing, but took hold of them and led them to a beautiful table covered with all sorts of good things: and when they had eaten and drunk, he showed each of them to a bed-chamber.

The next morning he came to the eldest and took him to a marble table, where there were three tablets, containing an account of the means by which the castle might be disenchanted. The first tablet said: 'In the wood, under the moss, lie the thousand pearls belonging to the king's daughter; they must all be found: and if one be missing by set of sun, he who seeks them will be turned into marble.'

The eldest brother set out, and sought for the pearls the whole day: but the evening came, and he had not found the first hundred: so he was turned into stone as the tablet had foretold.

The next day the second brother undertook the task; but he succeeded no better than the first; for he could only find the second hundred of the pearls; and therefore he too was turned into stone.

At last came the little dwarf’s turn; and he looked in the moss; but it was so hard to find the pearls, and the job was so tiresome! — so he sat down upon a stone and cried. And as he sat there, the king of the ants (whose life he had saved) came to help him, with five thousand ants; and it was not long before they had found all the pearls and laid them in a heap.

The second tablet said: ‘The key of the princess’s bed-chamber must be fished up out of the lake.’ And as the dwarf came to the brink of it, he saw the two ducks whose lives he had saved swimming about; and they dived down and soon brought in the key from the bottom.

The third task was the hardest. It was to choose out the youngest and the best of the king’s three daughters. Now they were all beautiful, and all exactly alike: but he was told that the eldest had eaten a piece of sugar, the next some sweet syrup, and the youngest a spoonful of honey; so he was to guess which it was that had eaten the honey.

Then came the queen of the bees, who had been saved by the little dwarf from the fire, and she tried the lips of all three; but at last she sat upon the lips of the one that had eaten the honey: and so the dwarf knew which was the youngest. Thus the spell was broken, and all who had been turned into stones awoke, and took their proper forms. And the dwarf married the youngest and the best of the princesses, and was king after her father’s death; but his two brothers married the other two sisters.

THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER

There was once a shoemaker, who worked very hard and was very honest: but still he could not earn enough to live upon; and at last all he had in the world was gone, save just leather enough to make one pair of shoes.

Then he cut his leather out, all ready to make up the next day, meaning to rise early in the morning to his work. His conscience was clear and his heart light amidst all his troubles; so he went peaceably to bed, left all his cares to Heaven, and soon fell asleep. In the morning after he had said his prayers, he sat himself down to his work; when, to his great wonder, there stood the shoes all ready made, upon the table. The good man knew not what to say or think at such an odd thing happening. He looked at the workmanship; there was not one false stitch in the whole job; all was so neat and true, that it was quite a masterpiece.

The same day a customer came in, and the shoes suited him so well that he willingly paid a price higher than usual for them; and the poor shoemaker, with the money, bought leather enough to make two pairs more. In the evening he cut out the work, and went to bed early, that he might get up and begin betimes next day; but he was saved all the trouble, for when he got up in the morning the work was done ready to his hand. Soon in came buyers, who paid him handsomely for his goods, so that he bought leather enough for four pair more. He cut out the work again overnight and found it done in the morning, as before; and so it went on for some time: what was got ready in the evening was always done by daybreak, and the good man soon became thriving and well off again.

One evening, about Christmas-time, as he and his wife were sitting over the fire chatting together, he said to her, ‘I should like to sit up and watch tonight, that we may see who it is that comes and does my work for me.’ The wife liked the thought; so they left a light burning, and hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind a curtain that was hung up there, and watched what would happen.

As soon as it was midnight, there came in two little naked dwarfs; and they sat themselves upon the shoemaker’s bench, took up all the work that was cut out, and began to ply with their little fingers, stitching and rapping and tapping away at such a rate, that the shoemaker was all wonder, and could not take his eyes off them. And on they went, till the job was quite done, and the shoes stood ready for use upon the table. This was long before daybreak; and then they bustled away as quick as lightning.

The next day the wife said to the shoemaker. ‘These little wights have made us rich, and we ought to be thankful to them, and do them a good turn if we can. I am quite sorry to see them run about as they do; and indeed it is not very decent, for they have nothing upon their backs to keep off the cold. I’ll tell you what, I will make each of them a shirt, and a coat and waistcoat, and a pair of pantaloons into the bargain; and do you make each of them a little pair of shoes.’

The thought pleased the good cobbler very much; and one evening, when all the things were ready, they laid them on the table, instead of the work that they used to cut out, and then went and hid themselves, to watch what the little elves would do.

About midnight in they came, dancing and skipping, hopped round the room, and then went to sit down to their work as usual; but when they saw the clothes lying for them, they laughed and chuckled, and seemed mightily delighted.

Then they dressed themselves in the twinkling of an eye, and danced and capered and sprang about, as merry as could be; till at last they danced out at the door, and away over the green.

The good couple saw them no more; but everything went well with them from that time forward, as long as they lived.

THE JUNIPER-TREE

Long, long ago, some two thousand years or so, there lived a rich man with a good and beautiful wife. They loved each other dearly, but sorrowed much that they had no children. So greatly did they desire to have one, that the wife prayed for it day and night, but still they remained childless.

In front of the house there was a court, in which grew a juniper-tree. One winter's day the wife stood under the tree to peel some apples, and as she was peeling them, she cut her finger, and the blood fell on the snow. 'Ah,' sighed the woman heavily, 'if I had but a child, as red as blood and as white as snow,' and as she spoke the words, her heart grew light within her, and it seemed to her that her wish was granted, and she returned to the house feeling glad and comforted. A month passed, and the snow had all disappeared; then another month went by, and all the earth was green. So the months followed one another, and first the trees budded in the woods, and soon the green branches grew thickly intertwined, and then the blossoms began to fall. Once again the wife stood under the juniper-tree, and it was so full of sweet scent that her heart leaped for joy, and she was so overcome with her happiness, that she fell on her knees. Presently the fruit became round and firm, and she was glad and at peace; but when they were fully ripe she picked the berries and ate eagerly of them, and then she grew sad and ill. A little while later she called her husband, and said to him, weeping. 'If I die, bury me under the juniper-tree.' Then she felt comforted and happy again, and before another month had passed she had a little child, and when she saw that it was as white as snow and as red as blood, her joy was so great that she died.

Her husband buried her under the juniper-tree, and wept bitterly for her. By degrees, however, his sorrow grew less, and although at times he still grieved over his loss, he was able to go about as usual, and later on he married again.

He now had a little daughter born to him; the child of his first wife was a boy, who was as red as blood and as white as snow. The mother loved her daughter very much, and when she looked at her and then looked at the boy, it pierced her heart to think that he would always stand in the way of her own child, and she was continually thinking how she could get the whole of the property for her. This evil thought took possession of her more and more, and made her behave very unkindly to the boy. She drove him from place to place with cuffings and buffetings, so that the poor child went about in fear, and had no peace from the time he left school to the time he went back.

One day the little daughter came running to her mother in the store-room, and said, 'Mother, give me an apple.' 'Yes, my child,' said the wife, and she gave her a beautiful apple out of the chest; the chest had a very heavy lid and a large iron lock.

'Mother,' said the little daughter again, 'may not brother have one too?' The mother was angry at this, but she answered, 'Yes, when he comes out of school.'

Just then she looked out of the window and saw him coming, and it seemed as if an evil spirit entered into her, for she snatched the apple out of her little daughter's hand, and said, 'You shall not have one before your brother.' She threw the apple into the chest and shut it to. The little boy now came in, and the evil spirit in the wife made her say kindly to him, 'My son, will you have an apple?' but she gave him a wicked look. 'Mother,' said the boy, 'how dreadful you look! Yes, give me an apple.' The thought came to her that she would kill him. 'Come with me,' she said, and she lifted up the lid of the chest; 'take one out for yourself.' And as he bent over to do so, the evil spirit urged her, and crash! down went the lid, and off went the little boy's head. Then she was overwhelmed with fear at the thought of what she had done. 'If only I can prevent anyone knowing that I did it,' she thought. So she went upstairs to her room, and took a white handkerchief out of her top drawer; then she set the boy's head again on his shoulders, and bound it with the handkerchief so that nothing could be seen, and placed him on a chair by the door with an apple in his hand.

Soon after this, little Marleen came up to her mother who was stirring a pot of boiling water over the fire, and said, 'Mother, brother is sitting by the door with an apple in his hand, and he looks so pale; and when I asked him to give me the apple, he did not answer, and that frightened me.'

'Go to him again,' said her mother, 'and if he does not answer, give him a box on the ear.' So little Marleen went, and said, 'Brother, give me that apple,' but he did not say a word; then she gave him a box on the ear, and his head rolled off. She was so terrified at this, that she ran crying and screaming to her mother. 'Oh!' she said, 'I have knocked off brother's head,' and then she wept and wept, and nothing would stop her.

'What have you done!' said her mother, 'but no one must know about it, so you must keep silence; what is done can't be undone; we will make him into puddings.' And she took the little boy and cut him up, made him into puddings, and put him in the pot. But Marleen stood looking on, and wept and wept, and her tears fell into the pot, so that there was no need of salt.

Presently the father came home and sat down to his dinner; he asked, 'Where is my son?' The mother said nothing, but gave him a large dish of black pudding, and Marleen still wept without ceasing.

The father again asked, 'Where is my son?'

'Oh,' answered the wife, 'he is gone into the country to his mother's great uncle; he is going to stay there some time.'

'What has he gone there for, and he never even said goodbye to me!'

'Well, he likes being there, and he told me he should be away quite six weeks; he is well looked after there.'

'I feel very unhappy about it,' said the husband, 'in case it should not be all right, and he ought to have said goodbye to me.'

With this he went on with his dinner, and said, 'Little Marleen, why do you weep? Brother will soon be back.' Then he asked his wife for more pudding, and as he ate, he threw the bones under the table.

Little Marleen went upstairs and took her best silk handkerchief out of her bottom drawer, and in it she wrapped all the bones from under the table and carried them outside, and all the time she did nothing but weep. Then she laid them in the green grass under the juniper-tree, and she had no sooner done so, then all her sadness seemed to leave her, and she wept no more. And now the juniper-tree began to move, and the branches waved backwards and forwards, first away from one another, and then together again, as it might be someone clapping their hands for joy. After this a mist came round the tree, and in the midst of it there was a burning as of fire, and out of the fire there flew a beautiful bird, that rose high into the air, singing magnificently, and when it could no more be seen, the juniper-tree stood there as before, and the silk handkerchief and the bones were gone.

Little Marleen now felt as lighthearted and happy as if her brother were still alive, and she went back to the house and sat down cheerfully to the table and ate.

The bird flew away and alighted on the house of a goldsmith and began to sing:

'My mother killed her little son;
My father grieved when I was gone;
My sister loved me best of all;
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

The goldsmith was in his workshop making a gold chain, when he heard the song of the bird on his roof. He thought it so beautiful that he got up and ran out, and as he crossed the threshold he lost one of his slippers. But he ran on into the middle of the street, with a slipper on one foot and a sock on the other; he still had on his apron, and still held the gold chain and the pincers in his hands, and so he stood gazing up at the bird, while the sun came shining brightly down on the street.

'Bird,' he said, 'how beautifully you sing! Sing me that song again.'

'Nay,' said the bird, 'I do not sing twice for nothing. Give that gold chain, and I will sing it you again.'

'Here is the chain, take it,' said the goldsmith. 'Only sing me that again.'

The bird flew down and took the gold chain in his right claw, and then he alighted again in front of the goldsmith and sang:

'My mother killed her little son;
My father grieved when I was gone;
My sister loved me best of all;
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

Then he flew away, and settled on the roof of a shoemaker's house and sang:

'My mother killed her little son;
My father grieved when I was gone;
My sister loved me best of all;
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

The shoemaker heard him, and he jumped up and ran out in his shirt-sleeves, and stood looking up at the bird on the roof with his hand over his eyes to keep himself from being blinded by the sun.

'Bird,' he said, 'how beautifully you sing!' Then he called through the door to his wife: 'Wife, come out; here is a bird, come and look at it and hear how beautifully it sings.' Then he called his daughter and the children, then the apprentices, girls and boys, and they all ran up the street to look at the bird, and saw how splendid it was with its red and green feathers, and its neck like burnished gold, and eyes like two bright stars in its head.

'Bird,' said the shoemaker, 'sing me that song again.'

'Nay,' answered the bird, 'I do not sing twice for nothing; you must give me something.'

'Wife,' said the man, 'go into the garret; on the upper shelf you will see a pair of red shoes; bring them to me.' The wife went in and fetched the shoes.

'There, bird,' said the shoemaker, 'now sing me that song again.'

The bird flew down and took the red shoes in his left claw, and then he went back to the roof and sang:

'My mother killed her little son;
My father grieved when I was gone;
My sister loved me best of all;
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

When he had finished, he flew away. He had the chain in his right claw and the shoes in his left, and he flew right away to a mill, and the mill went 'Click clack, click clack, click clack.' Inside the mill were twenty of the miller's men hewing a stone, and as they went 'Hick hack, hick hack, hick hack,' the mill went 'Click clack, click clack, click clack.'

The bird settled on a lime-tree in front of the mill and sang:

'My mother killed her little son;
then one of the men left off,
My father grieved when I was gone;
two more men left off and listened,
My sister loved me best of all;
then four more left off,
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Now there were only eight at work,

Underneath,
and now only five,
the juniper-tree.
and now only one,
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'
then he looked up and the last one had left off work.

'Bird,' he said, 'what a beautiful song that is you sing! Let me hear it too; sing it again.'

'Nay,' answered the bird, 'I do not sing twice for nothing; give me that millstone, and I will sing it again.'

'If it belonged to me alone,' said the man, 'you should have it.'

'Yes, yes,' said the others: 'if he will sing again, he can have it.'

The bird came down, and all the twenty millers set to and lifted up the stone with a beam; then the bird put his head through the hole and took the stone round his neck like a collar, and flew back with it to the tree and sang —

'My mother killed her little son;
My father grieved when I was gone;
My sister loved me best of all;
She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

And when he had finished his song, he spread his wings, and with the chain in his right claw, the shoes in his left, and the millstone round his neck, he flew right away to his father's house.

The father, the mother, and little Marleen were having their dinner.

'How lighthearted I feel,' said the father, 'so pleased and cheerful.'

'And I,' said the mother, 'I feel so uneasy, as if a heavy thunderstorm were coming.'

But little Marleen sat and wept and wept.

Then the bird came flying towards the house and settled on the roof.

'I do feel so happy,' said the father, 'and how beautifully the sun shines; I feel just as if I were going to see an old friend again.'

'Ah!' said the wife, 'and I am so full of distress and uneasiness that my teeth chatter, and I feel as if there were a fire in my veins,' and she tore open her dress; and all the while little Marleen sat in the corner and wept, and the plate on her knees was wet with her tears.

The bird now flew to the juniper-tree and began singing:

'My mother killed her little son;

the mother shut her eyes and her ears, that she might see and hear nothing, but there was a roaring sound in her ears like that of a violent storm, and in her eyes a burning and flashing like lightning:

My father grieved when I was gone;

'Look, mother,' said the man, 'at the beautiful bird that is singing so magnificently; and how warm and bright the sun is, and what a delicious scent of spice in the air!'

My sister loved me best of all;

then little Marleen laid her head down on her knees and sobbed.

'I must go outside and see the bird nearer,' said the man.

'Ah, do not go!' cried the wife. 'I feel as if the whole house were in flames!'

But the man went out and looked at the bird.

She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie
Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

With that the bird let fall the gold chain, and it fell just round the man's neck, so that it fitted him exactly.

He went inside, and said, 'See, what a splendid bird that is; he has given me this beautiful gold chain, and looks so beautiful himself.'

But the wife was in such fear and trouble, that she fell on the floor, and her cap fell from her head.

Then the bird began again:

'My mother killed her little son;

'Ah me!' cried the wife, 'if I were but a thousand feet beneath the earth, that I might not hear that song.'

My father grieved when I was gone;

then the woman fell down again as if dead.

My sister loved me best of all;

'Well,' said little Marleen, 'I will go out too and see if the bird will give me anything.'

So she went out.

She laid her kerchief over me,
And took my bones that they might lie

and he threw down the shoes to her,

Underneath the juniper-tree
Kywitt, Kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!'

And she now felt quite happy and lighthearted; she put on the shoes and danced and jumped about in them. 'I was so miserable,' she said, 'when I came out, but that has all passed away; that is indeed a splendid bird, and he has given me a pair of red shoes.'

The wife sprang up, with her hair standing out from her head like flames of fire. 'Then I will go out too,' she said, 'and see if it will lighten my misery, for I feel as if the world were coming to an end.'

But as she crossed the threshold, crash! the bird threw the millstone down on her head, and she was crushed to death.

The father and little Marleen heard the sound and ran out, but they only saw mist and flame and fire rising from the spot, and when these had passed, there stood the little brother, and he took the father and little Marleen by the hand; then they all three rejoiced, and went inside together and sat down to their dinners and ate.

THE TURNIP

There were two brothers who were both soldiers; the one was rich and the other poor. The poor man thought he would try to better himself; so, pulling off his red coat, he became a gardener, and dug his ground well, and sowed turnips.

When the seed came up, there was one plant bigger than all the rest; and it kept getting larger and larger, and seemed as if it would never cease growing; so that it might have been called the prince of turnips for there never was such a one seen before, and never will again. At last it was so big that it filled a cart, and two oxen could hardly draw it; and the gardener knew not what in the world to do with it, nor whether it would be a blessing or a curse to him. One day he said to himself, ‘What shall I do with it? if I sell it, it will bring no more than another; and for eating, the little turnips are better than this; the best thing perhaps is to carry it and give it to the king as a mark of respect.’

Then he yoked his oxen, and drew the turnip to the court, and gave it to the king. ‘What a wonderful thing!’ said the king; ‘I have seen many strange things, but such a monster as this I never saw. Where did you get the seed? or is it only your good luck? If so, you are a true child of fortune.’ ‘Ah, no!’ answered the gardener, ‘I am no child of fortune; I am a poor soldier, who never could get enough to live upon; so I laid aside my red coat, and set to work, tilling the ground. I have a brother, who is rich, and your majesty knows him well, and all the world knows him; but because I am poor, everybody forgets me.’

The king then took pity on him, and said, ‘You shall be poor no longer. I will give you so much that you shall be even richer than your brother.’ Then he gave him gold and lands and flocks, and made him so rich that his brother’s fortune could not at all be compared with his.

When the brother heard of all this, and how a turnip had made the gardener so rich, he envied him sorely, and bethought himself how he could contrive to get the same good fortune for himself. However, he determined to manage more cleverly than his brother, and got together a rich present of gold and fine horses for the king; and thought he must have a much larger gift in return; for if his brother had received so much for only a turnip, what must his present be worth?

The king took the gift very graciously, and said he knew not what to give in return more valuable and wonderful than the great turnip; so the soldier was forced to put it into a cart, and drag it home with him. When he reached home, he knew not upon whom to vent his rage and spite; and at length wicked thoughts came into his head, and he resolved to kill his brother.

So he hired some villains to murder him; and having shown them where to lie in ambush, he went to his brother, and said, ‘Dear brother, I have found a hidden treasure; let us go and dig it up, and share it between us.’ The other had no suspicions of his roguery: so they went out together, and as they were travelling along, the murderers rushed out upon him, bound him, and were going to hang him on a tree.

But whilst they were getting all ready, they heard the trampling of a horse at a distance, which so frightened them that they pushed their prisoner neck and shoulders together into a sack, and swung him up by a cord to the tree, where they left him dangling, and ran away. Meantime he worked and worked away, till he made a hole large enough to put out his head.

When the horseman came up, he proved to be a student, a merry fellow, who was journeying along on his nag, and singing as he went. As soon as the man in the sack saw him passing under the tree, he cried out, ‘Good morning! good morning to thee, my friend!’ The student looked about everywhere; and seeing no one, and not knowing where the voice came from, cried out, ‘Who calls me?’

Then the man in the tree answered, ‘Lift up thine eyes, for behold here I sit in the sack of wisdom; here have I, in a short time, learned great and wondrous things. Compared to this seat, all the learning of the schools is as empty air. A little longer, and I shall know all that man can know, and shall come forth wiser than the wisest of mankind. Here I discern the signs and motions of the heavens and the stars; the laws that control the winds; the number of the sands on the seashore; the healing of the sick; the virtues of all simples, of birds, and of precious stones. Wert thou but once here, my friend, though wouldst feel and own the power of knowledge.

The student listened to all this and wondered much; at last he said, ‘Blessed be the day and hour when I found you; cannot you contrive to let me into the sack for a little while?’ Then the other answered, as if very unwillingly, ‘A little space I may allow thee to sit here, if thou wilt reward me well and entreat me kindly; but thou must tarry yet an hour below, till I have learnt some little matters that are yet unknown to me.’

So the student sat himself down and waited a while; but the time hung heavy upon him, and he begged earnestly that he might ascend forthwith, for his thirst for knowledge was great. Then the other pretended to give way, and said, ‘Thou must let the sack of wisdom descend, by untying yonder cord, and then thou shalt enter.’ So the student let him down, opened the sack, and set him free. ‘Now then,’ cried he, ‘let me ascend quickly.’ As he began to put himself into the sack heels first, ‘Wait a while,’ said the gardener, ‘that is not the way.’ Then he pushed him in head first, tied up the sack, and soon swung up the searcher after wisdom dangling in the air. ‘How is it with thee, friend?’ said he, ‘dost thou not feel that wisdom comes unto thee? Rest there in peace, till thou art a wiser man than thou wert.’

So saying, he trotted off on the student’s nag, and left the poor fellow to gather wisdom till somebody should come and let him down.

CLEVER HANS

The mother of Hans said: ‘Whither away, Hans?’ Hans answered: ‘To Gretel.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘Oh, I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans. What do you bring that is good?’ ‘I bring nothing, I want to have something given me.’ Gretel presents Hans with a needle, Hans says: ‘Goodbye, Gretel.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’

Hans takes the needle, sticks it into a hay-cart, and follows the cart home. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ ‘What did you take her?’ ‘Took nothing; had something given me.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘Gave me a needle.’ ‘Where is the needle, Hans?’ ‘Stuck in the hay-cart.’ ‘That was ill done, Hans. You should have stuck the needle in your sleeve.’ ‘Never mind, I’ll do better next time.’

‘Whither away, Hans?’ ‘To Gretel, mother.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘Oh, I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans. What do you bring that is good?’ ‘I bring nothing. I want to have something given to me.’ Gretel presents Hans with a knife. ‘Goodbye, Gretel.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans takes the knife, sticks it in his sleeve, and goes home. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ What did you take her?’ ‘Took her nothing, she gave me something.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘Gave me a knife.’ ‘Where is the knife, Hans?’ ‘Stuck in my sleeve.’ ‘That’s ill done, Hans, you should have put the knife in your pocket.’ ‘Never mind, will do better next time.’

‘Whither away, Hans?’ ‘To Gretel, mother.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘Oh, I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?’ ‘I bring nothing, I want something given me.’ Gretel presents Hans with a young goat. ‘Goodbye, Gretel.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans takes the goat, ties its legs, and puts it in his pocket. When he gets home it is suffocated. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ ‘What did you take her?’ ‘Took nothing, she gave me something.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘She gave me a goat.’ ‘Where is the goat, Hans?’ ‘Put it in my pocket.’ ‘That was ill done, Hans, you should have put a rope round the goat’s neck.’ ‘Never mind, will do better next time.’

‘Whither away, Hans?’ ‘To Gretel, mother.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘Oh, I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?’ ‘I bring nothing, I want something given me.’ Gretel presents Hans with a piece of bacon. ‘Goodbye, Gretel.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’

Hans takes the bacon, ties it to a rope, and drags it away behind him. The dogs come and devour the bacon. When he gets home, he has the rope in his hand, and there is no longer anything hanging on to it. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ ‘What did you take her?’ ‘I took her nothing, she gave me something.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘Gave me a bit of bacon.’ ‘Where is the bacon, Hans?’ ‘I tied it to a rope, brought it home, dogs took it.’ ‘That was ill done, Hans, you should have carried the bacon on your head.’ ‘Never mind, will do better next time.’

‘Whither away, Hans?’ ‘To Gretel, mother.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’ Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans, What good thing do you bring?’ ‘I bring nothing, but would have something given.’ Gretel presents Hans with a calf. ‘Goodbye, Gretel.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’

Hans takes the calf, puts it on his head, and the calf kicks his face. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ ‘What did you take her?’ ‘I took nothing, but had something given me.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘A calf.’ ‘Where have you the calf, Hans?’ ‘I set it on my head and it kicked my face.’ ‘That was ill done, Hans, you should have led the calf, and put it in the stall.’ ‘Never mind, will do better next time.’

‘Whither away, Hans?’ ‘To Gretel, mother.’ ‘Behave well, Hans.’ ‘I’ll behave well. Goodbye, mother.’ ‘Goodbye, Hans.’

Hans comes to Gretel. ‘Good day, Gretel.’ ‘Good day, Hans. What good thing do you bring?’ ‘I bring nothing, but would have something given.’ Gretel says to Hans: ‘I will go with you.’

Hans takes Gretel, ties her to a rope, leads her to the rack, and binds her fast. Then Hans goes to his mother. ‘Good evening, mother.’ ‘Good evening, Hans. Where have you been?’ ‘With Gretel.’ ‘What did you take her?’ ‘I took her nothing.’ ‘What did Gretel give you?’ ‘She gave me nothing, she came with me.’ ‘Where have you left Gretel?’ ‘I led her by the rope, tied her to the rack, and scattered some grass for her.’ ‘That was ill done, Hans, you should have cast friendly eyes on her.’ ‘Never mind, will do better.’

Hans went into the stable, cut out all the calves’ and sheep’s eyes, and threw them in Gretel’s face. Then Gretel became angry, tore herself loose and ran away, and was no longer the bride of Hans.

THE THREE LANGUAGES

An aged count once lived in Switzerland, who had an only son, but he was stupid, and could learn nothing. Then said the father: ‘Hark you, my son, try as I will I can get nothing into your head. You must go from hence, I will give you into the care of a celebrated master, who shall see what he can do with you.’ The youth was sent into a strange town, and remained a whole year with the master. At the end of this time, he came home again, and his father asked: ‘Now, my son, what have you learnt?’ ‘Father, I have learnt what the dogs say when they bark.’ ‘Lord have mercy on us!’ cried the father; ’is that all you have learnt? I will send you into another town, to another master.’ The youth was taken thither, and stayed a year with this master likewise. When he came back the father again asked: ‘My son, what have you learnt?’ He answered: ‘Father, I have learnt what the birds say.’ Then the father fell into a rage and said: ‘Oh, you lost man, you have spent the precious time and learnt nothing; are you not ashamed to appear before my eyes? I will send you to a third master, but if you learn nothing this time also, I will no longer be your father.’ The youth remained a whole year with the third master also, and when he came home again, and his father inquired: ‘My son, what have you learnt?’ he answered: ‘Dear father, I have this year learnt what the frogs croak.’ Then the father fell into the most furious anger, sprang up, called his people thither, and said: ‘This man is no longer my son, I drive him forth, and command you to take him out into the forest, and kill him.’ They took him forth, but when they should have killed him, they could not do it for pity, and let him go, and they cut the eyes and tongue out of a deer that they might carry them to the old man as a token.

The youth wandered on, and after some time came to a fortress where he begged for a night’s lodging. ‘Yes,’ said the lord of the castle, ‘if you will pass the night down there in the old tower, go thither; but I warn you, it is at the peril of your life, for it is full of wild dogs, which bark and howl without stopping, and at certain hours a man has to be given to them, whom they at once devour.’ The whole district was in sorrow and dismay because of them, and yet no one could do anything to stop this. The youth, however, was without fear, and said: ‘Just let me go down to the barking dogs, and give me something that I can throw to them; they will do nothing to harm me.’ As he himself would have it so, they gave him some food for the wild animals, and led him down to the tower. When he went inside, the dogs did not bark at him, but wagged their tails quite amicably around him, ate what he set before them, and did not hurt one hair of his head. Next morning, to the astonishment of everyone, he came out again safe and unharmed, and said to the lord of the castle: ‘The dogs have revealed to me, in their own language, why they dwell there, and bring evil on the land. They are bewitched, and are obliged to watch over a great treasure which is below in the tower, and they can have no rest until it is taken away, and I have likewise learnt, from their discourse, how that is to be done.’ Then all who heard this rejoiced, and the lord of the castle said he would adopt him as a son if he accomplished it successfully. He went down again, and as he knew what he had to do, he did it thoroughly, and brought a chest full of gold out with him. The howling of the wild dogs was henceforth heard no more; they had disappeared, and the country was freed from the trouble.

After some time he took it in his head that he would travel to Rome. On the way he passed by a marsh, in which a number of frogs were sitting croaking. He listened to them, and when he became aware of what they were saying, he grew very thoughtful and sad. At last he arrived in Rome, where the Pope had just died, and there was great doubt among the cardinals as to whom they should appoint as his successor. They at length agreed that the person should be chosen as pope who should be distinguished by some divine and miraculous token. And just as that was decided on, the young count entered into the church, and suddenly two snow-white doves flew on his shoulders and remained sitting there. The ecclesiastics recognized therein the token from above, and asked him on the spot if he would be pope. He was undecided, and knew not if he were worthy of this, but the doves counselled him to do it, and at length he said yes. Then was he anointed and consecrated, and thus was fulfilled what he had heard from the frogs on his way, which had so affected him, that he was to be his Holiness the Pope. Then he had to sing a mass, and did not know one word of it, but the two doves sat continually on his shoulders, and said it all in his ear.

THE FOX AND THE CAT

It happened that the cat met the fox in a forest, and as she thought to herself: ‘He is clever and full of experience, and much esteemed in the world,’ she spoke to him in a friendly way. ‘Good day, dear Mr Fox, how are you? How is all with you? How are you getting on in these hard times?’ The fox, full of all kinds of arrogance, looked at the cat from head to foot, and for a long time did not know whether he would give any answer or not. At last he said: ‘Oh, you wretched beard-cleaner, you piebald fool, you hungry mouse-hunter, what can you be thinking of? Have you the cheek to ask how I am getting on? What have you learnt? How many arts do you understand?’ ‘I understand but one,’ replied the cat, modestly. ‘What art is that?’ asked the fox. ‘When the hounds are following me, I can spring into a tree and save myself.’ ‘Is that all?’ said the fox. ‘I am master of a hundred arts, and have into the bargain a sackful of cunning. You make me sorry for you; come with me, I will teach you how people get away from the hounds.’ Just then came a hunter with four dogs. The cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and sat down at the top of it, where the branches and foliage quite concealed her. ‘Open your sack, Mr Fox, open your sack,’ cried the cat to him, but the dogs had already seized him, and were holding him fast. ‘Ah, Mr Fox,’ cried the cat. ‘You with your hundred arts are left in the lurch! Had you been able to climb like me, you would not have lost your life.’

THE FOUR CLEVER BROTHERS

‘Dear children,’ said a poor man to his four sons, ‘I have nothing to give you; you must go out into the wide world and try your luck. Begin by learning some craft or another, and see how you can get on.’ So the four brothers took their walking-sticks in their hands, and their little bundles on their shoulders, and after bidding their father goodbye, went all out at the gate together. When they had got on some way they came to four crossways, each leading to a different country. Then the eldest said, ‘Here we must part; but this day four years we will come back to this spot, and in the meantime each must try what he can do for himself.’

So each brother went his way; and as the eldest was hastening on a man met him, and asked him where he was going, and what he wanted. ‘I am going to try my luck in the world, and should like to begin by learning some art or trade,’ answered he. ‘Then,’ said the man, ‘go with me, and I will teach you to become the cunningest thief that ever was.’ ‘No,’ said the other, ‘that is not an honest calling, and what can one look to earn by it in the end but the gallows?’ ‘Oh!’ said the man, ‘you need not fear the gallows; for I will only teach you to steal what will be fair game: I meddle with nothing but what no one else can get or care anything about, and where no one can find you out.’ So the young man agreed to follow his trade, and he soon showed himself so clever, that nothing could escape him that he had once set his mind upon.

The second brother also met a man, who, when he found out what he was setting out upon, asked him what craft he meant to follow. ‘I do not know yet,’ said he. ‘Then come with me, and be a star-gazer. It is a noble art, for nothing can be hidden from you, when once you understand the stars.’ The plan pleased him much, and he soon became such a skilful star-gazer, that when he had served out his time, and wanted to leave his master, he gave him a glass, and said, ‘With this you can see all that is passing in the sky and on earth, and nothing can be hidden from you.’

The third brother met a huntsman, who took him with him, and taught him so well all that belonged to hunting, that he became very clever in the craft of the woods; and when he left his master he gave him a bow, and said, ‘Whatever you shoot at with this bow you will be sure to hit.’

The youngest brother likewise met a man who asked him what he wished to do. ‘Would not you like,’ said he, ‘to be a tailor?’ ‘Oh, no!’ said the young man; ‘sitting cross-legged from morning to night, working backwards and forwards with a needle and goose, will never suit me.’ ‘Oh!’ answered the man, ‘that is not my sort of tailoring; come with me, and you will learn quite another kind of craft from that.’ Not knowing what better to do, he came into the plan, and learnt tailoring from the beginning; and when he left his master, he gave him a needle, and said, ‘You can sew anything with this, be it as soft as an egg or as hard as steel; and the joint will be so fine that no seam will be seen.’

After the space of four years, at the time agreed upon, the four brothers met at the four cross-roads; and having welcomed each other, set off towards their father's home, where they told him all that had happened to them, and how each had learned some craft.

Then, one day, as they were sitting before the house under a very high tree, the father said, 'I should like to try what each of you can do in this way.' So he looked up, and said to the second son, 'At the top of this tree there is a chaffinch's nest; tell me how many eggs there are in it.' The star-gazer took his glass, looked up, and said, 'Five.' 'Now,' said the father to the eldest son, 'take away the eggs without letting the bird that is sitting upon them and hatching them know anything of what you are doing.' So the cunning thief climbed up the tree, and brought away to his father the five eggs from under the bird; and it never saw or felt what he was doing, but kept sitting on at its ease. Then the father took the eggs, and put one on each corner of the table, and the fifth in the middle, and said to the huntsman, 'Cut all the eggs in two pieces at one shot.' The huntsman took up his bow, and at one shot struck all the five eggs as his father wished.

'Now comes your turn,' said he to the young tailor; 'sew the eggs and the young birds in them together again, so neatly that the shot shall have done them no harm.' Then the tailor took his needle, and sewed the eggs as he was told; and when he had done, the thief was sent to take them back to the nest, and put them under the bird without its knowing it. Then she went on sitting, and hatched them: and in a few days they crawled out, and had only a little red streak across their necks, where the tailor had sewn them together.

'Well done, sons!' said the old man; 'you have made good use of your time, and learnt something worth the knowing; but I am sure I do not know which ought to have the prize. Oh, that a time might soon come for you to turn your skill to some account!'

Not long after this there was a great bustle in the country; for the king's daughter had been carried off by a mighty dragon, and the king mourned over his loss day and night, and made it known that whoever brought her back to him should have her for a wife. Then the four brothers said to each other, 'Here is a chance for us; let us try what we can do.' And they agreed to see whether they could not set the princess free. 'I will soon find out where she is, however,' said the star-gazer, as he looked through his glass; and he soon cried out, 'I see her afar off, sitting upon a rock in the sea, and I can spy the dragon close by, guarding her.' Then he went to the king, and asked for a ship for himself and his brothers; and they sailed together over the sea, till they came to the right place. There they found the princess sitting, as the star-gazer had said, on the rock; and the dragon was lying asleep, with his head upon her lap. 'I dare not shoot at him,' said the huntsman, 'for I should kill the beautiful young lady also.' 'Then I will try my skill,' said the thief, and went and stole her away from under the dragon, so quietly and gently that the beast did not know it, but went on snoring.

Then away they hastened with her full of joy in their boat towards the ship; but soon came the dragon roaring behind them through the air; for he awoke and missed the princess. But when he got over the boat, and wanted to pounce upon them and carry off the princess, the huntsman took up his bow and shot him straight through the heart so that he fell down dead. They were still not safe; for he was such a great beast that in his fall he overset the boat, and they had to swim in the open sea upon a few planks. So the tailor took his needle, and with a few large stitches put some of the planks together; and he sat down upon these, and sailed about and gathered up all pieces of the boat; and then tacked them together so quickly that the boat was soon ready, and they then reached the ship and got home safe.

When they had brought home the princess to her father, there was great rejoicing; and he said to the four brothers, ‘One of you shall marry her, but you must settle amongst yourselves which it is to be.’ Then there arose a quarrel between them; and the star-gazer said, ‘If I had not found the princess out, all your skill would have been of no use; therefore she ought to be mine.’ ‘Your seeing her would have been of no use,’ said the thief, ‘if I had not taken her away from the dragon; therefore she ought to be mine.’ ‘No, she is mine,’ said the huntsman; ‘for if I had not killed the dragon, he would, after all, have torn you and the princess into pieces.’ ‘And if I had not sewn the boat together again,’ said the tailor, ‘you would all have been drowned, therefore she is mine.’ Then the king put in a word, and said, ‘Each of you is right; and as all cannot have the young lady, the best way is for neither of you to have her: for the truth is, there is somebody she likes a great deal better. But to make up for your loss, I will give each of you, as a reward for his skill, half a kingdom.’ So the brothers agreed that this plan would be much better than either quarrelling or marrying a lady who had no mind to have them. And the king then gave to each half a kingdom, as he had said; and they lived very happily the rest of their days, and took good care of their father; and somebody took better care of the young lady, than to let either the dragon or one of the craftsmen have her again.

LILY AND THE LION

A merchant, who had three daughters, was once setting out upon a journey; but before he went he asked each daughter what gift he should bring back for her. The eldest wished for pearls; the second for jewels; but the third, who was called Lily, said, ‘Dear father, bring me a rose.’ Now it was no easy task to find a rose, for it was the middle of winter; yet as she was his prettiest daughter, and was very fond of flowers, her father said he would try what he could do. So he kissed all three, and bid them goodbye.

And when the time came for him to go home, he had bought pearls and jewels for the two eldest, but he had sought everywhere in vain for the rose; and when he went into any garden and asked for such a thing, the people laughed at him, and asked him whether he thought roses grew in snow. This grieved him very much, for Lily was his dearest child; and as he was journeying home, thinking what he should bring her, he came to a fine castle; and around the castle was a garden, in one half of which it seemed to be summer-time and in the other half winter. On one side the finest flowers were in full bloom, and on the other everything looked dreary and buried in the snow. ‘A lucky hit!’ said he, as he called to his servant, and told him to go to a beautiful bed of roses that was there, and bring him away one of the finest flowers.

This done, they were riding away well pleased, when up sprang a fierce lion, and roared out, ‘Whoever has stolen my roses shall be eaten up alive!’ Then the man said, ‘I knew not that the garden belonged to you; can nothing save my life?’ ‘No!’ said the lion, ‘nothing, unless you undertake to give me whatever meets you on your return home; if you agree to this, I will give you your life, and the rose too for your daughter.’ But the man was unwilling to do so and said, ‘It may be my youngest daughter, who loves me most, and always runs to meet me when I go home.’ Then the servant was greatly frightened, and said, ‘It may perhaps be only a cat or a dog.’ And at last the man yielded with a heavy heart, and took the rose; and said he would give the lion whatever should meet him first on his return.

And as he came near home, it was Lily, his youngest and dearest daughter, that met him; she came running, and kissed him, and welcomed him home; and when she saw that he had brought her the rose, she was still more glad. But her father began to be very sorrowful, and to weep, saying, ‘Alas, my dearest child! I have bought this flower at a high price, for I have said I would give you to a wild lion; and when he has you, he will tear you in pieces, and eat you.’ Then he told her all that had happened, and said she should not go, let what would happen.

But she comforted him, and said, ‘Dear father, the word you have given must be kept; I will go to the lion, and soothe him: perhaps he will let me come safe home again.’

The next morning she asked the way she was to go, and took leave of her father, and went forth with a bold heart into the wood. But the lion was an enchanted prince. By day he and all his court were lions, but in the evening they took their right forms again. And when Lily came to the castle, he welcomed her so courteously that she agreed to marry him. The wedding-feast was held, and they lived happily together a long time. The prince was only to be seen as soon as evening came, and then he held his court; but every morning he left his bride, and went away by himself, she knew not whither, till the night came again.

After some time he said to her, ‘Tomorrow there will be a great feast in your father’s house, for your eldest sister is to be married; and if you wish to go and visit her my lions shall lead you thither.’ Then she rejoiced much at the thoughts of seeing her father once more, and set out with the lions; and everyone was overjoyed to see her, for they had thought her dead long since. But she told them how happy she was, and stayed till the feast was over, and then went back to the wood.

Her second sister was soon after married, and when Lily was asked to go to the wedding, she said to the prince, ‘I will not go alone this time — you must go with me.’ But he would not, and said that it would be a very hazardous thing; for if the least ray of the torch-light should fall upon him his enchantment would become still worse, for he should be changed into a dove, and be forced to wander about the world for seven long years. However, she gave him no rest, and said she would take care no light should fall upon him. So at last they set out together, and took with them their little child; and she chose a large hall with thick walls for him to sit in while the wedding-torches were lighted; but, unluckily, no one saw that there was a crack in the door. Then the wedding was held with great pomp, but as the train came from the church, and passed with the torches before the hall, a very small ray of light fell upon the prince. In a moment he disappeared, and when his wife came in and looked for him, she found only a white dove; and it said to her, ‘Seven years must I fly up and down over the face of the earth, but every now and then I will let fall a white feather, that will show you the way I am going; follow it, and at last you may overtake and set me free.’

This said, he flew out at the door, and poor Lily followed; and every now and then a white feather fell, and showed her the way she was to journey. Thus she went roving on through the wide world, and looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor took any rest, for seven years. Then she began to be glad, and thought to herself that the time was fast coming when all her troubles should end; yet repose was still far off, for one day as she was travelling on she missed the white feather, and when she lifted up her eyes she could nowhere see the dove. ‘Now,’ thought she to herself, ‘no aid of man can be of use to me.’ So she went to the sun and said, ‘Thou shinest everywhere, on the hill’s top and the valley’s depth — hast thou anywhere seen my white dove?’ ‘No,’ said the sun, ‘I have not seen it; but I will give thee a casket — open it when thy hour of need comes.’

So she thanked the sun, and went on her way till eventide; and when the moon arose, she cried unto it, and said, ‘Thou shinest through the night, over field and grove — hast thou nowhere seen my white dove?’ ‘No,’ said the moon, ‘I cannot help thee but I will give thee an egg — break it when need comes.’

Then she thanked the moon, and went on till the night-wind blew; and she raised up her voice to it, and said, ‘Thou blowest through every tree and under every leaf — hast thou not seen my white dove?’ ‘No,’ said the night-wind, ‘but I will ask three other winds; perhaps they have seen it.’ Then the east wind and the west wind came, and said they too had not seen it, but the south wind said, ‘I have seen the white dove — he has fled to the Red Sea, and is changed once more into a lion, for the seven years are passed away, and there he is fighting with a dragon; and the dragon is an enchanted princess, who seeks to separate him from you.’ Then the night-wind said, ‘I will give thee counsel. Go to the Red Sea; on the right shore stand many rods — count them, and when thou comest to the eleventh, break it off, and smite the dragon with it; and so the lion will have the victory, and both of them will appear to you in their own forms. Then look round and thou wilt see a griffin, winged like bird, sitting by the Red Sea; jump on to his back with thy beloved one as quickly as possible, and he will carry you over the waters to your home. I will also give thee this nut,’ continued the night-wind. ‘When you are half-way over, throw it down, and out of the waters will immediately spring up a high nut-tree on which the griffin will be able to rest, otherwise he would not have the strength to bear you the whole way; if, therefore, thou dost forget to throw down the nut, he will let you both fall into the sea.’

So our poor wanderer went forth, and found all as the night-wind had said; and she plucked the eleventh rod, and smote the dragon, and the lion forthwith became a prince, and the dragon a princess again. But no sooner was the princess released from the spell, than she seized the prince by the arm and sprang on to the griffin’s back, and went off carrying the prince away with her.

Thus the unhappy traveller was again forsaken and forlorn; but she took heart and said, ‘As far as the wind blows, and so long as the cock crows, I will journey on, till I find him once again.’ She went on for a long, long way, till at length she came to the castle whither the princess had carried the prince; and there was a feast got ready, and she heard that the wedding was about to be held. ‘Heaven aid me now!’ said she; and she took the casket that the sun had given her, and found that within it lay a dress as dazzling as the sun itself. So she put it on, and went into the palace, and all the people gazed upon her; and the dress pleased the bride so much that she asked whether it was to be sold. ‘Not for gold and silver.’ said she, ‘but for flesh and blood.’ The princess asked what she meant, and she said, ‘Let me speak with the bridegroom this night in his chamber, and I will give thee the dress.’ At last the princess agreed, but she told her chamberlain to give the prince a sleeping draught, that he might not hear or see her. When evening came, and the prince had fallen asleep, she was led into his chamber, and she sat herself down at his feet, and said: ‘I have followed thee seven years. I have been to the sun, the moon, and the night-wind, to seek thee, and at last I have helped thee to overcome the dragon. Wilt thou then forget me quite?' But the prince all the time slept so soundly, that her voice only passed over him, and seemed like the whistling of the wind among the fir-trees.

Then poor Lily was led away, and forced to give up the golden dress; and when she saw that there was no help for her, she went out into a meadow, and sat herself down and wept. But as she sat she bethought herself of the egg that the moon had given her; and when she broke it, there ran out a hen and twelve chickens of pure gold, that played about, and then nestled under the old one's wings, so as to form the most beautiful sight in the world. And she rose up and drove them before her, till the bride saw them from her window, and was so pleased that she came forth and asked her if she would sell the brood. 'Not for gold or silver, but for flesh and blood: let me again this evening speak with the bridegroom in his chamber, and I will give thee the whole brood.'

Then the princess thought to betray her as before, and agreed to what she asked: but when the prince went to his chamber he asked the chamberlain why the wind had whistled so in the night. And the chamberlain told him all — how he had given him a sleeping draught, and how a poor maiden had come and spoken to him in his chamber, and was to come again that night. Then the prince took care to throw away the sleeping draught; and when Lily came and began again to tell him what woes had befallen her, and how faithful and true to him she had been, he knew his beloved wife's voice, and sprang up, and said, 'You have awakened me as from a dream, for the strange princess had thrown a spell around me, so that I had altogether forgotten you; but Heaven hath sent you to me in a lucky hour.'

And they stole away out of the palace by night unawares, and seated themselves on the griffin, who flew back with them over the Red Sea. When they were half-way across Lily let the nut fall into the water, and immediately a large nut-tree arose from the sea, whereon the griffin rested for a while, and then carried them safely home. There they found their child, now grown up to be comely and fair; and after all their troubles they lived happily together to the end of their days.

THE FOX AND THE HORSE

A farmer had a horse that had been an excellent faithful servant to him: but he was now grown too old to work; so the farmer would give him nothing more to eat, and said, ‘I want you no longer, so take yourself off out of my stable; I shall not take you back again until you are stronger than a lion.’ Then he opened the door and turned him adrift.

The poor horse was very melancholy, and wandered up and down in the wood, seeking some little shelter from the cold wind and rain. Presently a fox met him: ‘What’s the matter, my friend?’ said he, ‘why do you hang down your head and look so lonely and woe-begone?’ ‘Ah!’ replied the horse, ‘justice and avarice never dwell in one house; my master has forgotten all that I have done for him so many years, and because I can no longer work he has turned me adrift, and says unless I become stronger than a lion he will not take me back again; what chance can I have of that? he knows I have none, or he would not talk so.’

However, the fox bid him be of good cheer, and said, ‘I will help you; lie down there, stretch yourself out quite stiff, and pretend to be dead.’ The horse did as he was told, and the fox went straight to the lion who lived in a cave close by, and said to him, ‘A little way off lies a dead horse; come with me and you may make an excellent meal of his carcase.’ The lion was greatly pleased, and set off immediately; and when they came to the horse, the fox said, ‘You will not be able to eat him comfortably here; I’ll tell you what — I will tie you fast to his tail, and then you can draw him to your den, and eat him at your leisure.’

This advice pleased the lion, so he laid himself down quietly for the fox to make him fast to the horse. But the fox managed to tie his legs together and bound all so hard and fast that with all his strength he could not set himself free. When the work was done, the fox clapped the horse on the shoulder, and said, ‘Jip! Dobbin! Jip!’ Then up he sprang, and moved off, dragging the lion behind him. The beast began to roar and bellow, till all the birds of the wood flew away for fright; but the horse let him sing on, and made his way quietly over the fields to his master’s house.

‘Here he is, master,’ said he, ‘I have got the better of him’: and when the farmer saw his old servant, his heart relented, and he said. ‘Thou shalt stay in thy stable and be well taken care of.’ And so the poor old horse had plenty to eat, and lived — till he died.

THE BLUE LIGHT

There was once upon a time a soldier who for many years had served the king faithfully, but when the war came to an end could serve no longer because of the many wounds which he had received. The king said to him: ‘You may return to your home, I need you no longer, and you will not receive any more money, for he only receives wages who renders me service for them.’ Then the soldier did not know how to earn a living, went away greatly troubled, and walked the whole day, until in the evening he entered a forest. When darkness came on, he saw a light, which he went up to, and came to a house wherein lived a witch. ‘Do give me one night’s lodging, and a little to eat and drink,’ said he to her, ‘or I shall starve.’ ‘Oho!’ she answered, ‘who gives anything to a run-away soldier? Yet will I be compassionate, and take you in, if you will do what I wish.’ ‘What do you wish?’ said the soldier. ‘That you should dig all round my garden for me, tomorrow.’ The soldier consented, and next day laboured with all his strength, but could not finish it by the evening. ‘I see well enough,’ said the witch, ‘that you can do no more today, but I will keep you yet another night, in payment for which you must tomorrow chop me a load of wood, and chop it small.’ The soldier spent the whole day in doing it, and in the evening the witch proposed that he should stay one night more. ‘Tomorrow, you shall only do me a very trifling piece of work. Behind my house, there is an old dry well, into which my light has fallen, it burns blue, and never goes out, and you shall bring it up again.’ Next day the old woman took him to the well, and let him down in a basket. He found the blue light, and made her a signal to draw him up again. She did draw him up, but when he came near the edge, she stretched down her hand and wanted to take the blue light away from him. ‘No,’ said he, perceiving her evil intention, ‘I will not give you the light until I am standing with both feet upon the ground.’ The witch fell into a passion, let him fall again into the well, and went away.

The poor soldier fell without injury on the moist ground, and the blue light went on burning, but of what use was that to him? He saw very well that he could not escape death. He sat for a while very sorrowfully, then suddenly he felt in his pocket and found his tobacco pipe, which was still half full. ‘This shall be my last pleasure,’ thought he, pulled it out, lit it at the blue light and began to smoke. When the smoke had circled about the cavern, suddenly a little black dwarf stood before him, and said: ‘Lord, what are your commands?’ ‘What my commands are?’ replied the soldier, quite astonished. ‘I must do everything you bid me,’ said the little man. ‘Good,’ said the soldier; ‘then in the first place help me out of this well.’ The little man took him by the hand, and led him through an underground passage, but he did not forget to take the blue light with him. On the way the dwarf showed him the treasures which the witch had collected and hidden there, and the soldier took as much gold as he could carry. When he was above, he said to the little man: ‘Now go and bind the old witch, and carry her before the judge.’ In a short time she came by like the wind, riding on a wild tom-cat and screaming frightfully. Nor was it long before the little man reappeared. ‘It is all done,’ said he, ‘and the witch is already hanging on the gallows. What further commands has my lord?’ inquired the dwarf. ‘At this moment, none,’ answered the soldier; ‘you can return home, only be at hand immediately, if I summon you.’ ‘Nothing more is needed than that you should light your pipe at the blue light, and I will appear before you at once.’ Thereupon he vanished from his sight.

The soldier returned to the town from which he came. He went to the best inn, ordered himself handsome clothes, and then bade the landlord furnish him a room as handsome as possible. When it was ready and the soldier had taken possession of it, he summoned the little black manikin and said: ‘I have served the king faithfully, but he has dismissed me, and left me to hunger, and now I want to take my revenge.’ ‘What am I to do?’ asked the little man. ‘Late at night, when the king’s daughter is in bed, bring her here in her sleep, she shall do servant’s work for me.’ The manikin said: ‘That is an easy thing for me to do, but a very dangerous thing for you, for if it is discovered, you will fare ill.’ When twelve o’clock had struck, the door sprang open, and the manikin carried in the princess. ‘Aha! are you there?’ cried the soldier, ‘get to your work at once! Fetch the broom and sweep the chamber.’ When she had done this, he ordered her to come to his chair, and then he stretched out his feet and said: ‘Pull off my boots,’ and then he threw them in her face, and made her pick them up again, and clean and brighten them. She, however, did everything he bade her, without opposition, silently and with half-shut eyes. When the first cock crowed, the manikin carried her back to the royal palace, and laid her in her bed.

Next morning when the princess arose she went to her father, and told him that she had had a very strange dream. ‘I was carried through the streets with the rapidity of lightning,’ said she, ‘and taken into a soldier’s room, and I had to wait upon him like a servant, sweep his room, clean his boots, and do all kinds of menial work. It was only a dream, and yet I am just as tired as if I really had done everything.’ ‘The dream may have been true,’ said the king. ‘I will give you a piece of advice. Fill your pocket full of peas, and make a small hole in the pocket, and then if you are carried away again, they will fall out and leave a track in the streets.’ But unseen by the king, the manikin was standing beside him when he said that, and heard all. At night when the sleeping princess was again carried through the streets, some peas certainly did fall out of her pocket, but they made no track, for the crafty manikin had just before scattered peas in every street there was. And again the princess was compelled to do servant’s work until cock-crow.

Next morning the king sent his people out to seek the track, but it was all in vain, for in every street poor children were sitting, picking up peas, and saying: ‘It must have rained peas, last night.’ ‘We must think of something else,’ said the king; ‘keep your shoes on when you go to bed, and before you come back from the place where you are taken, hide one of them there, I will soon contrive to find it.’ The black manikin heard this plot, and at night when the soldier again ordered him to bring the princess, revealed it to him, and told him that he knew of no expedient to counteract this stratagem, and that if the shoe were found in the soldier's house it would go badly with him. 'Do what I bid you,' replied the soldier, and again this third night the princess was obliged to work like a servant, but before she went away, she hid her shoe under the bed.

Next morning the king had the entire town searched for his daughter's shoe. It was found at the soldier's, and the soldier himself, who at the entreaty of the dwarf had gone outside the gate, was soon brought back, and thrown into prison. In his flight he had forgotten the most valuable things he had, the blue light and the gold, and had only one ducat in his pocket. And now loaded with chains, he was standing at the window of his dungeon, when he chanced to see one of his comrades passing by. The soldier tapped at the pane of glass, and when this man came up, said to him: 'Be so kind as to fetch me the small bundle I have left lying in the inn, and I will give you a ducat for doing it.' His comrade ran thither and brought him what he wanted. As soon as the soldier was alone again, he lighted his pipe and summoned the black manikin. 'Have no fear,' said the latter to his master. 'Go wheresoever they take you, and let them do what they will, only take the blue light with you.' Next day the soldier was tried, and though he had done nothing wicked, the judge condemned him to death. When he was led forth to die, he begged a last favour of the king. 'What is it?' asked the king. 'That I may smoke one more pipe on my way.' 'You may smoke three,' answered the king, 'but do not imagine that I will spare your life.' Then the soldier pulled out his pipe and lighted it at the blue light, and as soon as a few wreaths of smoke had ascended, the manikin was there with a small cudgel in his hand, and said: 'What does my lord command?' 'Strike down to earth that false judge there, and his constable, and spare not the king who has treated me so ill.' Then the manikin fell on them like lightning, darting this way and that way, and whosoever was so much as touched by his cudgel fell to earth, and did not venture to stir again. The king was terrified; he threw himself on the soldier's mercy, and merely to be allowed to live at all, gave him his kingdom for his own, and his daughter to wife.

THE RAVEN

There was once a queen who had a little daughter, still too young to run alone. One day the child was very troublesome, and the mother could not quiet it, do what she would. She grew impatient, and seeing the ravens flying round the castle, she opened the window, and said: ‘I wish you were a raven and would fly away, then I should have a little peace.’ Scarcely were the words out of her mouth, when the child in her arms was turned into a raven, and flew away from her through the open window. The bird took its flight to a dark wood and remained there for a long time, and meanwhile the parents could hear nothing of their child.

Long after this, a man was making his way through the wood when he heard a raven calling, and he followed the sound of the voice. As he drew near, the raven said, ‘I am by birth a king’s daughter, but am now under the spell of some enchantment; you can, however, set me free.’ ‘What am I to do?’ he asked. She replied, ‘Go farther into the wood until you come to a house, wherein lives an old woman; she will offer you food and drink, but you must not take of either; if you do, you will fall into a deep sleep, and will not be able to help me. In the garden behind the house is a large tan-heap, and on that you must stand and watch for me. I shall drive there in my carriage at two o’clock in the afternoon for three successive days; the first day it will be drawn by four white, the second by four chestnut, and the last by four black horses; but if you fail to keep awake and I find you sleeping, I shall not be set free.’

The man promised to do all that she wished, but the raven said, ‘Alas! I know even now that you will take something from the woman and be unable to save me.’ The man assured her again that he would on no account touch a thing to eat or drink.

When he came to the house and went inside, the old woman met him, and said, ‘Poor man! how tired you are! Come in and rest and let me give you something to eat and drink.’

‘No,’ answered the man, ‘I will neither eat not drink.’

But she would not leave him alone, and urged him saying, ‘If you will not eat anything, at least you might take a draught of wine; one drink counts for nothing,’ and at last he allowed himself to be persuaded, and drank.

As it drew towards the appointed hour, he went outside into the garden and mounted the tan-heap to await the raven. Suddenly a feeling of fatigue came over him, and unable to resist it, he lay down for a little while, fully determined, however, to keep awake; but in another minute his eyes closed of their own accord, and he fell into such a deep sleep, that all the noises in the world would not have awakened him. At two o’clock the raven came driving along, drawn by her four white horses; but even before she reached the spot, she said to herself, sighing, ‘I know he has fallen asleep.’ When she entered the garden, there she found him as she had feared, lying on the tan-heap, fast asleep. She got out of her carriage and went to him; she called him and shook him, but it was all in vain, he still continued sleeping.

The next day at noon, the old woman came to him again with food and drink which he at first refused. At last, overcome by her persistent entreaties that he would take something, he lifted the glass and drank again.

Towards two o'clock he went into the garden and on to the tan-heap to watch for the raven. He had not been there long before he began to feel so tired that his limbs seemed hardly able to support him, and he could not stand upright any longer; so again he lay down and fell fast asleep. As the raven drove along her four chestnut horses, she said sorrowfully to herself, 'I know he has fallen asleep.' She went as before to look for him, but he slept, and it was impossible to awaken him.

The following day the old woman said to him, 'What is this? You are not eating or drinking anything, do you want to kill yourself?'

He answered, 'I may not and will not either eat or drink.'

But she put down the dish of food and the glass of wine in front of him, and when he smelt the wine, he was unable to resist the temptation, and took a deep draught.

When the hour came round again he went as usual on to the tan-heap in the garden to await the king's daughter, but he felt even more overcome with weariness than on the two previous days, and throwing himself down, he slept like a log. At two o'clock the raven could be seen approaching, and this time her coachman and everything about her, as well as her horses, were black.

She was sadder than ever as she drove along, and said mournfully, 'I know he has fallen asleep, and will not be able to set me free.' She found him sleeping heavily, and all her efforts to awaken him were of no avail. Then she placed beside him a loaf, and some meat, and a flask of wine, of such a kind, that however much he took of them, they would never grow less. After that she drew a gold ring, on which her name was engraved, off her finger, and put it upon one of his. Finally, she laid a letter near him, in which, after giving him particulars of the food and drink she had left for him, she finished with the following words: 'I see that as long as you remain here you will never be able to set me free; if, however, you still wish to do so, come to the golden castle of Stromberg; this is well within your power to accomplish.' She then returned to her carriage and drove to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man awoke and found that he had been sleeping, he was grieved at heart, and said, 'She has no doubt been here and driven away again, and it is now too late for me to save her.' Then his eyes fell on the things which were lying beside him; he read the letter, and knew from it all that had happened. He rose up without delay, eager to start on his way and to reach the castle of Stromberg, but he had no idea in which direction he ought to go. He travelled about a long time in search of it and came at last to a dark forest, through which he went on walking for fourteen days and still could not find a way out. Once more the night came on, and worn out he lay down under a bush and fell asleep. Again the next day he pursued his way through the forest, and that evening, thinking to rest again, he lay down as before, but he heard such a howling and wailing that he found it impossible to sleep. He waited till it was darker and people had begun to light up their houses, and then seeing a little glimmer ahead of him, he went towards it.

He found that the light came from a house which looked smaller than it really was, from the contrast of its height with that of an immense giant who stood in front of it. He thought to himself, ‘If the giant sees me going in, my life will not be worth much.’ However, after a while he summoned up courage and went forward. When the giant saw him, he called out, ‘It is lucky for that you have come, for I have not had anything to eat for a long time. I can have you now for my supper.’ ‘I would rather you let that alone,’ said the man, ‘for I do not willingly give myself up to be eaten; if you are wanting food I have enough to satisfy your hunger.’ ‘If that is so,’ replied the giant, ‘I will leave you in peace; I only thought of eating you because I had nothing else.’

So they went indoors together and sat down, and the man brought out the bread, meat, and wine, which although he had eaten and drunk of them, were still unconsumed. The giant was pleased with the good cheer, and ate and drank to his heart’s content. When he had finished his supper the man asked him if he could direct him to the castle of Stromberg. The giant said, ‘I will look on my map; on it are marked all the towns, villages, and houses.’ So he fetched his map, and looked for the castle, but could not find it. ‘Never mind,’ he said, ‘I have larger maps upstairs in the cupboard, we will look on those,’ but they searched in vain, for the castle was not marked even on these. The man now thought he should like to continue his journey, but the giant begged him to remain for a day or two longer until the return of his brother, who was away in search of provisions. When the brother came home, they asked him about the castle of Stromberg, and he told them he would look on his own maps as soon as he had eaten and appeased his hunger. Accordingly, when he had finished his supper, they all went up together to his room and looked through his maps, but the castle was not to be found. Then he fetched other older maps, and they went on looking for the castle until at last they found it, but it was many thousand miles away. ‘How shall I be able to get there?’ asked the man. ‘I have two hours to spare,’ said the giant, ‘and I will carry you into the neighbourhood of the castle; I must then return to look after the child who is in our care.’

The giant, thereupon, carried the man to within about a hundred leagues of the castle, where he left him, saying, ‘You will be able to walk the remainder of the way yourself.’ The man journeyed on day and night till he reached the golden castle of Stromberg. He found it situated, however, on a glass mountain, and looking up from the foot he saw the enchanted maiden drive round her castle and then go inside. He was overjoyed to see her, and longed to get to the top of the mountain, but the sides were so slippery that every time he attempted to climb he fell back again. When he saw that it was impossible to reach her, he was greatly grieved, and said to himself, ‘I will remain here and wait for her,’ so he built himself a little hut, and there he sat and watched for a whole year, and every day he saw the king’s daughter driving round her castle, but still was unable to get nearer to her.

Looking out from his hut one day he saw three robbers fighting and he called out to them, ‘God be with you.’ They stopped when they heard the call, but looking round and seeing nobody, they went on again with their fighting, which now became more furious. ‘God be with you,’ he cried again, and again they paused and looked about, but seeing no one went back to their fighting. A third time he called out, ‘God be with you,’ and then thinking he should like to know the cause of dispute between the three men, he went out and asked them why they were fighting so angrily with one another. One of them said that he had found a stick, and that he had but to strike it against any door through which he wished to pass, and it immediately flew open. Another told him that he had found a cloak which rendered its wearer invisible; and the third had caught a horse which would carry its rider over any obstacle, and even up the glass mountain. They had been unable to decide whether they would keep together and have the things in common, or whether they would separate. On hearing this, the man said, ‘I will give you something in exchange for those three things; not money, for that I have not got, but something that is of far more value. I must first, however, prove whether all you have told me about your three things is true.’ The robbers, therefore, made him get on the horse, and handed him the stick and the cloak, and when he had put this round him he was no longer visible. Then he fell upon them with the stick and beat them one after another, crying, ‘There, you idle vagabonds, you have got what you deserve; are you satisfied now!’

After this he rode up the glass mountain. When he reached the gate of the castle, he found it closed, but he gave it a blow with his stick, and it flew wide open at once and he passed through. He mounted the steps and entered the room where the maiden was sitting, with a golden goblet full of wine in front of her. She could not see him for he still wore his cloak. He took the ring which she had given him off his finger, and threw it into the goblet, so that it rang as it touched the bottom. ‘That is my own ring,’ she exclaimed, ‘and if that is so the man must also be here who is coming to set me free.’

She sought for him about the castle, but could find him nowhere. Meanwhile he had gone outside again and mounted his horse and thrown off the cloak. When therefore she came to the castle gate she saw him, and cried aloud for joy. Then he dismounted and took her in his arms; and she kissed him, and said, ‘Now you have indeed set me free, and tomorrow we will celebrate our marriage.’

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

There was a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was called Dummling,[*] and was despised, mocked, and sneered at on every occasion.

It happened that the eldest wanted to go into the forest to hew wood, and before he went his mother gave him a beautiful sweet cake and a bottle of wine in order that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst.

When he entered the forest he met a little grey-haired old man who bade him good day, and said: ‘Do give me a piece of cake out of your pocket, and let me have a draught of your wine; I am so hungry and thirsty.’ But the clever son answered: ‘If I give you my cake and wine, I shall have none for myself; be off with you,’ and he left the little man standing and went on.

But when he began to hew down a tree, it was not long before he made a false stroke, and the axe cut him in the arm, so that he had to go home and have it bound up. And this was the little grey man’s doing.

After this the second son went into the forest, and his mother gave him, like the eldest, a cake and a bottle of wine. The little old grey man met him likewise, and asked him for a piece of cake and a drink of wine. But the second son, too, said sensibly enough: ‘What I give you will be taken away from myself; be off!’ and he left the little man standing and went on. His punishment, however, was not delayed; when he had made a few blows at the tree he struck himself in the leg, so that he had to be carried home.

Then Dummling said: ‘Father, do let me go and cut wood.’ The father answered: ‘Your brothers have hurt themselves with it, leave it alone, you do not understand anything about it.’ But Dummling begged so long that at last he said: ‘Just go then, you will get wiser by hurting yourself.’ His mother gave him a cake made with water and baked in the cinders, and with it a bottle of sour beer.

When he came to the forest the little old grey man met him likewise, and greeting him, said: ‘Give me a piece of your cake and a drink out of your bottle; I am so hungry and thirsty.’ Dummling answered: ‘I have only cinder-cake and sour beer; if that pleases you, we will sit down and eat.’ So they sat down, and when Dummling pulled out his cinder-cake, it was a fine sweet cake, and the sour beer had become good wine. So they ate and drank, and after that the little man said: ‘Since you have a good heart, and are willing to divide what you have, I will give you good luck. There stands an old tree, cut it down, and you will find something at the roots.’ Then the little man took leave of him.

Dummling went and cut down the tree, and when it fell there was a goose sitting in the roots with feathers of pure gold. He lifted her up, and taking her with him, went to an inn where he thought he would stay the night. Now the host had three daughters, who saw the goose and were curious to know what such a wonderful bird might be, and would have liked to have one of its golden feathers.

The eldest thought: ‘I shall soon find an opportunity of pulling out a feather,’ and as soon as Dummling had gone out she seized the goose by the wing, but her finger and hand remained sticking fast to it.

The second came soon afterwards, thinking only of how she might get a feather for herself, but she had scarcely touched her sister than she was held fast.

At last the third also came with the like intent, and the others screamed out: ‘Keep away; for goodness’ sake keep away!’ But she did not understand why she was to keep away. ‘The others are there,’ she thought, ‘I may as well be there too,’ and ran to them; but as soon as she had touched her sister, she remained sticking fast to her. So they had to spend the night with the goose.

The next morning Dummling took the goose under his arm and set out, without troubling himself about the three girls who were hanging on to it. They were obliged to run after him continually, now left, now right, wherever his legs took him.

In the middle of the fields the parson met them, and when he saw the procession he said: ‘For shame, you good-for-nothing girls, why are you running across the fields after this young man? Is that seemly?’ At the same time he seized the youngest by the hand in order to pull her away, but as soon as he touched her he likewise stuck fast, and was himself obliged to run behind.

Before long the sexton came by and saw his master, the parson, running behind three girls. He was astonished at this and called out: ‘Hi! your reverence, whither away so quickly? Do not forget that we have a christening today!’ and running after him he took him by the sleeve, but was also held fast to it.

Whilst the five were trotting thus one behind the other, two labourers came with their hoes from the fields; the parson called out to them and begged that they would set him and the sexton free. But they had scarcely touched the sexton when they were held fast, and now there were seven of them running behind Dummling and the goose.

Soon afterwards he came to a city, where a king ruled who had a daughter who was so serious that no one could make her laugh. So he had put forth a decree that whosoever should be able to make her laugh should marry her. When Dummling heard this, he went with his goose and all her train before the king’s daughter, and as soon as she saw the seven people running on and on, one behind the other, she began to laugh quite loudly, and as if she would never stop. Thereupon Dummling asked to have her for his wife; but the king did not like the son-in-law, and made all manner of excuses and said he must first produce a man who could drink a cellarful of wine. Dummling thought of the little grey man, who could certainly help him; so he went into the forest, and in the same place where he had felled the tree, he saw a man sitting, who had a very sorrowful face. Dummling asked him what he was taking to heart so sorely, and he answered: ‘I have such a great thirst and cannot quench it; cold water I cannot stand, a barrel of wine I have just emptied, but that to me is like a drop on a hot stone!'

'There, I can help you,' said Dummling, 'just come with me and you shall be satisfied.'

He led him into the king's cellar, and the man bent over the huge barrels, and drank and drank till his loins hurt, and before the day was out he had emptied all the barrels. Then Dummling asked once more for his bride, but the king was vexed that such an ugly fellow, whom everyone called Dummling, should take away his daughter, and he made a new condition; he must first find a man who could eat a whole mountain of bread. Dummling did not think long, but went straight into the forest, where in the same place there sat a man who was tying up his body with a strap, and making an awful face, and saying: 'I have eaten a whole ovenful of rolls, but what good is that when one has such a hunger as I? My stomach remains empty, and I must tie myself up if I am not to die of hunger.'

At this Dummling was glad, and said: 'Get up and come with me; you shall eat yourself full.' He led him to the king's palace where all the flour in the whole Kingdom was collected, and from it he caused a huge mountain of bread to be baked. The man from the forest stood before it, began to eat, and by the end of one day the whole mountain had vanished. Then Dummling for the third time asked for his bride; but the king again sought a way out, and ordered a ship which could sail on land and on water. 'As soon as you come sailing back in it,' said he, 'you shall have my daughter for wife.'

Dummling went straight into the forest, and there sat the little grey man to whom he had given his cake. When he heard what Dummling wanted, he said: 'Since you have given me to eat and to drink, I will give you the ship; and I do all this because you once were kind to me.' Then he gave him the ship which could sail on land and water, and when the king saw that, he could no longer prevent him from having his daughter. The wedding was celebrated, and after the king's death, Dummling inherited his kingdom and lived for a long time contentedly with his wife.

[*] Simpleton

THE WATER OF LIFE

Long before you or I were born, there reigned, in a country a great way off, a king who had three sons. This king once fell very ill — so ill that nobody thought he could live. His sons were very much grieved at their father's sickness; and as they were walking together very mournfully in the garden of the palace, a little old man met them and asked what was the matter. They told him that their father was very ill, and that they were afraid nothing could save him. 'I know what would,' said the little old man; 'it is the Water of Life. If he could have a draught of it he would be well again; but it is very hard to get.' Then the eldest son said, 'I will soon find it': and he went to the sick king, and begged that he might go in search of the Water of Life, as it was the only thing that could save him. 'No,' said the king. 'I had rather die than place you in such great danger as you must meet with in your journey.' But he begged so hard that the king let him go; and the prince thought to himself, 'If I bring my father this water, he will make me sole heir to his kingdom.'

Then he set out: and when he had gone on his way some time he came to a deep valley, overhung with rocks and woods; and as he looked around, he saw standing above him on one of the rocks a little ugly dwarf, with a sugarloaf cap and a scarlet cloak; and the dwarf called to him and said, 'Prince, whither so fast?' 'What is that to thee, you ugly imp?' said the prince haughtily, and rode on.

But the dwarf was enraged at his behaviour, and laid a fairy spell of ill-luck upon him; so that as he rode on the mountain pass became narrower and narrower, and at last the way was so straitened that he could not go to step forward: and when he thought to have turned his horse round and go back the way he came, he heard a loud laugh ringing round him, and found that the path was closed behind him, so that he was shut in all round. He next tried to get off his horse and make his way on foot, but again the laugh rang in his ears, and he found himself unable to move a step, and thus he was forced to abide spellbound.

Meantime the old king was lingering on in daily hope of his son's return, till at last the second son said, 'Father, I will go in search of the Water of Life.' For he thought to himself, 'My brother is surely dead, and the kingdom will fall to me if I find the water.' The king was at first very unwilling to let him go, but at last yielded to his wish. So he set out and followed the same road which his brother had done, and met with the same elf, who stopped him at the same spot in the mountains, saying, as before, 'Prince, prince, whither so fast?' 'Mind your own affairs, busybody!' said the prince scornfully, and rode on.

But the dwarf put the same spell upon him as he put on his elder brother, and he, too, was at last obliged to take up his abode in the heart of the mountains. Thus it is with proud silly people, who think themselves above everyone else, and are too proud to ask or take advice.

When the second prince had thus been gone a long time, the youngest son said he would go and search for the Water of Life, and trusted he should soon be able to make his father well again. So he set out, and the dwarf met him too at the same spot in the valley, among the mountains, and said, ‘Prince, whither so fast?’ And the prince said, ‘I am going in search of the Water of Life, because my father is ill, and like to die: can you help me? Pray be kind, and aid me if you can!’ ‘Do you know where it is to be found?’ asked the dwarf. ‘No,’ said the prince, ‘I do not. Pray tell me if you know.’ ‘Then as you have spoken to me kindly, and are wise enough to seek for advice, I will tell you how and where to go. The water you seek springs from a well in an enchanted castle; and, that you may be able to reach it in safety, I will give you an iron wand and two little loaves of bread; strike the iron door of the castle three times with the wand, and it will open: two hungry lions will be lying down inside gaping for their prey, but if you throw them the bread they will let you pass; then hasten on to the well, and take some of the Water of Life before the clock strikes twelve; for if you tarry longer the door will shut upon you for ever.’

Then the prince thanked his little friend with the scarlet cloak for his friendly aid, and took the wand and the bread, and went travelling on and on, over sea and over land, till he came to his journey’s end, and found everything to be as the dwarf had told him. The door flew open at the third stroke of the wand, and when the lions were quieted he went on through the castle and came at length to a beautiful hall. Around it he saw several knights sitting in a trance; then he pulled off their rings and put them on his own fingers. In another room he saw on a table a sword and a loaf of bread, which he also took. Further on he came to a room where a beautiful young lady sat upon a couch; and she welcomed him joyfully, and said, if he would set her free from the spell that bound her, the kingdom should be his, if he would come back in a year and marry her. Then she told him that the well that held the Water of Life was in the palace gardens; and bade him make haste, and draw what he wanted before the clock struck twelve.

He walked on; and as he walked through beautiful gardens he came to a delightful shady spot in which stood a couch; and he thought to himself, as he felt tired, that he would rest himself for a while, and gaze on the lovely scenes around him. So he laid himself down, and sleep fell upon him unawares, so that he did not wake up till the clock was striking a quarter to twelve. Then he sprang from the couch dreadfully frightened, ran to the well, filled a cup that was standing by him full of water, and hastened to get away in time. Just as he was going out of the iron door it struck twelve, and the door fell so quickly upon him that it snapped off a piece of his heel.

When he found himself safe, he was overjoyed to think that he had got the Water of Life; and as he was going on his way homewards, he passed by the little dwarf, who, when he saw the sword and the loaf, said, ‘You have made a noble prize; with the sword you can at a blow slay whole armies, and the bread will never fail you.’ Then the prince thought to himself, ‘I cannot go home to my father without my brothers’; so he said, ‘My dear friend, cannot you tell me where my two brothers are, who set out in search of the Water of Life before me, and never came back?' 'I have shut them up by a charm between two mountains,' said the dwarf, 'because they were proud and ill-behaved, and scorned to ask advice.' The prince begged so hard for his brothers, that the dwarf at last set them free, though unwillingly, saying, 'Beware of them, for they have bad hearts.' Their brother, however, was greatly rejoiced to see them, and told them all that had happened to him; how he had found the Water of Life, and had taken a cup full of it; and how he had set a beautiful princess free from a spell that bound her; and how she had engaged to wait a whole year, and then to marry him, and to give him the kingdom.

Then they all three rode on together, and on their way home came to a country that was laid waste by war and a dreadful famine, so that it was feared all must die for want. But the prince gave the king of the land the bread, and all his kingdom ate of it. And he lent the king the wonderful sword, and he slew the enemy's army with it; and thus the kingdom was once more in peace and plenty. In the same manner he befriended two other countries through which they passed on their way.

When they came to the sea, they got into a ship and during their voyage the two eldest said to themselves, 'Our brother has got the water which we could not find, therefore our father will forsake us and give him the kingdom, which is our right'; so they were full of envy and revenge, and agreed together how they could ruin him. Then they waited till he was fast asleep, and poured the Water of Life out of the cup, and took it for themselves, giving him bitter sea-water instead.

When they came to their journey's end, the youngest son brought his cup to the sick king, that he might drink and be healed. Scarcely, however, had he tasted the bitter sea-water when he became worse even than he was before; and then both the elder sons came in, and blamed the youngest for what they had done; and said that he wanted to poison their father, but that they had found the Water of Life, and had brought it with them. He no sooner began to drink of what they brought him, than he felt his sickness leave him, and was as strong and well as in his younger days. Then they went to their brother, and laughed at him, and said, 'Well, brother, you found the Water of Life, did you? You have had the trouble and we shall have the reward. Pray, with all your cleverness, why did not you manage to keep your eyes open? Next year one of us will take away your beautiful princess, if you do not take care. You had better say nothing about this to our father, for he does not believe a word you say; and if you tell tales, you shall lose your life into the bargain: but be quiet, and we will let you off.'

The old king was still very angry with his youngest son, and thought that he really meant to have taken away his life; so he called his court together, and asked what should be done, and all agreed that he ought to be put to death. The prince knew nothing of what was going on, till one day, when the king's chief huntsmen went a-hunting with him, and they were alone in the wood together, the huntsman looked so sorrowful that the prince said, 'My friend, what is the matter with you?' 'I cannot and dare not tell you,' said he. But the prince begged very hard, and said, 'Only tell me what it is, and do not think I shall be angry, for I will forgive you.' 'Alas!' said the huntsman; 'the king has ordered me to shoot you.' The prince started at this, and said, 'Let me live, and I will change dresses with you; you shall take my royal coat to show to my father, and do you give me your shabby one.' 'With all my heart,' said the huntsman; 'I am sure I shall be glad to save you, for I could not have shot you.' Then he took the prince's coat, and gave him the shabby one, and went away through the wood.

Some time after, three grand embassies came to the old king's court, with rich gifts of gold and precious stones for his youngest son; now all these were sent from the three kings to whom he had lent his sword and loaf of bread, in order to rid them of their enemy and feed their people. This touched the old king's heart, and he thought his son might still be guiltless, and said to his court, 'O that my son were still alive! how it grieves me that I had him killed!' 'He is still alive,' said the huntsman; 'and I am glad that I had pity on him, but let him go in peace, and brought home his royal coat.' At this the king was overwhelmed with joy, and made it known throughout all his kingdom, that if his son would come back to his court he would forgive him.

Meanwhile the princess was eagerly waiting till her deliverer should come back; and had a road made leading up to her palace all of shining gold; and told her courtiers that whoever came on horseback, and rode straight up to the gate upon it, was her true lover; and that they must let him in: but whoever rode on one side of it, they must be sure was not the right one; and that they must send him away at once.

The time soon came, when the eldest brother thought that he would make haste to go to the princess, and say that he was the one who had set her free, and that he should have her for his wife, and the kingdom with her. As he came before the palace and saw the golden road, he stopped to look at it, and he thought to himself, 'It is a pity to ride upon this beautiful road'; so he turned aside and rode on the right-hand side of it. But when he came to the gate, the guards, who had seen the road he took, said to him, he could not be what he said he was, and must go about his business.

The second prince set out soon afterwards on the same errand; and when he came to the golden road, and his horse had set one foot upon it, he stopped to look at it, and thought it very beautiful, and said to himself, 'What a pity it is that anything should tread here!' Then he too turned aside and rode on the left side of it. But when he came to the gate the guards said he was not the true prince, and that he too must go away about his business; and away he went.

Now when the full year was come round, the third brother left the forest in which he had lain hid for fear of his father's anger, and set out in search of his betrothed bride. So he journeyed on, thinking of her all the way, and rode so quickly that he did not even see what the road was made of, but went with his horse straight over it; and as he came to the gate it flew open, and the princess welcomed him with joy, and said he was her deliverer, and should now be her husband and lord of the kingdom. When the first joy at their meeting was over, the princess told him she had heard of his father having forgiven him, and of his wish to have him home again: so, before his wedding with the princess, he went to visit his father, taking her with him. Then he told him everything; how his brothers had cheated and robbed him, and yet that he had borne all those wrongs for the love of his father. And the old king was very angry, and wanted to punish his wicked sons; but they made their escape, and got into a ship and sailed away over the wide sea, and where they went to nobody knew and nobody cared.

And now the old king gathered together his court, and asked all his kingdom to come and celebrate the wedding of his son and the princess. And young and old, noble and squire, gentle and simple, came at once on the summons; and among the rest came the friendly dwarf, with the sugarloaf hat, and a new scarlet cloak.

And the wedding was held, and the merry bells run.
And all the good people they danced and they sung,
And feasted and frolick’d I can’t tell how long.

THE TWELVE HUNTSMEN

There was once a king’s son who had a bride whom he loved very much. And when he was sitting beside her and very happy, news came that his father lay sick unto death, and desired to see him once again before his end. Then he said to his beloved: ‘I must now go and leave you, I give you a ring as a remembrance of me. When I am king, I will return and fetch you.’ So he rode away, and when he reached his father, the latter was dangerously ill, and near his death. He said to him: ‘Dear son, I wished to see you once again before my end, promise me to marry as I wish,’ and he named a certain king’s daughter who was to be his wife. The son was in such trouble that he did not think what he was doing, and said: ‘Yes, dear father, your will shall be done,’ and thereupon the king shut his eyes, and died.

When therefore the son had been proclaimed king, and the time of mourning was over, he was forced to keep the promise which he had given his father, and caused the king’s daughter to be asked in marriage, and she was promised to him. His first betrothed heard of this, and fretted so much about his faithfulness that she nearly died. Then her father said to her: ‘Dearest child, why are you so sad? You shall have whatsoever you will.’ She thought for a moment and said: ‘Dear father, I wish for eleven girls exactly like myself in face, figure, and size.’ The father said: ‘If it be possible, your desire shall be fulfilled,’ and he caused a search to be made in his whole kingdom, until eleven young maidens were found who exactly resembled his daughter in face, figure, and size.

When they came to the king’s daughter, she had twelve suits of huntsmen’s clothes made, all alike, and the eleven maidens had to put on the huntsmen’s clothes, and she herself put on the twelfth suit. Thereupon she took her leave of her father, and rode away with them, and rode to the court of her former betrothed, whom she loved so dearly. Then she asked if he required any huntsmen, and if he would take all of them into his service. The king looked at her and did not know her, but as they were such handsome fellows, he said: ‘Yes,’ and that he would willingly take them, and now they were the king’s twelve huntsmen.

The king, however, had a lion which was a wondrous animal, for he knew all concealed and secret things. It came to pass that one evening he said to the king: ‘You think you have twelve huntsmen?’ ‘Yes,’ said the king, ‘they are twelve huntsmen.’ The lion continued: ‘You are mistaken, they are twelve girls.’ The king said: ‘That cannot be true! How will you prove that to me?’ ‘Oh, just let some peas be strewn in the ante-chamber,’ answered the lion, ‘and then you will soon see. Men have a firm step, and when they walk over peas none of them stir, but girls trip and skip, and drag their feet, and the peas roll about.’ The king was well pleased with the counsel, and caused the peas to be strewn.

There was, however, a servant of the king’s who favoured the huntsmen, and when he heard that they were going to be put to this test he went to them and repeated everything, and said: ‘The lion wants to make the king believe that you are girls.’ Then the king’s daughter thanked him, and said to her maidens: ‘Show some strength, and step firmly on the peas.’ So next morning when the king had the twelve huntsmen called before him, and they came into the ante-chamber where the peas were lying, they stepped so firmly on them, and had such a strong, sure walk, that not one of the peas either rolled or stirred. Then they went away again, and the king said to the lion: ‘You have lied to me, they walk just like men.’ The lion said: ‘They have been informed that they were going to be put to the test, and have assumed some strength. Just let twelve spinning-wheels be brought into the ante-chamber, and they will go to them and be pleased with them, and that is what no man would do.’ The king liked the advice, and had the spinning-wheels placed in the ante-chamber.

But the servant, who was well disposed to the huntsmen, went to them, and disclosed the project. So when they were alone the king’s daughter said to her eleven girls: ‘Show some constraint, and do not look round at the spinning-wheels.’ And next morning when the king had his twelve huntsmen summoned, they went through the ante-chamber, and never once looked at the spinning-wheels. Then the king again said to the lion: ‘You have deceived me, they are men, for they have not looked at the spinning-wheels.’ The lion replied: ‘They have restrained themselves.’ The king, however, would no longer believe the lion.

The twelve huntsmen always followed the king to the chase, and his liking for them continually increased. Now it came to pass that once when they were out hunting, news came that the king’s bride was approaching. When the true bride heard that, it hurt her so much that her heart was almost broken, and she fell fainting to the ground. The king thought something had happened to his dear huntsman, ran up to him, wanted to help him, and drew his glove off. Then he saw the ring which he had given to his first bride, and when he looked in her face he recognized her. Then his heart was so touched that he kissed her, and when she opened her eyes he said: ‘You are mine, and I am yours, and no one in the world can alter that.’ He sent a messenger to the other bride, and entreated her to return to her own kingdom, for he had a wife already, and someone who had just found an old key did not require a new one. Thereupon the wedding was celebrated, and the lion was again taken into favour, because, after all, he had told the truth.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN

There was once a merchant who had only one child, a son, that was very young, and barely able to run alone. He had two richly laden ships then making a voyage upon the seas, in which he had embarked all his wealth, in the hope of making great gains, when the news came that both were lost. Thus from being a rich man he became all at once so very poor that nothing was left to him but one small plot of land; and there he often went in an evening to take his walk, and ease his mind of a little of his trouble.

One day, as he was roaming along in a brown study, thinking with no great comfort on what he had been and what he now was, and was like to be, all on a sudden there stood before him a little, rough-looking, black dwarf. ‘Prithee, friend, why so sorrowful?’ said he to the merchant; ‘what is it you take so deeply to heart?’ ‘If you would do me any good I would willingly tell you,’ said the merchant. ‘Who knows but I may?’ said the little man: ‘tell me what ails you, and perhaps you will find I may be of some use.’ Then the merchant told him how all his wealth was gone to the bottom of the sea, and how he had nothing left but that little plot of land. ‘Oh, trouble not yourself about that,’ said the dwarf; ‘only undertake to bring me here, twelve years hence, whatever meets you first on your going home, and I will give you as much as you please.’ The merchant thought this was no great thing to ask; that it would most likely be his dog or his cat, or something of that sort, but forgot his little boy Heinel; so he agreed to the bargain, and signed and sealed the bond to do what was asked of him.

But as he drew near home, his little boy was so glad to see him that he crept behind him, and laid fast hold of his legs, and looked up in his face and laughed. Then the father started, trembling with fear and horror, and saw what it was that he had bound himself to do; but as no gold was come, he made himself easy by thinking that it was only a joke that the dwarf was playing him, and that, at any rate, when the money came, he should see the bearer, and would not take it in.

About a month afterwards he went upstairs into a lumber-room to look for some old iron, that he might sell it and raise a little money; and there, instead of his iron, he saw a large pile of gold lying on the floor. At the sight of this he was overjoyed, and forgetting all about his son, went into trade again, and became a richer merchant than before.

Meantime little Heinel grew up, and as the end of the twelve years drew near the merchant began to call to mind his bond, and became very sad and thoughtful; so that care and sorrow were written upon his face. The boy one day asked what was the matter, but his father would not tell for some time; at last, however, he said that he had, without knowing it, sold him for gold to a little, ugly-looking, black dwarf, and that the twelve years were coming round when he must keep his word. Then Heinel said, ‘Father, give yourself very little trouble about that; I shall be too much for the little man.’

When the time came, the father and son went out together to the place agreed upon: and the son drew a circle on the ground, and set himself and his father in the middle of it. The little black dwarf soon came, and walked round and round about the circle, but could not find any way to get into it, and he either could not, or dared not, jump over it. At last the boy said to him. ‘Have you anything to say to us, my friend, or what do you want?’ Now Heinel had found a friend in a good fairy, that was fond of him, and had told him what to do; for this fairy knew what good luck was in store for him. ‘Have you brought me what you said you would?’ said the dwarf to the merchant. The old man held his tongue, but Heinel said again, ‘What do you want here?’ The dwarf said, ‘I come to talk with your father, not with you.’ ‘You have cheated and taken in my father,’ said the son; ‘pray give him up his bond at once.’ ‘Fair and softly,’ said the little old man; ‘right is right; I have paid my money, and your father has had it, and spent it; so be so good as to let me have what I paid it for.’ ‘You must have my consent to that first,’ said Heinel, ‘so please to step in here, and let us talk it over.’ The old man grinned, and showed his teeth, as if he should have been very glad to get into the circle if he could. Then at last, after a long talk, they came to terms. Heinel agreed that his father must give him up, and that so far the dwarf should have his way: but, on the other hand, the fairy had told Heinel what fortune was in store for him, if he followed his own course; and he did not choose to be given up to his hump-backed friend, who seemed so anxious for his company.

So, to make a sort of drawn battle of the matter, it was settled that Heinel should be put into an open boat, that lay on the sea-shore hard by; that the father should push him off with his own hand, and that he should thus be set adrift, and left to the bad or good luck of wind and weather. Then he took leave of his father, and set himself in the boat, but before it got far off a wave struck it, and it fell with one side low in the water, so the merchant thought that poor Heinel was lost, and went home very sorrowful, while the dwarf went his way, thinking that at any rate he had had his revenge.

The boat, however, did not sink, for the good fairy took care of her friend, and soon raised the boat up again, and it went safely on. The young man sat safe within, till at length it ran ashore upon an unknown land. As he jumped upon the shore he saw before him a beautiful castle but empty and dreary within, for it was enchanted. ‘Here,’ said he to himself, ‘must I find the prize the good fairy told me of.’ So he once more searched the whole palace through, till at last he found a white snake, lying coiled up on a cushion in one of the chambers.

Now the white snake was an enchanted princess; and she was very glad to see him, and said, ‘Are you at last come to set me free? Twelve long years have I waited here for the fairy to bring you hither as she promised, for you alone can save me. This night twelve men will come: their faces will be black, and they will be dressed in chain armour. They will ask what you do here, but give no answer; and let them do what they will — beat, whip, pinch, prick, or torment you — bear all; only speak not a word, and at twelve o’clock they must go away. The second night twelve others will come: and the third night twenty-four, who will even cut off your head; but at the twelfth hour of that night their power is gone, and I shall be free, and will come and bring you the Water of Life, and will wash you with it, and bring you back to life and health.’ And all came to pass as she had said; Heinel bore all, and spoke not a word; and the third night the princess came, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Joy and gladness burst forth throughout the castle, the wedding was celebrated, and he was crowned king of the Golden Mountain.

They lived together very happily, and the queen had a son. And thus eight years had passed over their heads, when the king thought of his father; and he began to long to see him once again. But the queen was against his going, and said, ‘I know well that misfortunes will come upon us if you go.’ However, he gave her no rest till she agreed. At his going away she gave him a wishing-ring, and said, ‘Take this ring, and put it on your finger; whatever you wish it will bring you; only promise never to make use of it to bring me hence to your father’s house.’ Then he said he would do what she asked, and put the ring on his finger, and wished himself near the town where his father lived.

Heinel found himself at the gates in a moment; but the guards would not let him go in, because he was so strangely clad. So he went up to a neighbouring hill, where a shepherd dwelt, and borrowed his old frock, and thus passed unknown into the town. When he came to his father’s house, he said he was his son; but the merchant would not believe him, and said he had had but one son, his poor Heinel, who he knew was long since dead: and as he was only dressed like a poor shepherd, he would not even give him anything to eat. The king, however, still vowed that he was his son, and said, ‘Is there no mark by which you would know me if I am really your son?’ ‘Yes,’ said his mother, ‘our Heinel had a mark like a raspberry on his right arm.’ Then he showed them the mark, and they knew that what he had said was true.

He next told them how he was king of the Golden Mountain, and was married to a princess, and had a son seven years old. But the merchant said, ‘that can never be true; he must be a fine king truly who travels about in a shepherd’s frock!’ At this the son was vexed; and forgetting his word, turned his ring, and wished for his queen and son. In an instant they stood before him; but the queen wept, and said he had broken his word, and bad luck would follow. He did all he could to soothe her, and she at last seemed to be appeased; but she was not so in truth, and was only thinking how she should punish him.

One day he took her to walk with him out of the town, and showed her the spot where the boat was set adrift upon the wide waters. Then he sat himself down, and said, ‘I am very much tired; sit by me, I will rest my head in your lap, and sleep a while.’ As soon as he had fallen asleep, however, she drew the ring from his finger, and crept softly away, and wished herself and her son at home in their kingdom. And when he awoke he found himself alone, and saw that the ring was gone from his finger. ‘I can never go back to my father’s house,’ said he; ‘they would say I am a sorcerer: I will journey forth into the world, till I come again to my kingdom.’

So saying he set out and travelled till he came to a hill, where three giants were sharing their father’s goods; and as they saw him pass they cried out and said, ‘Little men have sharp wits; he shall part the goods between us.’ Now there was a sword that cut off an enemy’s head whenever the wearer gave the words, ‘Heads off!’; a cloak that made the owner invisible, or gave him any form he pleased; and a pair of boots that carried the wearer wherever he wished. Heinel said they must first let him try these wonderful things, then he might know how to set a value upon them. Then they gave him the cloak, and he wished himself a fly, and in a moment he was a fly. ‘The cloak is very well,’ said he: ‘now give me the sword.’ ‘No,’ said they; ‘not unless you undertake not to say, “Heads off!” for if you do we are all dead men.’ So they gave it him, charging him to try it on a tree. He next asked for the boots also; and the moment he had all three in his power, he wished himself at the Golden Mountain; and there he was at once. So the giants were left behind with no goods to share or quarrel about.

As Heinel came near his castle he heard the sound of merry music; and the people around told him that his queen was about to marry another husband. Then he threw his cloak around him, and passed through the castle hall, and placed himself by the side of the queen, where no one saw him. But when anything to eat was put upon her plate, he took it away and ate it himself; and when a glass of wine was handed to her, he took it and drank it; and thus, though they kept on giving her meat and drink, her plate and cup were always empty.

Upon this, fear and remorse came over her, and she went into her chamber alone, and sat there weeping; and he followed her there. ‘Alas!’ said she to herself, ‘was I not once set free? Why then does this enchantment still seem to bind me?’

‘False and fickle one!’ said he. ‘One indeed came who set thee free, and he is now near thee again; but how have you used him? Ought he to have had such treatment from thee?’ Then he went out and sent away the company, and said the wedding was at an end, for that he was come back to the kingdom. But the princes, peers, and great men mocked at him. However, he would enter into no parley with them, but only asked them if they would go in peace or not. Then they turned upon him and tried to seize him; but he drew his sword. ‘Heads Off!’ cried he; and with the word the traitors’ heads fell before him, and Heinel was once more king of the Golden Mountain.

DOCTOR KNOWALL

There was once upon a time a poor peasant called Crabb, who drove with two oxen a load of wood to the town, and sold it to a doctor for two talers. When the money was being counted out to him, it so happened that the doctor was sitting at table, and when the peasant saw how well he ate and drank, his heart desired what he saw, and would willingly have been a doctor too. So he remained standing a while, and at length inquired if he too could not be a doctor. 'Oh, yes,' said the doctor, 'that is soon managed.' 'What must I do?' asked the peasant. 'In the first place buy yourself an A B C book of the kind which has a cock on the frontispiece; in the second, turn your cart and your two oxen into money, and get yourself some clothes, and whatsoever else pertains to medicine; thirdly, have a sign painted for yourself with the words: "I am Doctor Knowall," and have that nailed up above your house-door.' The peasant did everything that he had been told to do. When he had doctored people awhile, but not long, a rich and great lord had some money stolen. Then he was told about Doctor Knowall who lived in such and such a village, and must know what had become of the money. So the lord had the horses harnessed to his carriage, drove out to the village, and asked Crabb if he were Doctor Knowall. Yes, he was, he said. Then he was to go with him and bring back the stolen money. 'Oh, yes, but Grete, my wife, must go too.' The lord was willing, and let both of them have a seat in the carriage, and they all drove away together. When they came to the nobleman's castle, the table was spread, and Crabb was told to sit down and eat. 'Yes, but my wife, Grete, too,' said he, and he seated himself with her at the table. And when the first servant came with a dish of delicate fare, the peasant nudged his wife, and said: 'Grete, that was the first,' meaning that was the servant who brought the first dish. The servant, however, thought he intended by that to say: 'That is the first thief,' and as he actually was so, he was terrified, and said to his comrade outside: 'The doctor knows all: we shall fare ill, he said I was the first.' The second did not want to go in at all, but was forced. So when he went in with his dish, the peasant nudged his wife, and said: 'Grete, that is the second.' This servant was equally alarmed, and he got out as fast as he could. The third fared no better, for the peasant again said: 'Grete, that is the third.' The fourth had to carry in a dish that was covered, and the lord told the doctor that he was to show his skill, and guess what was beneath the cover. Actually, there were crabs. The doctor looked at the dish, had no idea what to say, and cried: 'Ah, poor Crabb.' When the lord heard that, he cried: 'There! he knows it; he must also know who has the money!'

On this the servants looked terribly uneasy, and made a sign to the doctor that they wished him to step outside for a moment. When therefore he went out, all four of them confessed to him that they had stolen the money, and said that they would willingly restore it and give him a heavy sum into the bargain, if he would not denounce them, for if he did they would be hanged.

They led him to the spot where the money was concealed. With this the doctor was satisfied, and returned to the hall, sat down to the table, and said: ‘My lord, now will I search in my book where the gold is hidden.’ The fifth servant, however, crept into the stove to hear if the doctor knew still more. But the doctor sat still and opened his A B C book, turned the pages backwards and forwards, and looked for the cock. As he could not find it immediately he said: ‘I know you are there, so you had better come out!’ Then the fellow in the stove thought that the doctor meant him, and full of terror, sprang out, crying: ‘That man knows everything!’ Then Doctor Knowall showed the lord where the money was, but did not say who had stolen it, and received from both sides much money in reward, and became a renowned man.

THE SEVEN RAVENS

There was once a man who had seven sons, and last of all one daughter. Although the little girl was very pretty, she was so weak and small that they thought she could not live; but they said she should at once be christened.

So the father sent one of his sons in haste to the spring to get some water, but the other six ran with him. Each wanted to be first at drawing the water, and so they were in such a hurry that all let their pitchers fall into the well, and they stood very foolishly looking at one another, and did not know what to do, for none dared go home. In the meantime the father was uneasy, and could not tell what made the young men stay so long. ‘Surely,’ said he, ‘the whole seven must have forgotten themselves over some game of play’; and when he had waited still longer and they yet did not come, he flew into a rage and wished them all turned into ravens. Scarcely had he spoken these words when he heard a croaking over his head, and looked up and saw seven ravens as black as coal flying round and round. Sorry as he was to see his wish so fulfilled, he did not know how what was done could be undone, and comforted himself as well as he could for the loss of his seven sons with his dear little daughter, who soon became stronger and every day more beautiful.

For a long time she did not know that she had ever had any brothers; for her father and mother took care not to speak of them before her: but one day by chance she heard the people about her speak of them. ‘Yes,’ said they, ‘she is beautiful indeed, but still ’tis a pity that her brothers should have been lost for her sake.’ Then she was much grieved, and went to her father and mother, and asked if she had any brothers, and what had become of them. So they dared no longer hide the truth from her, but said it was the will of Heaven, and that her birth was only the innocent cause of it; but the little girl mourned sadly about it every day, and thought herself bound to do all she could to bring her brothers back; and she had neither rest nor ease, till at length one day she stole away, and set out into the wide world to find her brothers, wherever they might be, and free them, whatever it might cost her.

She took nothing with her but a little ring which her father and mother had given her, a loaf of bread in case she should be hungry, a little pitcher of water in case she should be thirsty, and a little stool to rest upon when she should be weary. Thus she went on and on, and journeyed till she came to the world’s end; then she came to the sun, but the sun looked much too hot and fiery; so she ran away quickly to the moon, but the moon was cold and chilly, and said, ‘I smell flesh and blood this way!’ so she took herself away in a hurry and came to the stars, and the stars were friendly and kind to her, and each star sat upon his own little stool; but the morning star rose up and gave her a little piece of wood, and said, ‘If you have not this little piece of wood, you cannot unlock the castle that stands on the glass-mountain, and there your brothers live.’ The little girl took the piece of wood, rolled it up in a little cloth, and went on again until she came to the glass-mountain, and found the door shut. Then she felt for the little piece of wood; but when she unwrapped the cloth it was not there, and she saw she had lost the gift of the good stars. What was to be done? She wanted to save her brothers, and had no key of the castle of the glass-mountain; so this faithful little sister took a knife out of her pocket and cut off her little finger, that was just the size of the piece of wood she had lost, and put it in the door and opened it.

As she went in, a little dwarf came up to her, and said, 'What are you seeking for?' 'I seek for my brothers, the seven ravens,' answered she. Then the dwarf said, 'My masters are not at home; but if you will wait till they come, pray step in.' Now the little dwarf was getting their dinner ready, and he brought their food upon seven little plates, and their drink in seven little glasses, and set them upon the table, and out of each little plate their sister ate a small piece, and out of each little glass she drank a small drop; but she let the ring that she had brought with her fall into the last glass.

On a sudden she heard a fluttering and croaking in the air, and the dwarf said, 'Here come my masters.' When they came in, they wanted to eat and drink, and looked for their little plates and glasses. Then said one after the other,

'Who has eaten from my little plate? And who has been drinking out of my little glass?'

'Caw! Caw! well I ween
Mortal lips have this way been.'

When the seventh came to the bottom of his glass, and found there the ring, he looked at it, and knew that it was his father's and mother's, and said, 'O that our little sister would but come! then we should be free.' When the little girl heard this (for she stood behind the door all the time and listened), she ran forward, and in an instant all the ravens took their right form again; and all hugged and kissed each other, and went merrily home.

THE WEDDING OF MRS FOX

FIRST STORY

There was once upon a time an old fox with nine tails, who believed that his wife was not faithful to him, and wished to put her to the test. He stretched himself out under the bench, did not move a limb, and behaved as if he were stone dead. Mrs Fox went up to her room, shut herself in, and her maid, Miss Cat, sat by the fire, and did the cooking. When it became known that the old fox was dead, suitors presented themselves. The maid heard someone standing at the house-door, knocking. She went and opened it, and it was a young fox, who said:

‘What may you be about, Miss Cat?
Do you sleep or do you wake?’

She answered:

‘I am not sleeping, I am waking,
Would you know what I am making?
I am boiling warm beer with butter,
Will you be my guest for supper?’

‘No, thank you, miss,’ said the fox, ‘what is Mrs Fox doing?’ The maid replied:

‘She is sitting in her room,
Moaning in her gloom,
Weeping her little eyes quite red,
Because old Mr Fox is dead.’

‘Do just tell her, miss, that a young fox is here, who would like to woo her.’ ‘Certainly, young sir.’

The cat goes up the stairs trip, trap,
The door she knocks at tap, tap, tap,
‘Mistress Fox, are you inside?’
‘Oh, yes, my little cat,’ she cried.
‘A wooer he stands at the door out there.’
‘What does he look like, my dear?’

‘Has he nine as beautiful tails as the late Mr Fox?’ ‘Oh, no,’ answered the cat, ‘he has only one.’ ‘Then I will not have him.’

Miss Cat went downstairs and sent the wooer away. Soon afterwards there was another knock, and another fox was at the door who wished to woo Mrs Fox. He had two tails, but he did not fare better than the first. After this still more came, each with one tail more than the other, but they were all turned away, until at last one came who had nine tails, like old Mr Fox. When the widow heard that, she said joyfully to the cat:

‘Now open the gates and doors all wide,
And carry old Mr Fox outside.’

But just as the wedding was going to be solemnized, old Mr Fox stirred under the bench, and cudgelled all the rabble, and drove them and Mrs Fox out of the house.

SECOND STORY

When old Mr Fox was dead, the wolf came as a suitor, and knocked at the door, and the cat who was servant to Mrs Fox, opened it for him. The wolf greeted her, and said:

'Good day, Mrs Cat of Kehrewit,
How comes it that alone you sit?
What are you making good?'

The cat replied:

'In milk I'm breaking bread so sweet,
Will you be my guest, and eat?'

'No, thank you, Mrs Cat,' answered the wolf. 'Is Mrs Fox not at home?'

The cat said:

'She sits upstairs in her room,
Bewailing her sorrowful doom,
Bewailing her trouble so sore,
For old Mr Fox is no more.'

The wolf answered:

'If she's in want of a husband now,
Then will it please her to step below?'
The cat runs quickly up the stair,
And lets her tail fly here and there,
Until she comes to the parlour door.
With her five gold rings at the door she knocks:
'Are you within, good Mistress Fox?
If you're in want of a husband now,
Then will it please you to step below?

Mrs Fox asked: 'Has the gentleman red stockings on, and has he a pointed mouth?' 'No,' answered the cat. 'Then he won't do for me.'

When the wolf was gone, came a dog, a stag, a hare, a bear, a lion, and all the beasts of the forest, one after the other. But one of the good qualities which old Mr Fox had possessed, was always lacking, and the cat had continually to send the suitors away. At length came a young fox. Then Mrs Fox said: 'Has the gentleman red stockings on, and has a little pointed mouth?' 'Yes,' said the cat, 'he has.' 'Then let him come upstairs,' said Mrs Fox, and ordered the servant to prepare the wedding feast.

'Sweep me the room as clean as you can,
Up with the window, fling out my old man!
For many a fine fat mouse he brought,
Yet of his wife he never thought,
But ate up every one he caught.'

Then the wedding was solemnized with young Mr Fox, and there was much rejoicing and dancing; and if they have not left off, they are dancing still.

THE SALAD

As a merry young huntsman was once going briskly along through a wood, there came up a little old woman, and said to him, ‘Good day, good day; you seem merry enough, but I am hungry and thirsty; do pray give me something to eat.’ The huntsman took pity on her, and put his hand in his pocket and gave her what he had. Then he wanted to go his way; but she took hold of him, and said, ‘Listen, my friend, to what I am going to tell you; I will reward you for your kindness; go your way, and after a little time you will come to a tree where you will see nine birds sitting on a cloak. Shoot into the midst of them, and one will fall down dead: the cloak will fall too; take it, it is a wishing-cloak, and when you wear it you will find yourself at any place where you may wish to be. Cut open the dead bird, take out its heart and keep it, and you will find a piece of gold under your pillow every morning when you rise. It is the bird’s heart that will bring you this good luck.’

The huntsman thanked her, and thought to himself, ‘If all this does happen, it will be a fine thing for me.’ When he had gone a hundred steps or so, he heard a screaming and chirping in the branches over him, and looked up and saw a flock of birds pulling a cloak with their bills and feet; screaming, fighting, and tugging at each other as if each wished to have it himself. ‘Well,’ said the huntsman, ‘this is wonderful; this happens just as the old woman said’; then he shot into the midst of them so that their feathers flew all about. Off went the flock chattering away; but one fell down dead, and the cloak with it. Then the huntsman did as the old woman told him, cut open the bird, took out the heart, and carried the cloak home with him.

The next morning when he awoke he lifted up his pillow, and there lay the piece of gold glittering underneath; the same happened next day, and indeed every day when he arose. He heaped up a great deal of gold, and at last thought to himself, ‘Of what use is this gold to me whilst I am at home? I will go out into the world and look about me.’

Then he took leave of his friends, and hung his bag and bow about his neck, and went his way. It so happened that his road one day led through a thick wood, at the end of which was a large castle in a green meadow, and at one of the windows stood an old woman with a very beautiful young lady by her side looking about them. Now the old woman was a witch, and said to the young lady, ‘There is a young man coming out of the wood who carries a wonderful prize; we must get it away from him, my dear child, for it is more fit for us than for him. He has a bird’s heart that brings a piece of gold under his pillow every morning.’ Meantime the huntsman came nearer and looked at the lady, and said to himself, ‘I have been travelling so long that I should like to go into this castle and rest myself, for I have money enough to pay for anything I want’; but the real reason was, that he wanted to see more of the beautiful lady. Then he went into the house, and was welcomed kindly;

and it was not long before he was so much in love that he thought of nothing else but looking at the lady’s eyes, and doing everything that she wished. Then the old woman said, ‘Now is the time for getting the bird’s heart.’ So the lady stole it away, and he never found any more gold under his pillow, for it lay now under the young lady’s, and the old woman took it away every morning; but he was so much in love that he never missed his prize.

‘Well,’ said the old witch, ‘we have got the bird’s heart, but not the wishing-cloak yet, and that we must also get.’ ‘Let us leave him that,’ said the young lady; ‘he has already lost his wealth.’ Then the witch was very angry, and said, ‘Such a cloak is a very rare and wonderful thing, and I must and will have it.’ So she did as the old woman told her, and set herself at the window, and looked about the country and seemed very sorrowful; then the huntsman said, ‘What makes you so sad?’ ‘Alas! dear sir,’ said she, ‘yonder lies the granite rock where all the costly diamonds grow, and I want so much to go there, that whenever I think of it I cannot help being sorrowful, for who can reach it? only the birds and the flies — man cannot.’ ‘If that’s all your grief,’ said the huntsman, ‘I’ll take you there with all my heart’; so he drew her under his cloak, and the moment he wished to be on the granite mountain they were both there. The diamonds glittered so on all sides that they were delighted with the sight and picked up the finest. But the old witch made a deep sleep come upon him, and he said to the young lady, ‘Let us sit down and rest ourselves a little, I am so tired that I cannot stand any longer.’ So they sat down, and he laid his head in her lap and fell asleep; and whilst he was sleeping on she took the cloak from his shoulders, hung it on her own, picked up the diamonds, and wished herself home again.

When he awoke and found that his lady had tricked him, and left him alone on the wild rock, he said, ‘Alas! what roguery there is in the world!’ and there he sat in great grief and fear, not knowing what to do. Now this rock belonged to fierce giants who lived upon it; and as he saw three of them striding about, he thought to himself, ‘I can only save myself by feigning to be asleep’; so he laid himself down as if he were in a sound sleep. When the giants came up to him, the first pushed him with his foot, and said, ‘What worm is this that lies here curled up?’ ‘Tread upon him and kill him,’ said the second. ‘It’s not worth the trouble,’ said the third; ‘let him live, he’ll go climbing higher up the mountain, and some cloud will come rolling and carry him away.’ And they passed on. But the huntsman had heard all they said; and as soon as they were gone, he climbed to the top of the mountain, and when he had sat there a short time a cloud came rolling around him, and caught him in a whirlwind and bore him along for some time, till it settled in a garden, and he fell quite gently to the ground amongst the greens and cabbages.

Then he looked around him, and said, ‘I wish I had something to eat, if not I shall be worse off than before; for here I see neither apples nor pears, nor any kind of fruits, nothing but vegetables.’ At last he thought to himself, ‘I can eat salad, it will refresh and strengthen me.’ So he picked out a fine head and ate of it; but scarcely had he swallowed two bites when he felt himself quite changed, and saw with horror that he was turned into an ass. However, he still felt very hungry, and the salad tasted very nice; so he ate on till he came to another kind of salad, and scarcely had he tasted it when he felt another change come over him, and soon saw that he was lucky enough to have found his old shape again.

Then he laid himself down and slept off a little of his weariness; and when he awoke the next morning he broke off a head both of the good and the bad salad, and thought to himself, 'This will help me to my fortune again, and enable me to pay off some folks for their treachery.' So he went away to try and find the castle of his friends; and after wandering about a few days he luckily found it. Then he stained his face all over brown, so that even his mother would not have known him, and went into the castle and asked for a lodging; 'I am so tired,' said he, 'that I can go no farther.' 'Countryman,' said the witch, 'who are you? and what is your business?' 'I am,' said he, 'a messenger sent by the king to find the finest salad that grows under the sun. I have been lucky enough to find it, and have brought it with me; but the heat of the sun scorches so that it begins to wither, and I don't know that I can carry it farther.'

When the witch and the young lady heard of his beautiful salad, they longed to taste it, and said, 'Dear countryman, let us just taste it.' 'To be sure,' answered he; 'I have two heads of it with me, and will give you one'; so he opened his bag and gave them the bad. Then the witch herself took it into the kitchen to be dressed; and when it was ready she could not wait till it was carried up, but took a few leaves immediately and put them in her mouth, and scarcely were they swallowed when she lost her own form and ran braying down into the court in the form of an ass. Now the servant-maid came into the kitchen, and seeing the salad ready, was going to carry it up; but on the way she too felt a wish to taste it as the old woman had done, and ate some leaves; so she also was turned into an ass and ran after the other, letting the dish with the salad fall on the ground. The messenger sat all this time with the beautiful young lady, and as nobody came with the salad and she longed to taste it, she said, 'I don't know where the salad can be.' Then he thought something must have happened, and said, 'I will go into the kitchen and see.' And as he went he saw two asses in the court running about, and the salad lying on the ground. 'All right!' said he; 'those two have had their share.' Then he took up the rest of the leaves, laid them on the dish and brought them to the young lady, saying, 'I bring you the dish myself that you may not wait any longer.' So she ate of it, and like the others ran off into the court braying away.

Then the huntsman washed his face and went into the court that they might know him. 'Now you shall be paid for your roguery,' said he; and tied them all three to a rope and took them along with him till he came to a mill and knocked at the window. 'What's the matter?' said the miller. 'I have three tiresome beasts here,' said the other; 'if you will take them, give them food and room, and treat them as I tell you, I will pay you whatever you ask.' 'With all my heart,' said the miller; 'but how shall I treat them?' Then the huntsman said, ‘Give the old one stripes three times a day and hay once; give the next (who was the servant-maid) stripes once a day and hay three times; and give the youngest (who was the beautiful lady) hay three times a day and no stripes’: for he could not find it in his heart to have her beaten. After this he went back to the castle, where he found everything he wanted.

Some days after, the miller came to him and told him that the old ass was dead; ‘The other two,’ said he, ‘are alive and eat, but are so sorrowful that they cannot last long.’ Then the huntsman pitied them, and told the miller to drive them back to him, and when they came, he gave them some of the good salad to eat. And the beautiful young lady fell upon her knees before him, and said, ‘O dearest huntsman! forgive me all the ill I have done you; my mother forced me to it, it was against my will, for I always loved you very much. Your wishing-cloak hangs up in the closet, and as for the bird’s heart, I will give it you too.’ But he said, ‘Keep it, it will be just the same thing, for I mean to make you my wife.’ So they were married, and lived together very happily till they died.

THE STORY OF THE YOUTH WHO WENT FORTH TO LEARN WHAT FEAR WAS

A certain father had two sons, the elder of who was smart and sensible, and could do everything, but the younger was stupid and could neither learn nor understand anything, and when people saw him they said: ‘There’s a fellow who will give his father some trouble!’ When anything had to be done, it was always the elder who was forced to do it; but if his father bade him fetch anything when it was late, or in the night-time, and the way led through the churchyard, or any other dismal place, he answered: ‘Oh, no father, I’ll not go there, it makes me shudder!’ for he was afraid. Or when stories were told by the fire at night which made the flesh creep, the listeners sometimes said: ‘Oh, it makes us shudder!’ The younger sat in a corner and listened with the rest of them, and could not imagine what they could mean. ‘They are always saying: “It makes me shudder, it makes me shudder!” It does not make me shudder,’ thought he. ‘That, too, must be an art of which I understand nothing!’

Now it came to pass that his father said to him one day: ‘Hearken to me, you fellow in the corner there, you are growing tall and strong, and you too must learn something by which you can earn your bread. Look how your brother works, but you do not even earn your salt.’ ‘Well, father,’ he replied, ‘I am quite willing to learn something — indeed, if it could but be managed, I should like to learn how to shudder. I don’t understand that at all yet.’ The elder brother smiled when he heard that, and thought to himself: ‘Goodness, what a blockhead that brother of mine is! He will never be good for anything as long as he lives! He who wants to be a sickle must bend himself betimes.’

The father sighed, and answered him: ‘You shall soon learn what it is to shudder, but you will not earn your bread by that.’

Soon after this the sexton came to the house on a visit, and the father bewailed his trouble, and told him how his younger son was so backward in every respect that he knew nothing and learnt nothing. ‘Just think,’ said he, ‘when I asked him how he was going to earn his bread, he actually wanted to learn to shudder.’ ‘If that be all,’ replied the sexton, ‘he can learn that with me. Send him to me, and I will soon polish him.’ The father was glad to do it, for he thought: ‘It will train the boy a little.’ The sexton therefore took him into his house, and he had to ring the church bell. After a day or two, the sexton awoke him at midnight, and bade him arise and go up into the church tower and ring the bell. ‘You shall soon learn what shuddering is,’ thought he, and secretly went there before him; and when the boy was at the top of the tower and turned round, and was just going to take hold of the bell rope, he saw a white figure standing on the stairs opposite the sounding hole. ‘Who is there?’ cried he, but the figure made no reply, and did not move or stir. ‘Give an answer,’ cried the boy, ‘or take yourself off, you have no business here at night.’

The sexton, however, remained standing motionless that the boy might think he was a ghost. The boy cried a second time: ‘What do you want here? — speak if you are an honest fellow, or I will throw you down the steps!’ The sexton thought: ‘He can’t mean to be as bad as his words,’ uttered no sound and stood as if he were made of stone. Then the boy called to him for the third time, and as that was also to no purpose, he ran against him and pushed the ghost down the stairs, so that it fell down the ten steps and remained lying there in a corner. Thereupon he rang the bell, went home, and without saying a word went to bed, and fell asleep. The sexton’s wife waited a long time for her husband, but he did not come back. At length she became uneasy, and wakened the boy, and asked: ‘Do you know where my husband is? He climbed up the tower before you did.’ ‘No, I don’t know,’ replied the boy, ‘but someone was standing by the sounding hole on the other side of the steps, and as he would neither gave an answer nor go away, I took him for a scoundrel, and threw him downstairs. Just go there and you will see if it was he. I should be sorry if it were.’ The woman ran away and found her husband, who was lying moaning in the corner, and had broken his leg.

She carried him down, and then with loud screams she hastened to the boy’s father, ‘Your boy,’ cried she, ‘has been the cause of a great misfortune! He has thrown my husband down the steps so that he broke his leg. Take the good-for-nothing fellow out of our house.’ The father was terrified, and ran thither and scolded the boy. ‘What wicked tricks are these?’ said he. ‘The devil must have put them into your head.’ ‘Father,’ he replied, ‘do listen to me. I am quite innocent. He was standing there by night like one intent on doing evil. I did not know who it was, and I entreated him three times either to speak or to go away.’ ‘Ah,’ said the father, ‘I have nothing but unhappiness with you. Go out of my sight. I will see you no more.’

‘Yes, father, right willingly, wait only until it is day. Then will I go forth and learn how to shudder, and then I shall, at any rate, understand one art which will support me.’ ‘Learn what you will,’ spoke the father, ‘it is all the same to me. Here are fifty talers for you. Take these and go into the wide world, and tell no one from whence you come, and who is your father, for I have reason to be ashamed of you.’ ‘Yes, father, it shall be as you will. If you desire nothing more than that, I can easily keep it in mind.’

When the day dawned, therefore, the boy put his fifty talers into his pocket, and went forth on the great highway, and continually said to himself: ‘If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!’ Then a man approached who heard this conversation which the youth was holding with himself, and when they had walked a little farther to where they could see the gallows, the man said to him: ‘Look, there is the tree where seven men have married the ropemaker’s daughter, and are now learning how to fly. Sit down beneath it, and wait till night comes, and you will soon learn how to shudder.’ ‘If that is all that is wanted,’ answered the youth, ‘it is easily done; but if I learn how to shudder as fast as that, you shall have my fifty talers. Just come back to me early in the morning.’ Then the youth went to the gallows, sat down beneath it, and waited till evening came. And as he was cold, he lighted himself a fire, but at midnight the wind blew so sharply that in spite of his fire, he could not get warm. And as the wind knocked the hanged men against each other, and they moved backwards and forwards, he thought to himself: ‘If you shiver below by the fire, how those up above must freeze and suffer!’ And as he felt pity for them, he raised the ladder, and climbed up, unbound one of them after the other, and brought down all seven. Then he stoked the fire, blew it, and set them all round it to warm themselves. But they sat there and did not stir, and the fire caught their clothes. So he said: ‘Take care, or I will hang you up again.’ The dead men, however, did not hear, but were quite silent, and let their rags go on burning. At this he grew angry, and said: ‘If you will not take care, I cannot help you, I will not be burnt with you,’ and he hung them up again each in his turn. Then he sat down by his fire and fell asleep, and the next morning the man came to him and wanted to have the fifty talers, and said: ‘Well do you know how to shudder?’ ‘No,’ answered he, ‘how should I know? Those fellows up there did not open their mouths, and were so stupid that they let the few old rags which they had on their bodies get burnt.’ Then the man saw that he would not get the fifty talers that day, and went away saying: ‘Such a youth has never come my way before.’

The youth likewise went his way, and once more began to mutter to himself: ‘Ah, if I could but shudder! Ah, if I could but shudder!’ A waggoner who was striding behind him heard this and asked: ‘Who are you?’ ‘I don’t know,’ answered the youth. Then the waggoner asked: ‘From whence do you come?’ ‘I know not.’ ‘Who is your father?’ ‘That I may not tell you.’ ‘What is it that you are always muttering between your teeth?’ ‘Ah,’ replied the youth, ‘I do so wish I could shudder, but no one can teach me how.’ ‘Enough of your foolish chatter,’ said the waggoner. ‘Come, go with me, I will see about a place for you.’ The youth went with the waggoner, and in the evening they arrived at an inn where they wished to pass the night. Then at the entrance of the parlour the youth again said quite loudly: ‘If I could but shudder! If I could but shudder!’ The host who heard this, laughed and said: ‘If that is your desire, there ought to be a good opportunity for you here.’ ‘Ah, be silent,’ said the hostess, ‘so many prying persons have already lost their lives, it would be a pity and a shame if such beautiful eyes as these should never see the daylight again.’

But the youth said: ‘However difficult it may be, I will learn it. For this purpose indeed have I journeyed forth.’ He let the host have no rest, until the latter told him, that not far from thence stood a haunted castle where anyone could very easily learn what shuddering was, if he would but watch in it for three nights. The king had promised that he who would venture should have his daughter to wife, and she was the most beautiful maiden the sun shone on. Likewise in the castle lay great treasures, which were guarded by evil spirits, and these treasures would then be freed, and would make a poor man rich enough. Already many men had gone into the castle, but as yet none had come out again. Then the youth went next morning to the king, and said: ‘If it be allowed, I will willingly watch three nights in the haunted castle.'

The king looked at him, and as the youth pleased him, he said: 'You may ask for three things to take into the castle with you, but they must be things without life.' Then he answered: 'Then I ask for a fire, a turning lathe, and a cutting-board with the knife.'

The king had these things carried into the castle for him during the day. When night was drawing near, the youth went up and made himself a bright fire in one of the rooms, placed the cutting-board and knife beside it, and seated himself by the turning-lathe. 'Ah, if I could but shudder!' said he, 'but I shall not learn it here either.' Towards midnight he was about to poke his fire, and as he was blowing it, something cried suddenly from one corner: 'Au, miau! how cold we are!' 'You fools!' cried he, 'what are you crying about? If you are cold, come and take a seat by the fire and warm yourselves.' And when he had said that, two great black cats came with one tremendous leap and sat down on each side of him, and looked savagely at him with their fiery eyes. After a short time, when they had warmed themselves, they said: 'Comrade, shall we have a game of cards?' 'Why not?' he replied, 'but just show me your paws.' Then they stretched out their claws. 'Oh,' said he, 'what long nails you have! Wait, I must first cut them for you.' Thereupon he seized them by the throats, put them on the cutting-board and screwed their feet fast. 'I have looked at your fingers,' said he, 'and my fancy for card-playing has gone,' and he struck them dead and threw them out into the water. But when he had made away with these two, and was about to sit down again by his fire, out from every hole and corner came black cats and black dogs with red-hot chains, and more and more of them came until he could no longer move, and they yelled horribly, and got on his fire, pulled it to pieces, and tried to put it out. He watched them for a while quietly, but at last when they were going too far, he seized his cutting-knife, and cried: 'Away with you, vermin,' and began to cut them down. Some of them ran away, the others he killed, and threw out into the fish-pond. When he came back he fanned the embers of his fire again and warmed himself. And as he thus sat, his eyes would keep open no longer, and he felt a desire to sleep. Then he looked round and saw a great bed in the corner. 'That is the very thing for me,' said he, and got into it. When he was just going to shut his eyes, however, the bed began to move of its own accord, and went over the whole of the castle. 'That's right,' said he, 'but go faster.' Then the bed rolled on as if six horses were harnessed to it, up and down, over thresholds and stairs, but suddenly hop, hop, it turned over upside down, and lay on him like a mountain. But he threw quilts and pillows up in the air, got out and said: 'Now anyone who likes, may drive,' and lay down by his fire, and slept till it was day. In the morning the king came, and when he saw him lying there on the ground, he thought the evil spirits had killed him and he was dead. Then said he: 'After all it is a pity, — for so handsome a man.' The youth heard it, got up, and said: 'It has not come to that yet.' Then the king was astonished, but very glad, and asked how he had fared. 'Very well indeed,' answered he; 'one night is past, the two others will pass likewise.' Then he went to the innkeeper, who opened his eyes very wide, and said: 'I never expected to see you alive again! Have you learnt how to shudder yet?' 'No,' said he, 'it is all in vain. If someone would but tell me!'

The second night he again went up into the old castle, sat down by the fire, and once more began his old song: 'If I could but shudder!' When midnight came, an uproar and noise of tumbling about was heard; at first it was low, but it grew louder and louder. Then it was quiet for a while, and at length with a loud scream, half a man came down the chimney and fell before him. 'Hullo!' cried he, 'another half belongs to this. This is not enough!' Then the uproar began again, there was a roaring and howling, and the other half fell down likewise. 'Wait,' said he, 'I will just stoke up the fire a little for you.' When he had done that and looked round again, the two pieces were joined together, and a hideous man was sitting in his place. 'That is no part of our bargain,' said the youth, 'the bench is mine.' The man wanted to push him away; the youth, however, would not allow that, but thrust him off with all his strength, and seated himself again in his own place. Then still more men fell down, one after the other; they brought nine dead men's legs and two skulls, and set them up and played at nine-pins with them. The youth also wanted to play and said: 'Listen you, can I join you?' 'Yes, if you have any money.' 'Money enough,' replied he, 'but your balls are not quite round.' Then he took the skulls and put them in the lathe and turned them till they were round. 'There, now they will roll better!' said he. 'Hurrah! now we'll have fun!' He played with them and lost some of his money, but when it struck twelve, everything vanished from his sight. He lay down and quietly fell asleep. Next morning the king came to inquire after him. 'How has it fared with you this time?' asked he. 'I have been playing at nine-pins,' he answered, 'and have lost a couple of farthings.' 'Have you not shuddered then?' 'What?' said he, 'I have had a wonderful time! If I did but know what it was to shudder!'

The third night he sat down again on his bench and said quite sadly: 'If I could but shudder.' When it grew late, six tall men came in and brought a coffin. Then he said: 'Ha, ha, that is certainly my little cousin, who died only a few days ago,' and he beckoned with his finger, and cried: 'Come, little cousin, come.' They placed the coffin on the ground, but he went to it and took the lid off, and a dead man lay therein. He felt his face, but it was cold as ice. 'Wait,' said he, 'I will warm you a little,' and went to the fire and warmed his hand and laid it on the dead man's face, but he remained cold. Then he took him out, and sat down by the fire and laid him on his breast and rubbed his arms that the blood might circulate again. As this also did no good, he thought to himself: 'When two people lie in bed together, they warm each other,' and carried him to the bed, covered him over and lay down by him. After a short time the dead man became warm too, and began to move. Then said the youth, 'See, little cousin, have I not warmed you?' The dead man, however, got up and cried: 'Now will I strangle you.'

‘What!’ said he, ’is that the way you thank me? You shall at once go into your coffin again,’ and he took him up, threw him into it, and shut the lid. Then came the six men and carried him away again. ‘I cannot manage to shudder,’ said he. ‘I shall never learn it here as long as I live.’

Then a man entered who was taller than all others, and looked terrible. He was old, however, and had a long white beard. ‘You wretch,’ cried he, ‘you shall soon learn what it is to shudder, for you shall die.’ ‘Not so fast,’ replied the youth. ‘If I am to die, I shall have to have a say in it.’ ‘I will soon seize you,’ said the fiend. ‘Softly, softly, do not talk so big. I am as strong as you are, and perhaps even stronger.’ ‘We shall see,’ said the old man. ‘If you are stronger, I will let you go — come, we will try.’ Then he led him by dark passages to a smith’s forge, took an axe, and with one blow struck an anvil into the ground. ‘I can do better than that,’ said the youth, and went to the other anvil. The old man placed himself near and wanted to look on, and his white beard hung down. Then the youth seized the axe, split the anvil with one blow, and in it caught the old man’s beard. ‘Now I have you,’ said the youth. ‘Now it is your turn to die.’ Then he seized an iron bar and beat the old man till he moaned and entreated him to stop, when he would give him great riches. The youth drew out the axe and let him go. The old man led him back into the castle, and in a cellar showed him three chests full of gold. ‘Of these,’ said he, ‘one part is for the poor, the other for the king, the third yours.’ In the meantime it struck twelve, and the spirit disappeared, so that the youth stood in darkness. ‘I shall still be able to find my way out,’ said he, and felt about, found the way into the room, and slept there by his fire. Next morning the king came and said: ‘Now you must have learnt what shuddering is?’ ‘No,’ he answered; ‘what can it be? My dead cousin was here, and a bearded man came and showed me a great deal of money down below, but no one told me what it was to shudder.’ ‘Then,’ said the king, ‘you have saved the castle, and shall marry my daughter.’ ‘That is all very well,’ said he, ‘but still I do not know what it is to shudder!’

Then the gold was brought up and the wedding celebrated; but howsoever much the young king loved his wife, and however happy he was, he still said always: ‘If I could but shudder — if I could but shudder.’ And this at last angered her. Her waiting-maid said: ‘I will find a cure for him; he shall soon learn what it is to shudder.’ She went out to the stream which flowed through the garden, and had a whole bucketful of gudgeons brought to her. At night when the young king was sleeping, his wife was to draw the clothes off him and empty the bucket full of cold water with the gudgeons in it over him, so that the little fishes would sprawl about him. Then he woke up and cried: ‘Oh, what makes me shudder so? — what makes me shudder so, dear wife? Ah! now I know what it is to shudder!’

KING GRISLY-BEARD

A great king of a land far away in the East had a daughter who was very beautiful, but so proud, and haughty, and conceited, that none of the princes who came to ask her in marriage was good enough for her, and she only made sport of them.

Once upon a time the king held a great feast, and asked thither all her suitors; and they all sat in a row, ranged according to their rank — kings, and princes, and dukes, and earls, and counts, and barons, and knights. Then the princess came in, and as she passed by them she had something spiteful to say to every one. The first was too fat: ‘He’s as round as a tub,’ said she. The next was too tall: ‘What a maypole!’ said she. The next was too short: ‘What a dumpling!’ said she. The fourth was too pale, and she called him ‘Wallface.’ The fifth was too red, so she called him ‘Coxcomb.’ The sixth was not straight enough; so she said he was like a green stick, that had been laid to dry over a baker’s oven. And thus she had some joke to crack upon every one: but she laughed more than all at a good king who was there. ‘Look at him,’ said she; ‘his beard is like an old mop; he shall be called Grisly-beard.’ So the king got the nickname of Grisly-beard.

But the old king was very angry when he saw how his daughter behaved, and how she ill-treated all his guests; and he vowed that, willing or unwilling, she should marry the first man, be he prince or beggar, that came to the door.

Two days after there came by a travelling fiddler, who began to play under the window and beg alms; and when the king heard him, he said, ‘Let him come in.’ So they brought in a dirty-looking fellow; and when he had sung before the king and the princess, he begged a boon. Then the king said, ‘You have sung so well, that I will give you my daughter for your wife.’ The princess begged and prayed; but the king said, ‘I have sworn to give you to the first comer, and I will keep my word.’ So words and tears were of no avail; the parson was sent for, and she was married to the fiddler. When this was over the king said, ‘Now get ready to go — you must not stay here — you must travel on with your husband.’

Then the fiddler went his way, and took her with him, and they soon came to a great wood. ‘Pray,’ said she, ‘whose is this wood?’ ‘It belongs to King Grisly-beard,’ answered he; ‘hadst thou taken him, all had been thine.’ ‘Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!’ sighed she; ‘would that I had married King Grisly-beard!’ Next they came to some fine meadows. ‘Whose are these beautiful green meadows?’ said she. ‘They belong to King Grisly-beard, hadst thou taken him, they had all been thine.’ ‘Ah! unlucky wretch that I am!’ said she; ‘would that I had married King Grisly-beard!’

Then they came to a great city. ‘Whose is this noble city?’ said she. ‘It belongs to King Grisly-beard; hadst thou taken him, it had all been thine.’ ‘Ah! wretch that I am!’ sighed she; ‘why did I not marry King Grisly-beard?’ ‘That is no business of mine,’ said the fiddler: ‘why should you wish for another husband? Am not I good enough for you?’

At last they came to a small cottage. ‘What a paltry place!’ said she; ‘to whom does that little dirty hole belong?’ Then the fiddler said, ‘That is your and my house, where we are to live.’ ‘Where are your servants?’ cried she. ‘What do we want with servants?’ said he; ‘you must do for yourself whatever is to be done. Now make the fire, and put on water and cook my supper, for I am very tired.’ But the princess knew nothing of making fires and cooking, and the fiddler was forced to help her. When they had eaten a very scanty meal they went to bed; but the fiddler called her up very early in the morning to clean the house. Thus they lived for two days: and when they had eaten up all there was in the cottage, the man said, ‘Wife, we can’t go on thus, spending money and earning nothing. You must learn to weave baskets.’ Then he went out and cut willows, and brought them home, and she began to weave; but it made her fingers very sore. ‘I see this work won’t do,’ said he: ‘try and spin; perhaps you will do that better.’ So she sat down and tried to spin; but the threads cut her tender fingers till the blood ran. ‘See now,’ said the fiddler, ‘you are good for nothing; you can do no work: what a bargain I have got! However, I’ll try and set up a trade in pots and pans, and you shall stand in the market and sell them.’ ‘Alas!’ sighed she, ‘if any of my father’s court should pass by and see me standing in the market, how they will laugh at me!’

But her husband did not care for that, and said she must work, if she did not wish to die of hunger. At first the trade went well; for many people, seeing such a beautiful woman, went to buy her wares, and paid their money without thinking of taking away the goods. They lived on this as long as it lasted; and then her husband bought a fresh lot of ware, and she sat herself down with it in the corner of the market; but a drunken soldier soon came by, and rode his horse against her stall, and broke all her goods into a thousand pieces. Then she began to cry, and knew not what to do. ‘Ah! what will become of me?’ said she; ‘what will my husband say?’ So she ran home and told him all. ‘Who would have thought you would have been so silly,’ said he, ‘as to put an earthenware stall in the corner of the market, where everybody passes? but let us have no more crying; I see you are not fit for this sort of work, so I have been to the king’s palace, and asked if they did not want a kitchen-maid; and they say they will take you, and there you will have plenty to eat.’

Thus the princess became a kitchen-maid, and helped the cook to do all the dirtiest work; but she was allowed to carry home some of the meat that was left, and on this they lived.

She had not been there long before she heard that the king’s eldest son was passing by, going to be married; and she went to one of the windows and looked out. Everything was ready, and all the pomp and brightness of the court was there. Then she bitterly grieved for the pride and folly which had brought her so low. And the servants gave her some of the rich meats, which she put into her basket to take home.

All on a sudden, as she was going out, in came the king’s son in golden clothes; and when he saw a beautiful woman at the door, he took her by the hand, and said she should be his partner in the dance; but she trembled for fear, for she saw that it was King Grisly-beard, who was making sport of her. However, he kept fast hold, and led her in; and the cover of the basket came off, so that the meats in it fell about. Then everybody laughed and jeered at her; and she was so abashed, that she wished herself a thousand feet deep in the earth. She sprang to the door to run away; but on the steps King Grisly-beard overtook her, and brought her back and said, ‘Fear me not! I am the fiddler who has lived with you in the hut. I brought you there because I really loved you. I am also the soldier that overset your stall. I have done all this only to cure you of your silly pride, and to show you the folly of your ill-treatment of me. Now all is over: you have learnt wisdom, and it is time to hold our marriage feast.’

Then the chamberlains came and brought her the most beautiful robes; and her father and his whole court were there already, and welcomed her home on her marriage. Joy was in every face and every heart. The feast was grand; they danced and sang; all were merry; and I only wish that you and I had been of the party.

IRON HANS

There was once upon a time a king who had a great forest near his palace, full of all kinds of wild animals. One day he sent out a huntsman to shoot him a roe, but he did not come back. ‘Perhaps some accident has befallen him,’ said the king, and the next day he sent out two more huntsmen who were to search for him, but they too stayed away. Then on the third day, he sent for all his huntsmen, and said: ‘Scour the whole forest through, and do not give up until you have found all three.’ But of these also, none came home again, none were seen again. From that time forth, no one would any longer venture into the forest, and it lay there in deep stillness and solitude, and nothing was seen of it, but sometimes an eagle or a hawk flying over it. This lasted for many years, when an unknown huntsman announced himself to the king as seeking a situation, and offered to go into the dangerous forest. The king, however, would not give his consent, and said: ‘It is not safe in there; I fear it would fare with you no better than with the others, and you would never come out again.’ The huntsman replied: ‘Lord, I will venture it at my own risk, of fear I know nothing.’

The huntsman therefore betook himself with his dog to the forest. It was not long before the dog fell in with some game on the way, and wanted to pursue it; but hardly had the dog run two steps when it stood before a deep pool, could go no farther, and a naked arm stretched itself out of the water, seized it, and drew it under. When the huntsman saw that, he went back and fetched three men to come with buckets and bale out the water. When they could see to the bottom there lay a wild man whose body was brown like rusty iron, and whose hair hung over his face down to his knees. They bound him with cords, and led him away to the castle. There was great astonishment over the wild man; the king, however, had him put in an iron cage in his courtyard, and forbade the door to be opened on pain of death, and the queen herself was to take the key into her keeping. And from this time forth everyone could again go into the forest with safety.

The king had a son of eight years, who was once playing in the courtyard, and while he was playing, his golden ball fell into the cage. The boy ran thither and said: ‘Give me my ball out.’ ‘Not till you have opened the door for me,’ answered the man. ‘No,’ said the boy, ‘I will not do that; the king has forbidden it,’ and ran away. The next day he again went and asked for his ball; the wild man said: ‘Open my door,’ but the boy would not. On the third day the king had ridden out hunting, and the boy went once more and said: ‘I cannot open the door even if I wished, for I have not the key.’ Then the wild man said: ‘It lies under your mother’s pillow, you can get it there.’ The boy, who wanted to have his ball back, cast all thought to the winds, and brought the key. The door opened with difficulty, and the boy pinched his fingers. When it was open the wild man stepped out, gave him the golden ball, and hurried away. The boy had become afraid; he called and cried after him: ‘Oh, wild man, do not go away, or I shall be beaten!’ The wild man turned back, took him up, set him on his shoulder, and went with hasty steps into the forest. When the king came home, he observed the empty cage, and asked the queen how that had happened. She knew nothing about it, and sought the key, but it was gone. She called the boy, but no one answered. The king sent out people to seek for him in the fields, but they did not find him. Then he could easily guess what had happened, and much grief reigned in the royal court.

When the wild man had once more reached the dark forest, he took the boy down from his shoulder, and said to him: ‘You will never see your father and mother again, but I will keep you with me, for you have set me free, and I have compassion on you. If you do all I bid you, you shall fare well. Of treasure and gold have I enough, and more than anyone in the world.’ He made a bed of moss for the boy on which he slept, and the next morning the man took him to a well, and said: ‘Behold, the gold well is as bright and clear as crystal, you shall sit beside it, and take care that nothing falls into it, or it will be polluted. I will come every evening to see if you have obeyed my order.’ The boy placed himself by the brink of the well, and often saw a golden fish or a golden snake show itself therein, and took care that nothing fell in. As he was thus sitting, his finger hurt him so violently that he involuntarily put it in the water. He drew it quickly out again, but saw that it was quite gilded, and whatsoever pains he took to wash the gold off again, all was to no purpose. In the evening Iron Hans came back, looked at the boy, and said: ‘What has happened to the well?’ ‘Nothing nothing,’ he answered, and held his finger behind his back, that the man might not see it. But he said: ‘You have dipped your finger into the water, this time it may pass, but take care you do not again let anything go in.’ By daybreak the boy was already sitting by the well and watching it. His finger hurt him again and he passed it over his head, and then unhappily a hair fell down into the well. He took it quickly out, but it was already quite gilded. Iron Hans came, and already knew what had happened. ‘You have let a hair fall into the well,’ said he. ‘I will allow you to watch by it once more, but if this happens for the third time then the well is polluted and you can no longer remain with me.’

On the third day, the boy sat by the well, and did not stir his finger, however much it hurt him. But the time was long to him, and he looked at the reflection of his face on the surface of the water. And as he still bent down more and more while he was doing so, and trying to look straight into the eyes, his long hair fell down from his shoulders into the water. He raised himself up quickly, but the whole of the hair of his head was already golden and shone like the sun. You can imagine how terrified the poor boy was! He took his pocket-handkerchief and tied it round his head, in order that the man might not see it. When he came he already knew everything, and said: ‘Take the handkerchief off.’ Then the golden hair streamed forth, and let the boy excuse himself as he might, it was of no use. ‘You have not stood the trial and can stay here no longer. Go forth into the world, there you will learn what poverty is. But as you have not a bad heart, and as I mean well by you, there is one thing I will grant you; if you fall into any difficulty, come to the forest and cry: “Iron Hans,” and then I will come and help you. My power is great, greater than you think, and I have gold and silver in abundance.’

Then the king’s son left the forest, and walked by beaten and unbeaten paths ever onwards until at length he reached a great city. There he looked for work, but could find none, and he learnt nothing by which he could help himself. At length he went to the palace, and asked if they would take him in. The people about court did not at all know what use they could make of him, but they liked him, and told him to stay. At length the cook took him into his service, and said he might carry wood and water, and rake the cinders together. Once when it so happened that no one else was at hand, the cook ordered him to carry the food to the royal table, but as he did not like to let his golden hair be seen, he kept his little cap on. Such a thing as that had never yet come under the king’s notice, and he said: ‘When you come to the royal table you must take your hat off.’ He answered: ‘Ah, Lord, I cannot; I have a bad sore place on my head.’ Then the king had the cook called before him and scolded him, and asked how he could take such a boy as that into his service; and that he was to send him away at once. The cook, however, had pity on him, and exchanged him for the gardener’s boy.

And now the boy had to plant and water the garden, hoe and dig, and bear the wind and bad weather. Once in summer when he was working alone in the garden, the day was so warm he took his little cap off that the air might cool him. As the sun shone on his hair it glittered and flashed so that the rays fell into the bedroom of the king’s daughter, and up she sprang to see what that could be. Then she saw the boy, and cried to him: ‘Boy, bring me a wreath of flowers.’ He put his cap on with all haste, and gathered wild field-flowers and bound them together. When he was ascending the stairs with them, the gardener met him, and said: ‘How can you take the king’s daughter a garland of such common flowers? Go quickly, and get another, and seek out the prettiest and rarest.’ ‘Oh, no,’ replied the boy, ‘the wild ones have more scent, and will please her better.’ When he got into the room, the king’s daughter said: ‘Take your cap off, it is not seemly to keep it on in my presence.’ He again said: ‘I may not, I have a sore head.’ She, however, caught at his cap and pulled it off, and then his golden hair rolled down on his shoulders, and it was splendid to behold. He wanted to run out, but she held him by the arm, and gave him a handful of ducats. With these he departed, but he cared nothing for the gold pieces. He took them to the gardener, and said: ‘I present them to your children, they can play with them.’ The following day the king’s daughter again called to him that he was to bring her a wreath of field-flowers, and then he went in with it, she instantly snatched at his cap, and wanted to take it away from him, but he held it fast with both hands. She again gave him a handful of ducats, but he would not keep them, and gave them to the gardener for playthings for his children. On the third day things went just the same; she could not get his cap away from him, and he would not have her money.

Not long afterwards, the country was overrun by war. The king gathered together his people, and did not know whether or not he could offer any opposition to the enemy, who was superior in strength and had a mighty army. Then said the gardener's boy: 'I am grown up, and will go to the wars also, only give me a horse.' The others laughed, and said: 'Seek one for yourself when we are gone, we will leave one behind us in the stable for you.' When they had gone forth, he went into the stable, and led the horse out; it was lame of one foot, and limped hobblety jib, hobblety jib; nevertheless he mounted it, and rode away to the dark forest. When he came to the outskirts, he called 'Iron Hans' three times so loudly that it echoed through the trees. Thereupon the wild man appeared immediately, and said: 'What do you desire?' 'I want a strong steed, for I am going to the wars.' 'That you shall have, and still more than you ask for.' Then the wild man went back into the forest, and it was not long before a stable-boy came out of it, who led a horse that snorted with its nostrils, and could hardly be restrained, and behind them followed a great troop of warriors entirely equipped in iron, and their swords flashed in the sun. The youth made over his three-legged horse to the stable-boy, mounted the other, and rode at the head of the soldiers. When he got near the battlefield a great part of the king's men had already fallen, and little was wanting to make the rest give way. Then the youth galloped thither with his iron soldiers, broke like a hurricane over the enemy, and beat down all who opposed him. They began to flee, but the youth pursued, and never stopped, until there was not a single man left. Instead of returning to the king, however, he conducted his troop by byways back to the forest, and called forth Iron Hans. 'What do you desire?' asked the wild man. 'Take back your horse and your troops, and give me my three-legged horse again.' All that he asked was done, and soon he was riding on his three-legged horse. When the king returned to his palace, his daughter went to meet him, and wished him joy of his victory. 'I am not the one who carried away the victory,' said he, 'but a strange knight who came to my assistance with his soldiers.' The daughter wanted to hear who the strange knight was, but the king did not know, and said: 'He followed the enemy, and I did not see him again.' She inquired of the gardener where his boy was, but he smiled, and said: 'He has just come home on his three-legged horse, and the others have been mocking him, and crying: "Here comes our hobblety jib back again!" They asked, too: "Under what hedge have you been lying sleeping all the time?" So he said: "I did the best of all, and it would have gone badly without me." And then he was still more ridiculed.'

The king said to his daughter: 'I will proclaim a great feast that shall last for three days, and you shall throw a golden apple. Perhaps the unknown man will show himself.' When the feast was announced, the youth went out to the forest, and called Iron Hans. 'What do you desire?' asked he. 'That I may catch the king's daughter's golden apple.' 'It is as safe as if you had it already,' said Iron Hans. 'You shall likewise have a suit of red armour for the occasion, and ride on a spirited chestnut-horse.' When the day came, the youth galloped to the spot, took his place amongst the knights, and was recognized by no one. The king's daughter came forward, and threw a golden apple to the knights, but none of them caught it but he, only as soon as he had it he galloped away.

On the second day Iron Hans equipped him as a white knight, and gave him a white horse. Again he was the only one who caught the apple, and he did not linger an instant, but galloped off with it. The king grew angry, and said: 'That is not allowed; he must appear before me and tell his name.' He gave the order that if the knight who caught the apple, should go away again they should pursue him, and if he would not come back willingly, they were to cut him down and stab him.

On the third day, he received from Iron Hans a suit of black armour and a black horse, and again he caught the apple. But when he was riding off with it, the king's attendants pursued him, and one of them got so near him that he wounded the youth's leg with the point of his sword. The youth nevertheless escaped from them, but his horse leapt so violently that the helmet fell from the youth's head, and they could see that he had golden hair. They rode back and announced this to the king.

The following day the king's daughter asked the gardener about his boy. 'He is at work in the garden; the queer creature has been at the festival too, and only came home yesterday evening; he has likewise shown my children three golden apples which he has won.'

The king had him summoned into his presence, and he came and again had his little cap on his head. But the king's daughter went up to him and took it off, and then his golden hair fell down over his shoulders, and he was so handsome that all were amazed. 'Are you the knight who came every day to the festival, always in different colours, and who caught the three golden apples?' asked the king. 'Yes,' answered he, 'and here the apples are,' and he took them out of his pocket, and returned them to the king. 'If you desire further proof, you may see the wound which your people gave me when they followed me. But I am likewise the knight who helped you to your victory over your enemies.' 'If you can perform such deeds as that, you are no gardener's boy; tell me, who is your father?' 'My father is a mighty king, and gold have I in plenty as great as I require.' 'I well see,' said the king, 'that I owe my thanks to you; can I do anything to please you?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'that indeed you can. Give me your daughter to wife.' The maiden laughed, and said: 'He does not stand much on ceremony, but I have already seen by his golden hair that he was no gardener's boy,' and then she went and kissed him. His father and mother came to the wedding, and were in great delight, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their dear son again. And as they were sitting at the marriage-feast, the music suddenly stopped, the doors opened, and a stately king came in with a great retinue. He went up to the youth, embraced him and said: 'I am Iron Hans, and was by enchantment a wild man, but you have set me free; all the treasures which I possess, shall be your property.'

CAT-SKIN

There was once a king, whose queen had hair of the purest gold, and was so beautiful that her match was not to be met with on the whole face of the earth. But this beautiful queen fell ill, and when she felt that her end drew near she called the king to her and said, ‘Promise me that you will never marry again, unless you meet with a wife who is as beautiful as I am, and who has golden hair like mine.’ Then when the king in his grief promised all she asked, she shut her eyes and died. But the king was not to be comforted, and for a long time never thought of taking another wife. At last, however, his wise men said, ‘this will not do; the king must marry again, that we may have a queen.’ So messengers were sent far and wide, to seek for a bride as beautiful as the late queen. But there was no princess in the world so beautiful; and if there had been, still there was not one to be found who had golden hair. So the messengers came home, and had had all their trouble for nothing.

Now the king had a daughter, who was just as beautiful as her mother, and had the same golden hair. And when she was grown up, the king looked at her and saw that she was just like this late queen: then he said to his courtiers, ‘May I not marry my daughter? She is the very image of my dead wife: unless I have her, I shall not find any bride upon the whole earth, and you say there must be a queen.’ When the courtiers heard this they were shocked, and said, ‘Heaven forbid that a father should marry his daughter! Out of so great a sin no good can come.’ And his daughter was also shocked, but hoped the king would soon give up such thoughts; so she said to him, ‘Before I marry anyone I must have three dresses: one must be of gold, like the sun; another must be of shining silver, like the moon; and a third must be dazzling as the stars: besides this, I want a mantle of a thousand different kinds of fur put together, to which every beast in the kingdom must give a part of his skin.’ And thus she thought he would think of the matter no more. But the king made the most skilful workmen in his kingdom weave the three dresses: one golden, like the sun; another silvery, like the moon; and a third sparkling, like the stars: and his hunters were told to hunt out all the beasts in his kingdom, and to take the finest fur out of their skins: and thus a mantle of a thousand furs was made.

When all were ready, the king sent them to her; but she got up in the night when all were asleep, and took three of her trinkets, a golden ring, a golden necklace, and a golden brooch, and packed the three dresses — of the sun, the moon, and the stars — up in a nutshell, and wrapped herself up in the mantle made of all sorts of fur, and besmeared her face and hands with soot. Then she threw herself upon Heaven for help in her need, and went away, and journeyed on the whole night, till at last she came to a large wood. As she was very tired, she sat herself down in the hollow of a tree and soon fell asleep: and there she slept on till it was midday.

Now as the king to whom the wood belonged was hunting in it, his dogs came to the tree, and began to snuff about, and run round and round, and bark. ‘Look sharp!’ said the king to the huntsmen, ‘and see what sort of game lies there.’ And the huntsmen went up to the tree, and when they came back again said, ‘In the hollow tree there lies a most wonderful beast, such as we never saw before; its skin seems to be of a thousand kinds of fur, but there it lies fast asleep.’ ‘See,’ said the king, ‘if you can catch it alive, and we will take it with us.’ So the huntsmen took it up, and the maiden awoke and was greatly frightened, and said, ‘I am a poor child that has neither father nor mother left; have pity on me and take me with you.’ Then they said, ‘Yes, Miss Cat-skin, you will do for the kitchen; you can sweep up the ashes, and do things of that sort.’ So they put her into the coach, and took her home to the king’s palace. Then they showed her a little corner under the staircase, where no light of day ever peeped in, and said, ‘Cat-skin, you may lie and sleep there.’ And she was sent into the kitchen, and made to fetch wood and water, to blow the fire, pluck the poultry, pick the herbs, sift the ashes, and do all the dirty work.

Thus Cat-skin lived for a long time very sorrowfully. ‘Ah! pretty princess!’ thought she, ‘what will now become of thee?’ But it happened one day that a feast was to be held in the king’s castle, so she said to the cook, ‘May I go up a little while and see what is going on? I will take care and stand behind the door.’ And the cook said, ‘Yes, you may go, but be back again in half an hour’s time, to rake out the ashes.’ Then she took her little lamp, and went into her cabin, and took off the fur skin, and washed the soot from off her face and hands, so that her beauty shone forth like the sun from behind the clouds. She next opened her nutshell, and brought out of it the dress that shone like the sun, and so went to the feast. Everyone made way for her, for nobody knew her, and they thought she could be no less than a king’s daughter. But the king came up to her, and held out his hand and danced with her; and he thought in his heart, ‘I never saw any one half so beautiful.’

When the dance was at an end she curtsied; and when the king looked round for her, she was gone, no one knew wither. The guards that stood at the castle gate were called in: but they had seen no one. The truth was, that she had run into her little cabin, pulled off her dress, blackened her face and hands, put on the fur-skin cloak, and was Cat-skin again. When she went into the kitchen to her work, and began to rake the ashes, the cook said, ‘Let that alone till the morning, and heat the king’s soup; I should like to run up now and give a peep: but take care you don’t let a hair fall into it, or you will run a chance of never eating again.’

As soon as the cook went away, Cat-skin heated the king’s soup, and toasted a slice of bread first, as nicely as ever she could; and when it was ready, she went and looked in the cabin for her little golden ring, and put it into the dish in which the soup was. When the dance was over, the king ordered his soup to be brought in; and it pleased him so well, that he thought he had never tasted any so good before. At the bottom he saw a gold ring lying; and as he could not make out how it had got there, he ordered the cook to be sent for. The cook was frightened when he heard the order, and said to Cat-skin, ‘You must have let a hair fall into the soup; if it be so, you will have a good beating.’ Then he went before the king, and he asked him who had cooked the soup. ‘I did,’ answered the cook. But the king said, ‘That is not true; it was better done than you could do it.’ Then he answered, ‘To tell the truth I did not cook it, but Cat-skin did.’ ‘Then let Cat-skin come up,’ said the king: and when she came he said to her, ‘Who are you?’ ‘I am a poor child,’ said she, ‘that has lost both father and mother.’ ‘How came you in my palace?’ asked he. ‘I am good for nothing,’ said she, ‘but to be scullion-girl, and to have boots and shoes thrown at my head.’ ‘But how did you get the ring that was in the soup?’ asked the king. Then she would not own that she knew anything about the ring; so the king sent her away again about her business.

After a time there was another feast, and Cat-skin asked the cook to let her go up and see it as before. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘but come again in half an hour, and cook the king the soup that he likes so much.’ Then she ran to her little cabin, washed herself quickly, and took her dress out which was silvery as the moon, and put it on; and when she went in, looking like a king’s daughter, the king went up to her, and rejoiced at seeing her again, and when the dance began he danced with her. After the dance was at an end she managed to slip out, so slyly that the king did not see where she was gone; but she sprang into her little cabin, and made herself into Cat-skin again, and went into the kitchen to cook the soup. Whilst the cook was above stairs, she got the golden necklace and dropped it into the soup; then it was brought to the king, who ate it, and it pleased him as well as before; so he sent for the cook, who was again forced to tell him that Cat-skin had cooked it. Cat-skin was brought again before the king, but she still told him that she was only fit to have boots and shoes thrown at her head.

But when the king had ordered a feast to be got ready for the third time, it happened just the same as before. ‘You must be a witch, Cat-skin,’ said the cook; ‘for you always put something into your soup, so that it pleases the king better than mine.’ However, he let her go up as before. Then she put on her dress which sparkled like the stars, and went into the ball-room in it; and the king danced with her again, and thought she had never looked so beautiful as she did then. So whilst he was dancing with her, he put a gold ring on her finger without her seeing it, and ordered that the dance should be kept up a long time. When it was at an end, he would have held her fast by the hand, but she slipped away, and sprang so quickly through the crowd that he lost sight of her: and she ran as fast as she could into her little cabin under the stairs. But this time she kept away too long, and stayed beyond the half-hour; so she had not time to take off her fine dress, and threw her fur mantle over it, and in her haste did not blacken herself all over with soot, but left one of her fingers white.

Then she ran into the kitchen, and cooked the king’s soup; and as soon as the cook was gone, she put the golden brooch into the dish. When the king got to the bottom, he ordered Cat-skin to be called once more, and soon saw the white finger, and the ring that he had put on it whilst they were dancing: so he seized her hand, and kept fast hold of it, and when she wanted to loose herself and spring away, the fur cloak fell off a little on one side, and the starry dress sparkled underneath it.

Then he got hold of the fur and tore it off, and her golden hair and beautiful form were seen, and she could no longer hide herself: so she washed the soot and ashes from her face, and showed herself to be the most beautiful princess upon the face of the earth. But the king said, ‘You are my beloved bride, and we will never more be parted from each other.’ And the wedding feast was held, and a merry day it was, as ever was heard of or seen in that country, or indeed in any other.

SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

There was once a poor widow who lived in a lonely cottage. In front of the cottage was a garden wherein stood two rose-trees, one of which bore white and the other red roses. She had two children who were like the two rose-trees, and one was called Snow-white, and the other Rose-red. They were as good and happy, as busy and cheerful as ever two children in the world were, only Snow-white was more quiet and gentle than Rose-red. Rose-red liked better to run about in the meadows and fields seeking flowers and catching butterflies; but Snow-white sat at home with her mother, and helped her with her housework, or read to her when there was nothing to do.

The two children were so fond of one another that they always held each other by the hand when they went out together, and when Snow-white said: ‘We will not leave each other,’ Rose-red answered: ‘Never so long as we live,’ and their mother would add: ‘What one has she must share with the other.’

They often ran about the forest alone and gathered red berries, and no beasts did them any harm, but came close to them trustfully. The little hare would eat a cabbage-leaf out of their hands, the roe grazed by their side, the stag leapt merrily by them, and the birds sat still upon the boughs, and sang whatever they knew.

No mishap overtook them; if they had stayed too late in the forest, and night came on, they laid themselves down near one another upon the moss, and slept until morning came, and their mother knew this and did not worry on their account.

Once when they had spent the night in the wood and the dawn had roused them, they saw a beautiful child in a shining white dress sitting near their bed. He got up and looked quite kindly at them, but said nothing and went into the forest. And when they looked round they found that they had been sleeping quite close to a precipice, and would certainly have fallen into it in the darkness if they had gone only a few paces further. And their mother told them that it must have been the angel who watches over good children.

Snow-white and Rose-red kept their mother’s little cottage so neat that it was a pleasure to look inside it. In the summer Rose-red took care of the house, and every morning laid a wreath of flowers by her mother’s bed before she awoke, in which was a rose from each tree. In the winter Snow-white lit the fire and hung the kettle on the hob. The kettle was of brass and shone like gold, so brightly was it polished. In the evening, when the snowflakes fell, the mother said: ‘Go, Snow-white, and bolt the door,’ and then they sat round the hearth, and the mother took her spectacles and read aloud out of a large book, and the two girls listened as they sat and spun. And close by them lay a lamb upon the floor, and behind them upon a perch sat a white dove with its head hidden beneath its wings.

One evening, as they were thus sitting comfortably together, someone knocked at the door as if he wished to be let in. The mother said: ‘Quick, Rose-red, open the door, it must be a traveller who is seeking shelter.' Rose-red went and pushed back the bolt, thinking that it was a poor man, but it was not; it was a bear that stretched his broad, black head within the door.

Rose-red screamed and sprang back, the lamb bleated, the dove fluttered, and Snow-white hid herself behind her mother's bed. But the bear began to speak and said: 'Do not be afraid, I will do you no harm! I am half-frozen, and only want to warm myself a little beside you.'

'Poor bear,' said the mother, 'lie down by the fire, only take care that you do not burn your coat.' Then she cried: 'Snow-white, Rose-red, come out, the bear will do you no harm, he means well.' So they both came out, and by-and-by the lamb and dove came nearer, and were not afraid of him. The bear said: 'Here, children, knock the snow out of my coat a little'; so they brought the broom and swept the bear's hide clean; and he stretched himself by the fire and growled contentedly and comfortably. It was not long before they grew quite at home, and played tricks with their clumsy guest. They tugged his hair with their hands, put their feet upon his back and rolled him about, or they took a hazel-switch and beat him, and when he growled they laughed. But the bear took it all in good part, only when they were too rough he called out: 'Leave me alive, children,

Snow-white, Rose-red,
Will you beat your wooer dead?'

When it was bed-time, and the others went to bed, the mother said to the bear: 'You can lie there by the hearth, and then you will be safe from the cold and the bad weather.' As soon as day dawned the two children let him out, and he trotted across the snow into the forest.

Henceforth the bear came every evening at the same time, laid himself down by the hearth, and let the children amuse themselves with him as much as they liked; and they got so used to him that the doors were never fastened until their black friend had arrived.

When spring had come and all outside was green, the bear said one morning to Snow-white: 'Now I must go away, and cannot come back for the whole summer.' 'Where are you going, then, dear bear?' asked Snow-white. 'I must go into the forest and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs. In the winter, when the earth is frozen hard, they are obliged to stay below and cannot work their way through; but now, when the sun has thawed and warmed the earth, they break through it, and come out to pry and steal; and what once gets into their hands, and in their caves, does not easily see daylight again.'

Snow-white was quite sorry at his departure, and as she unbolted the door for him, and the bear was hurrying out, he caught against the bolt and a piece of his hairy coat was torn off, and it seemed to Snow-white as if she had seen gold shining through it, but she was not sure about it. The bear ran away quickly, and was soon out of sight behind the trees.

A short time afterwards the mother sent her children into the forest to get firewood. There they found a big tree which lay felled on the ground, and close by the trunk something was jumping backwards and forwards in the grass, but they could not make out what it was. When they came nearer they saw a dwarf with an old withered face and a snow-white beard a yard long. The end of the beard was caught in a crevice of the tree, and the little fellow was jumping about like a dog tied to a rope, and did not know what to do.

He glared at the girls with his fiery red eyes and cried: ‘Why do you stand there? Can you not come here and help me?’ ‘What are you up to, little man?’ asked Rose-red. ‘You stupid, prying goose!’ answered the dwarf: ‘I was going to split the tree to get a little wood for cooking. The little bit of food that we people get is immediately burnt up with heavy logs; we do not swallow so much as you coarse, greedy folk. I had just driven the wedge safely in, and everything was going as I wished; but the cursed wedge was too smooth and suddenly sprang out, and the tree closed so quickly that I could not pull out my beautiful white beard; so now it is tight and I cannot get away, and the silly, sleek, milk-faced things laugh! Ugh! how odious you are!’

The children tried very hard, but they could not pull the beard out, it was caught too fast. ‘I will run and fetch someone,’ said Rose-red. ‘You senseless goose!’ snarled the dwarf; ‘why should you fetch someone? You are already two too many for me; can you not think of something better?’ ‘Don’t be impatient,’ said Snow-white, ‘I will help you,’ and she pulled her scissors out of her pocket, and cut off the end of the beard.

As soon as the dwarf felt himself free he laid hold of a bag which lay amongst the roots of the tree, and which was full of gold, and lifted it up, grumbling to himself: ‘Uncouth people, to cut off a piece of my fine beard. Bad luck to you!’ and then he swung the bag upon his back, and went off without even once looking at the children.

Some time afterwards Snow-white and Rose-red went to catch a dish of fish. As they came near the brook they saw something like a large grasshopper jumping towards the water, as if it were going to leap in. They ran to it and found it was the dwarf. ‘Where are you going?’ said Rose-red; ‘you surely don’t want to go into the water?’ ‘I am not such a fool!’ cried the dwarf; ‘don’t you see that the accursed fish wants to pull me in?’ The little man had been sitting there fishing, and unluckily the wind had tangled up his beard with the fishing-line; a moment later a big fish made a bite and the feeble creature had not strength to pull it out; the fish kept the upper hand and pulled the dwarf towards him. He held on to all the reeds and rushes, but it was of little good, for he was forced to follow the movements of the fish, and was in urgent danger of being dragged into the water.

The girls came just in time; they held him fast and tried to free his beard from the line, but all in vain, beard and line were entangled fast together. There was nothing to do but to bring out the scissors and cut the beard, whereby a small part of it was lost. When the dwarf saw that he screamed out: ‘Is that civil, you toadstool, to disfigure a man’s face? Was it not enough to clip off the end of my beard? Now you have cut off the best part of it. I cannot let myself be seen by my people. I wish you had been made to run the soles off your shoes!’ Then he took out a sack of pearls which lay in the rushes, and without another word he dragged it away and disappeared behind a stone.

It happened that soon afterwards the mother sent the two children to the town to buy needles and thread, and laces and ribbons. The road led them across a heath upon which huge pieces of rock lay strewn about. There they noticed a large bird hovering in the air, flying slowly round and round above them; it sank lower and lower, and at last settled near a rock not far away. Immediately they heard a loud, piteous cry. They ran up and saw with horror that the eagle had seized their old acquaintance the dwarf, and was going to carry him off.

The children, full of pity, at once took tight hold of the little man, and pulled against the eagle so long that at last he let his booty go. As soon as the dwarf had recovered from his first fright he cried with his shrill voice: ‘Could you not have done it more carefully! You dragged at my brown coat so that it is all torn and full of holes, you clumsy creatures!’ Then he took up a sack full of precious stones, and slipped away again under the rock into his hole. The girls, who by this time were used to his ingratitude, went on their way and did their business in town.

As they crossed the heath again on their way home they surprised the dwarf, who had emptied out his bag of precious stones in a clean spot, and had not thought that anyone would come there so late. The evening sun shone upon the brilliant stones; they glittered and sparkled with all colours so beautifully that the children stood still and stared at them. ‘Why do you stand gaping there?’ cried the dwarf, and his ashen-grey face became copper-red with rage. He was still cursing when a loud growling was heard, and a black bear came trotting towards them out of the forest. The dwarf sprang up in a fright, but he could not reach his cave, for the bear was already close. Then in the dread of his heart he cried: ‘Dear Mr Bear, spare me, I will give you all my treasures; look, the beautiful jewels lying there! Grant me my life; what do you want with such a slender little fellow as I? you would not feel me between your teeth. Come, take these two wicked girls, they are tender morsels for you, fat as young quails; for mercy’s sake eat them!’ The bear took no heed of his words, but gave the wicked creature a single blow with his paw, and he did not move again.

The girls had run away, but the bear called to them: ‘Snow-white and Rose-red, do not be afraid; wait, I will come with you.’ Then they recognized his voice and waited, and when he came up to them suddenly his bearskin fell off, and he stood there a handsome man, clothed all in gold. ‘I am a king’s son,’ he said, ‘and I was bewitched by that wicked dwarf, who had stolen my treasures; I have had to run about the forest as a savage bear until I was freed by his death. Now he has got his well-deserved punishment.

Snow-white was married to him, and Rose-red to his brother, and they divided between them the great treasure which the dwarf had gathered together in his cave. The old mother lived peacefully and happily with her children for many years. She took the two rose-trees with her, and they stood before her window, and every year bore the most beautiful roses, white and red.

THE ORIGINAL GERMAN TEXT, 1857

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Vorrede.

Wir finden es wohl, wenn von Sturm und anderem Unglück, das der Himmel schickt, eine ganze Saat zu Boden geschlagen wird, daß noch bei niedrigen Hecken oder Sträuchen, die am Wege stehen, ein kleiner Platz sich gesichert hat, und einzelne Ähren aufrecht geblieben sind. Scheint dann die Sonne wieder günstig, so wachsen sie einsam und unbeachtet fort: keine frühe Sichel schneidet sie für die großen Vorratskammern, aber im Spätsommer, wenn sie reif und voll geworden, kommen arme Hände, die sie suchen, und Ähre an Ähre gelegt, sorgfältig gebunden und höher geachtet als sonst ganze Garben, werden sie heimgetragen, und winterlang sind sie Nahrung, vielleicht auch der einzige Samen für die Zukunft.

So ist es uns vorgekommen, wenn wir gesehen haben, wie von so vielem, was in früherer Zeit geblüht hat, nichts mehr übrig geblieben, selbst die Erinnerung daran fast ganz verloren war, als unter dem Volke Lieder, ein paar Bücher, Sagen und diese unschuldigen Hausmärchen. Die Plätze am Ofen, der Küchenherd, Bodentreppen, Feiertage noch gefeiert, Triften und Wälder in ihrer Stille, vor allem die ungetrübte Phantasie sind die Hecken gewesen, die sie gesichert und einer Zeit aus der andern überliefert haben.

Es war vielleicht gerade Zeit, diese Märchen festzuhalten, da diejenigen, die sie bewahren sollen, immer seltener werden. Freilich, die sie noch wissen, wissen gemeinlich auch recht viel, weil die Menschen ihnen absterben, sie nicht den Menschen: aber die Sitte selber nimmt immer mehr ab, wie alle heimlichen Plätze in Wohnungen und Gärten, die vom Großvater bis zum Enkel fortdauerten, dem stetigen Wechsel einer leeren Prächtigkeit weichen, die dem Lächeln gleicht, womit man von diesen Hausmärchen spricht, welches vornehm aussieht und doch wenig kostet. Wo sie noch da sind, leben sie so, daß man nicht daran denkt, ob sie gut oder schlecht sind, poetisch oder für gescheite Leute abgeschmackt: man weiß sie und liebt sie, weil man sie eben so empfangen hat, und freut sich daran, ohne einen Grund dafür. So herrlich ist lebendige Sitte, ja auch das hat die Poesie mit allem Unvergänglichen gemein, daß man ihr selbst gegen einen andern Willen geneigt sein muß. Leicht wird man übrigens bemerken, daß sie nur da gehaftet hat, wo überhaupt eine regere Empfänglichkeit für Poesie oder eine noch nicht von den Verkehrtheiten des Lebens ausgelöschte Phantasie vorhanden war. Wir wollen in gleichem Sinne diese Märchen nicht rühmen oder gar gegen eine entgegengesetzte Meinung verteidigen: ihr bloßes Dasein reicht hin, sie zu schützen. Was so mannigfach und immer wieder von neuem erfreut, bewegt und belehrt hat, das trägt seine Notwendigkeit in sich und ist gewiß aus jener ewigen Quelle gekommen, die alles Leben betaut, und wenn es auch nur ein einziger Tropfen wäre, den ein kleines, zusammengehaltenes Blatt gefaßt hat, so schimmert er doch in dem ersten Morgenrot.

Darum geht innerlich durch diese Dichtungen jene Reinheit, um derentwillen uns Kinder so wunderbar und selig erscheinen: sie haben gleichsam dieselben blaulichweißen makellosen glänzenden Augen, die nicht mehr wachsen können, während die andern Glieder noch zart, schwach und zum Dienste der Erde ungeschickt sind. Das ist der Grund, warum wir durch unsere Sammlung nicht bloß der Geschichte der Poesie und Mythologie einen Dienst erweisen wollten, sondern es zugleich Absicht war, daß die Poesie selbst, die darin lebendig ist, wirke und erfreue, wen sie erfreuen kann, also auch, daß es als ein Erziehungsbuch diene. Wir suchen für ein solches nicht jene Reinheit, die durch ein ängstliches Ausscheiden dessen, was Bezug auf gewisse Zustände und Verhältnisse hat, wie sie täglich vorkommen und auf keine Weise verborgen bleiben können, erlangt wird, und wobei man zugleich in der Täuschung ist, daß das, was in einem gedruckten Buche ausführbar, es auch im wirklichen Leben sei. Wir suchen die Reinheit in der Wahrheit einer geraden, nichts Unrechtes im Rückhalt bergenden Erzählung. Dabei haben wir jeden für das Kindesalter nicht passenden Ausdruck in dieser neuen Auflage sorgfältig gelöscht. Sollte man dennoch einzuwenden haben, daß Eltern eins und das andere in Verlegenheit setze und ihnen anstößig vorkomme, so daß sie das Buch Kindern nicht geradezu in die Hände geben wollten, so mag für einzelne Fälle die Sorge begründet sein, und sie können dann leicht eine Auswahl treffen: im ganzen, das heißt für einen gesunden Zustand, ist sie gewiß unnötig. Nichts besser kann uns verteidigen als die Natur selber, welche diese Blumen und Blätter in solcher Farbe und Gestalt hat wachsen lassen; wem sie nicht zuträglich sind nach besonderen Bedürfnissen, der kann nicht fordern, daß sie deshalb anders gefärbt und geschnitten werden sollen. Oder auch, Regen und Tau fällt als eine Wohltat für alles herab, was auf der Erde steht, wer seine Pflanzen nicht hineinzustellen getraut, weil sie zu empfindlich sind und Schaden nehmen könnten, sondern sie lieber in der Stube mit abgeschrecktem Wasser begießt, wird doch nicht verlangen, daß Regen und Tau darum ausbleiben sollen. Gedeihlich aber kann alles werden, was natürlich ist, und danach sollen wir trachten. Übrigens wissen wir kein gesundes und kräftiges Buch, welches das Volk erbaut hat, wenn wir die Bibel obenan stellen, wo solche Bedenklichkeiten nicht in ungleich größerem Maß einträten: der rechte Gebrauch aber findet nichts Böses heraus, sondern, wie ein schönes Wort sagt, ein Zeugnis unseres Herzens. Kinder deuten ohne Furcht in die Sterne, während andere, nach dem Volksglauben, die Engel damit beleidigen.

Gesammelt haben wir an diesen Märchen seit etwa dreizehn Jahren, der erste Band, welcher im Jahre 1812 erschien, enthielt meist, was wir nach und nach in Hessen, in den Mainund Kinziggegenden der Grafschaft Hanau, wo wir her sind, von mündlichen Überlieferungen aufgefaßt hatten. Der zweite Band wurde im Jahre 1814 beendigt und kam schneller zustande, teils weil das Buch selbst sich Freunde verschafft hatte, die es nun, wo sie bestimmt sahen, was und wie es gemeint war, unterstützten, teils weil uns das Glück begünstigte, das Zufall scheint, aber gewöhnlich beharrlichen und fleißigen Sammlern beisteht. Ist man erst gewöhnt, auf dergleichen zu achten, so begegnet es doch häufiger, als man sonst glaubt, und das ist überhaupt mit Sitten und Eigentümlichkeiten, Sprüchen und Scherzen des Volkes der Fall. Die schönen plattdeutschen Märchen aus dem Fürstentum Münster und Paderborn verdanken wir besonderer Güte und Freundschaft: das Zutrauliche der Mundart bei der innern Vollständigkeit zeigt sich hier besonders günstig. Dort, in den altberühmten Gegenden deutscher Freiheit, haben sich an manchen Orten die Sagen und Märchen als eine fast regelmäßige Vergnügung der Feiertage erhalten, und das Land ist noch reich an ererbten Gebräuchen und Liedern. Da, wo die Schrift teils noch nicht durch Einführung des Fremden stört oder durch Überladung abstumpft, teils, weil sie sichert, dem Gedächtnis noch nicht nachlässig zu werden gestattet, überhaupt bei Völkern, deren Literatur unbedeutend ist, pflegt sich als Ersatz die Überlieferung stärker und ungetrübter zu zeigen. So scheint auch Niedersachsen mehr als alle andere Gegenden behalten zu haben. Was für eine viel vollständigere und innerlich reichere Sammlung wäre im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert, oder auch noch im sechzehnten zu Hans Sachsens und Fischarts Zeiten in Deutschland möglich gewesen.

Einer jener guten Zufälle aber war es, daß wir aus dem bei Kassel gelegenen Dorfe Niederzwehrn eine Bäuerin kennen lernten, die uns die meisten und schönsten Märchen des zweiten Bandes erzählte. Die Frau Viehmännin war noch rüstig und nicht viel über fünfzig Jahre alt. Ihre Gesichtszüge hatten etwas Festes, Verständiges und Angenehmes, und aus großen Augen blickte sie hell und scharf. Sie bewahrte die alten Sagen fest im Gedächtnis und sagte wohl selbst, daß diese Gabe nicht jedem verliehen sei und mancher gar nichts im Zusammenhange behalten könne. Dabei erzählte sie bedächtig, sicher und ungemein lebendig, mit eigenem Wohlgefallen daran, erst ganz frei, dann, wenn man es wollte, noch einmal langsam, so daß man mit einiger Übung nachschreiben konnte. Manches ist auf diese Weise wörtlich beibehalten und wird in seiner Wahrheit nicht zu verkennen sein. Wer an leichte Verfälschung der Überlieferung, Nachlässigkeit bei Aufbewahrung und daher an Unmöglichkeit langer Dauer als Regel glaubt, der hätte hören müssen, wie genau sie immer bei der Erzählung blieb und auf ihre Richtigkeit eifrig war; sie änderte niemals bei einer Wiederholung etwas in der Sache ab und besserte ein Versehen, sobald sie es bemerkte, mitten in der Rede gleich selber. Die Anhänglichkeit an das Überlieferte ist bei Menschen, die in gleicher Lebensart unabänderlich fortfahren, stärker, als wir, zur Veränderung geneigt, begreifen. Eben darum hat es, so vielfach bewährt, eine gewisse eindringliche Nähe und innere Tüchtigkeit, zu der anderes, das äußerlich viel glänzender erscheinen kann, nicht so leicht gelangt. Der epische Grund der Volksdichtung gleicht dem durch die ganze Natur in mannigfachen Abstufungen verbreiteten Grün, das sättigt und sänftigt, ohne je zu ermüden.

Wir erhielten außer den Märchen des zweiten Bandes auch reichliche Nachträge zu dem ersten, und bessere Erzählungen vieler dort gelieferten und gleich falls aus jener oder andern ähnlichen Quellen. Hessen hat als ein bergichtes, von großen Heerstraßen abseits liegendes und zunächst mit dem Ackerbau beschäftigtes Land den Vorteil, daß es alte Überlieferungen und

Sitten besser aufbewahren kann. Ein gewisser Ernst, eine gesunde, tüchtige und tapfere Gesinnung, die von der Geschichte nicht wird unbeachtet bleiben, selbst die große und schöne Gestalt der Männer in den Gegenden, wo der eigentliche Sitz der Chatten war, haben sich auf diese Art erhalten und lassen den Mangel an dem Bequemen und Zierlichen, den man im Gegensatz zu anderen Ländern, etwa aus Sachsen kommend, leicht bemerkt, eher als einen Gewinn betrachten. Dann empfindet man auch, daß die zwar rauheren, aber oft ausgezeichnet herrlichen Gegenden wie eine gewisse Strenge und Dürftigkeit der Lebensweise zu dem Ganzen gehören. Überhaupt müssen die Hessen zu den Völkern unseres Vaterlandes gezählt werden, die am meisten wie die alten Wohnsitze, so auch die Eigentümlichkeit ihres Wesens durch die Veränderung der Zeit festgehalten haben.

Was wir nun bisher für unsere Sammlung gewonnen hatten, wollten wir bei dieser zweiten Auflage dem Buch einverleiben. Daher ist der erste Band fast ganz umgearbeitet, das Unvollständige ergänzt, manches einfacher und reiner erzählt, und nicht viel Stücke werden sich finden, die nicht in besserer Gestalt er scheinen. Es ist noch einmal geprüft, was verdächtig schien, das heißt, was etwa hätte fremden Ursprungs oder durch Zusätze verfälscht sein können, und dann alles ausgeschieden. Dafür sind die neuen Stücke, worunter wir auch Beiträge aus Österreich und Deutschböhmen zählen, eingerückt, so daß man manches bisher ganz Unbekannte finden wird. Für die Anmerkungen war uns früher nur ein enger Raum gegeben, bei dem erweiterten Umfange des Buchs konnten wir für jene nun einen eigenen dritten Band bestimmen. Hierdurch ist es möglich geworden, nicht nur das, was wir früher ungern zurückbehielten, mitzuteilen, sondern auch neue, hierher gehörige Abschnitte zu liefern, die, wie wir hoffen, den wissenschaftlichen Wert dieser Überlieferungen noch deutlicher machen werden.

Was die Weise betrifft, in der wir hier gesammelt haben, so ist es uns zuerst auf Treue und Wahrheit angekommen. Wir haben nämlich aus eigenen Mitteln nichts hinzugesetzt, keinen Umstand und Zug der Sage selbst verschönert, sondern ihren Inhalt so wiedergegeben, wie wir ihn empfangen hatten; daß der Ausdruck und die Ausführung des einzelnen großenteils von uns herrührt, versteht sich von selbst, doch haben wir jede Eigentümlichkeit, die wir bemerkten, zu erhalten gesucht, um auch in dieser Hinsicht der Sammlung die Mannigfaltigkeit der Natur zu lassen. Jeder, der sich mit ähnlicher Arbeit befaßt, wird es übrigens begreifen, daß dies kein sorgloses und unachtsames Auffassen kann genannt werden, im Gegenteil ist Aufmerksamkeit und ein Takt nötig, der sich erst mit der Zeit erwirbt, um das Einfachere, Reinere und doch in sich Vollkommenere von dem Verfälschten zu unterscheiden. Verschiedene Erzählungen haben wir, sobald sie sich ergänzten und zu ihrer Vereinigung keine Widersprüche wegzuschneiden waren, als eine mitgeteilt, wenn sie aber abwichen, wo dann jede gewöhnliche ihre eigentümlichen Züge hatte, der besten den Vorzug gegeben und die andern für die Anmerkungen aufbewahrt. Diese

Abweichungen nämlich erschienen uns merkwürdiger als denen, welche darin bloß Abänderungen und Entstellungen eines einmal dagewesenen Urbildes sehen, da es im Gegenteil vielleicht nur Versuche sind, einem im Geist bloß Vorhandenen, Unerschöpflichen auf mannigfachen Wegen sich zu nähern. Wiederholungen einzelner Sätze, Züge und Einleitungen sind wie epische Zeilen zu betrachten, die, sobald der Ton sich rührt, der sie anschlägt, immer wiederkehren, und in einem andern Sinne eigentlich nicht zu verstehen.

Eine entschiedene Mundart haben wir gerne beibehalten. Hätte es überall geschehen können, so würde die Erzählung ohne Zweifel gewonnen haben. Es ist hier ein Fall, wo die erlangte Bildung, Feinheit und Kunst der Sprache zuschanden wird und man fühlt, daß eine geläuterte Schriftsprache, so gewandt sie in allem übrigen sein mag, heller und durchsichtiger, aber auch schmackloser geworden ist und nicht mehr so fest dem Kerne sich anschließt. Schade, daß die niederhessische Mundart in der Nähe von Kassel, als in den Grenzpunkten des alten sächsischen und fränkischen Hessengaues, eine unbestimmte und nicht reinlich aufzufassende Mischung von Niedersächsischem und Hochdeutschem ist.

In diesem Sinn gibt es unsers Wissens sonst keine Sammlungen von Märchen in Deutschland. Entweder waren es nur ein paar zufällig erhaltene, die man mitteilte, oder man betrachtete sie bloß als rohen Stoff, um größere Erzählungen daraus zu bilden. Gegen solche Bearbeitungen erklären wir uns geradezu. Zwar ist es unbezweifelt, daß in allem lebendigen Gefühl für eine Dichtung ein poetisches Bilden und Fortbilden liegt, ohne welches auch eine Überlieferung etwas Unfruchtbares und Abgestorbenes wäre, ja eben dies ist mit Ursache, warum jede Gegend nach ihrer Eigentümlichkeit, jeder Mund anders erzählt. Aber es ist doch ein großer Unterschied zwischen jenem halb unbewußten, dem stillen Forttreiben der Pflanzen ähnlichen und von der unmittelbaren Lebensquelle getränkten Einfalten und einer absichtlichen, alles nach Willkür zusammenknüpfenden und auch wohl leimenden Umänderung: diese aber ist es, welche wir nicht billigen können. Die einzige Richtschnur wäre dann die von seiner Bildung abhängende, gerade vorherrschende Ansicht des Dichters, während bei jenem natürlichen Fortbilden der Geist des Volkes in dem einzelnen waltet und einem besondern Gelüsten vorzudringen nicht erlaubt. Räumt man den Überlieferungen wissenschaftlichen Wert ein, das heißt, gibt man zu, daß sich in ihnen Anschauungen und Bildungen der Vorzeit erhalten, so versteht sich von selbst, daß dieser Wert durch solche Bearbeitungen fast immer zugrunde gerichtet wird. Allein die Poesie gewinnt nicht dadurch, denn wo lebt sie wirklich als da, wo sie die Seele trifft, wo sie in der Tat kühlt und erfrischt, oder wärmt und stärkt? Aber jede Bearbeitung dieser Sagen, welche ihre Einfachheit, Unschuld und prunklose Reinheit wegnimmt, reißt sie aus dem Kreise, welchem sie angehören, und wo sie ohne Überdruß immer wieder begehrt werden. Es kann sein, und dies ist der beste Fall, daß man Feinheit, Geist, besonders Witz, der die Lächerlichkeit der Zeit mit hineinzieht, ein zartes Ausmalen des Gefühls, wie es einer von der Poesie aller Völker genährten Bildung nicht allzuschwer fällt, dafür gibt; aber diese Gabe hat doch mehr Schimmer als Nutzen, sie denkt an das einmalige Anhören oder Lesen, an das sich unsere Zeit gewöhnt hat, und sammelt und spitzt dafür die Reize. Doch in der Wiederholung ermüdet uns der Witz, und das Dauernde ist etwas Ruhiges, Stilles und Reines. Die geübte Hand solcher Bearbeitungen gleicht doch jener unglücklich begabten, die alles, was sie anrührte, auch die Speisen, in Gold verwandelte, und kann uns mitten im Reichtum nicht sättigen und tränken. Gar, wo aus bloßer Einbildungskraft die Mythologie mit ihren Bildern soll angeschafft werden, wie kahl, innerlich leer und gestaltlos sieht dann trotz den besten und stärksten Worten alles aus! Übrigens ist dies nur gegen sogenannte Bearbeitungen gesagt, welche die Märchen zu verschönern und poetischer auszustatten vorhaben, nicht gegen ein freies Auffassen derselben zu eignen, ganz der Zeit angehörenden Dichtungen, denn wer hätte Lust, der Poesie Grenzen abzustecken?

Wir übergeben dies Buch wohlwollenden Händen, dabei denken wir an die segnende Kraft, die in ihnen liegt, und wünschen, daß denen, welche diese Brosamen der Poesie Armen und Genügsamen nicht gönnen, es gänzlich verborgen bleiben möge.

Kassel, am 3ten Julius 1819.

1. Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich.

In den alten Zeiten, wo das Wünschen noch geholfen hat, lebte ein König, dessen Töchter waren alle schön, aber die jüngste war so schön, daß die Sonne selber, die doch so vieles gesehen hat, sich verwunderte, sooft sie ihr ins Gesicht schien. Nahe bei dem Schlosse des Königs lag ein großer dunkler Wald, und in dem Walde unter einer alten Linde war ein Brunnen; wenn nun der Tag sehr heiß war, so ging das Königskind hinaus in den Wald und setzte sich an den Rand des kühlen Brunnens: und wenn sie Langeweile hatte, so nahm sie eine goldene Kugel, warf sie in die Höhe und fing sie wieder; und das war ihr liebstes Spielwerk.

Nun trug es sich einmal zu, daß die goldene Kugel der Königstochter nicht in ihr Händchen fiel, das sie in die Höhe gehalten hatte, sondern vorbei auf die Erde schlug und geradezu ins Wasser hineinrollte. Die Königstochter folgte ihr mit den Augen nach, aber die Kugel verschwand, und der Brunnen war tief, so tief, daß man keinen Grund sah. Da fing sie an zu weinen und weinte immer lauter und konnte sich gar nicht trösten. Und wie sie so klagte, rief ihr jemand zu »was hast du vor, Königstochter, du schreist ja daß sich ein Stein erbarmen möchte.« Sie sah sich um, woher die Stimme käme, da erblickte sie einen Frosch, der seinen dicken häßlichen Kopf aus dem Wasser streckte. »Ach, du bists, alter Wasserpatscher,« sagte sie, »ich weine über meine goldene Kugel, die mir in den Brunnen hinabgefallen ist.« »Sei still und weine nicht,« antwortete der Frosch, »ich kann wohl Rat schaffen, aber was gibst du mir, wenn ich dein Spielwerk wieder heraufhole?« »Was du haben willst, lieber Frosch,« sagte sie, »meine Kleider, meine Perlen und Edelsteine, auch noch die goldene Krone, die ich trage.« Der Frosch antwortete »deine Kleider, deine Perlen und Edelsteine und deine goldene Krone, die mag ich nicht: aber wenn du mich lieb haben willst, und ich soll dein Geselle und Spielkamerad sein, an deinem Tischlein neben dir sitzen, von deinem goldenen Tellerlein essen, aus deinem Becherlein trinken, in deinem Bettlein schlafen: wenn du mir das versprichst, so will ich hinuntersteigen und dir die goldene Kugel wieder heraufholen.« »Ach ja,« sagte sie, »ich verspreche dir alles, was du willst, wenn du mir nur die Kugel wiederbringst.« Sie dachte aber »was der einfältige Frosch schwätzt, der sitzt im Wasser bei seinesgleichen und quakt, und kann keines Menschen Geselle sein.«

Der Frosch, als er die Zusage erhalten hatte, tauchte seinen Kopf unter, sank hinab, und über ein Weilchen kam er wieder heraufgerudert; hatte die Kugel im Maul und warf sie ins Gras. Die Königstochter war voll Freude, als sie ihr schönes Spielwerk wieder erblickte, hob es auf und sprang damit fort. »Warte, warte,« rief der Frosch, »nimm mich mit, ich kann nicht so laufen wie du.« Aber was half ihm, daß er ihr sein quak quak so laut nachschrie, als er konnte! Sie hörte nicht darauf, eilte nach Haus und hatte bald den armen Frosch vergessen, der wieder in seinen Brunnen hinabsteigen mußte.

Am andern Tage, als sie mit dem König und allen Hofleuten sich zur Tafel gesetzt hatte und von ihrem goldenen Tellerlein aß, da kam, plitsch platsch, plitsch platsch, etwas die Marmortreppe heraufgekrochen, und als es oben angelangt war, klopfte es an der Tür und rief »Königstochter, jüngste, mach mir auf.« Sie lief und wollte sehen, wer draußen wäre, als sie aber aufmachte, so saß der Frosch davor. Da warf sie die Tür hastig zu, setzte sich wieder an den Tisch, und war ihr ganz angst. Der König sah wohl, daß ihr das Herz gewaltig klopfte, und sprach »mein Kind, was fürchtest du dich, steht etwa ein Riese vor der Tür und will dich holen?« »Ach nein,« antwortete sie, »es ist kein Riese, sondern ein garstiger Frosch.« »Was will der Frosch von dir?« »Ach lieber Vater, als ich gestern im Wald bei dem Brunnen saß und spielte, da fiel meine goldene Kugel ins Wasser. Und weil ich so weinte, hat sie der Frosch wieder heraufgeholt, und weil er es durchaus verlangte, so versprach ich ihm, er sollte mein Geselle werden, ich dachte aber nimmermehr, daß er aus seinem Wasser heraus könnte. Nun ist er draußen und will zu mir herein.« Indem klopfte es zum zweitenmal und rief

»Königstochter, jüngste,
mach mir auf,
weißt du nicht, was gestern
du zu mir gesagt
bei dem kühlen Brunnenwasser?
Königstochter, jüngste,
mach mir auf.«

Da sagte der König »was du versprochen hast, das mußt du auch halten; geh nur und mach ihm auf.« Sie ging und öffnete die Türe, da hüpfte der Frosch herein, ihr immer auf dem Fuße nach, bis zu ihrem Stuhl. Da saß er und rief »heb mich herauf zu dir.« Sie zauderte, bis es endlich der König befahl. Als der Frosch erst auf dem Stuhl war, wollte er auf den Tisch, und als er da saß, sprach er »nun schieb mir dein goldenes Tellerlein näher, damit wir zusammen essen.« Das tat sie zwar, aber man sah wohl, daß sies nicht gerne tat. Der Frosch ließ sichs gut schmecken, aber ihr blieb fast jedes Bißlein im Halse. Endlich sprach er »ich habe mich satt gegessen und bin müde, nun trag mich in dein Kämmerlein und mach dein seiden Bettlein zurecht, da wollen wir uns schlafen legen.« Die Königstochter fing an zu weinen und fürchtete sich vor dem kalten Frosch, den sie nicht anzurühren getraute, und der nun in ihrem schönen reinen Bettlein schlafen sollte. Der König aber ward zornig und sprach »wer dir geholfen hat, als du in der Not warst, den sollst du hernach nicht verachten.« Da packte sie ihn mit zwei Fingern, trug ihn hinauf und setzte ihn in eine Ecke. Als sie aber im Bette lag, kam er gekrochen und sprach »ich bin müde, ich will schlafen so gut wie du: heb mich herauf, oder ich sags deinem Vater.« Da ward sie erst bitterböse, holte ihn herauf und warf ihn aus allen Kräften wider die Wand, »nun wirst du Ruhe haben, du garstiger Frosch.« Als er aber herabfiel, war er kein Frosch, sondern ein Königssohn mit schönen freundlichen Augen. Der war nun nach ihres Vaters Willen ihr lieber Geselle und Gemahl. Da erzählte er ihr, er wäre von einer bösen Hexe verwünscht worden, und niemand hätte ihn aus dem Brunnen erlösen können als sie allein, und morgen wollten sie zusammen in sein Reich gehen. Dann schliefen sie ein, und am andern Morgen, als die Sonne sie aufweckte, kam ein Wagen herangefahren mit acht weißen Pferden bespannt, die hatten weiße Straußfedern auf dem Kopf und gingen in goldenen Ketten, und hinten stand der Diener des jungen Königs, das war der treue Heinrich. Der treue Heinrich hatte sich so betrübt, als sein Herr war in einen Frosch verwandelt worden, daß er drei eiserne Bande hatte um sein Herz legen lassen, damit es ihm nicht vor Weh und Traurigkeit zerspränge. Der Wagen aber sollte den jungen König in sein Reich abholen; der treue Heinrich hob beide hinein, stellte sich wieder hinten auf und war voller Freude über die Erlösung. Und als sie ein Stück Wegs gefahren waren, hörte der Königssohn, daß es hinter ihm krachte, als wäre etwas zerbrochen. Da drehte er sich um und rief

»Heinrich, der Wagen bricht.«
»Nein, Herr, der Wagen nicht,
es ist ein Band von meinem Herzen,
das da lag in großen Schmerzen,
als Ihr in dem Brunnen saßt,
als Ihr eine Fretsche (Frosch) wast (wart).«

Noch einmal und noch einmal krachte es auf dem Weg, und der Königssohn meinte immer, der Wagen bräche, und es waren doch nur die Bande, die vom Herzen des treuen Heinrich absprangen, weil sein Herr erlöst und glücklich war.

2. Katze und Maus in Gesellschaft.

Eine Katze hatte Bekanntschaft mit einer Maus gemacht und ihr so viel von der großen Liebe und Freundschaft vorgesagt, die sie zu ihr trüge, daß die Maus endlich einwilligte, mit ihr zusammen in einem Hause zu wohnen und gemeinschaftliche Wirtschaft zu führen. »Aber für den Winter müssen wir Vorsorge tragen, sonst leiden wir Hunger,« sagte die Katze, »du, Mäuschen, kannst dich nicht überall hinwagen und gerätst mir am Ende in eine Falle.« Der gute Rat ward also befolgt und ein Töpfchen mit Fett angekauft. Sie wußten aber nicht, wo sie es hinstellen sollten, endlich nach langer Überlegung sprach die Katze »ich weiß keinen Ort, wo es besser aufgehoben wäre, als die Kirche, da getraut sich niemand, etwas wegzunehmen: wir stellen es unter den Altar und rühren es nicht eher an, als bis wir es nötig haben.« Das Töpfchen ward also in Sicherheit gebracht, aber es dauerte nicht lange, so trug die Katze Gelüsten danach und sprach zur Maus »was ich dir sagen wollte, Mäuschen, ich bin von meiner Base zu Gevatter gebeten; sie hat ein Söhnchen zur Welt gebracht, weiß mit braunen Flecken, das soll ich über die Taufe halten. Laß mich heute ausgehen und besorge du das Haus allein.« »Ja, ja,« antwortete die Maus, »geh in Gottes Namen, wenn du was Gutes issest, so denk an mich: von dem süßen roten Kindbetterwein tränk ich auch gerne ein Tröpfchen.« Es war aber alles nicht wahr, die Katze hatte keine Base, und war nicht zu Gevatter gebeten. Sie ging geradeswegs nach der Kirche, schlich zu dem Fettöpfchen, fing an zu lecken und leckte die fette Haut ab. Dann machte sie einen Spaziergang auf den Dächern der Stadt, besah sich die Gelegenheit, streckte sich hernach in der Sonne aus und wischte sich den Bart, sooft sie an das Fettnäpfchen dachte. Erst als es Abend war, kam sie wieder nach Haus. »Nun, da bist du ja wieder,« sagte die Maus, »du hast gewiß einen lustigen Tag gehabt.« »Es ging wohl an,« antwortete die Katze. »Was hat denn das Kind für einen Namen bekommen?« fragte die Maus. »Hautab,« sagte die Katze ganz trocken. »Hautab,« rief die Maus, »das ist ja ein wunderlicher und seltsamer Name, ist der in eurer Familie gebräuchlich?« »Was ist da weiter,« sagte die Katze, »er ist nicht schlechter als Bröseldieb, wie deine Paten heißen.«

Nicht lange danach überkam die Katze wieder ein Gelüsten. Sie sprach zur Maus »du mußt mir den Gefallen tun und nochmals das Hauswesen allein besorgen, ich bin zum zweitenmal zu Gevatter gebeten, und da das Kind einen weißen Ring um den Hals hat, so kann ichs nicht absagen.« Die gute Maus willigte ein, die Katze aber schlich hinter der Stadtmauer zu der Kirche und fraß den Fettopf halb aus. »Es schmeckt nichts besser,« sagte sie, »als was man selber ißt,« und war mit ihrem Tagewerk ganz zufrieden. Als sie heim kam, fragte die Maus »wie ist denn dieses Kind getauft worden?« »Halbaus,« antwortete die Katze. »Halbaus! was du sagst! den Namen habe ich mein Lebtag noch nicht gehört, ich wette, der steht nicht in dem Kalender.«

Der Katze wässerte das Maul bald wieder nach dem Leckerwerk. »Aller guten Dinge sind drei,« sprach sie zu der Maus, »da soll ich wieder Gevatter stehen, das Kind ist ganz schwarz und hat bloß weiße Pfoten, sonst kein weißes Haar am ganzen Leib, das trifft sich alle paar Jahr nur einmal: du lässest mich doch ausgehen?« »Hautab! Halbaus!« antwortete die Maus, »es sind so kuriose Namen, die machen mich so nachdenksam.« »Da sitzest du daheim in deinem dunkelgrauen Flausrock und deinem langen Haarzopf,« sprach die Katze, »und fängst Grillen: das kommt davon, wenn man bei Tage nicht ausgeht.« Die Maus räumte während der Abwesenheit der Katze auf und brachte das Haus in Ordnung, die naschhafte Katze aber fraß den Fettopf rein aus. »Wenn erst alles aufgezehrt ist, so hat man Ruhe,« sagte sie zu sich selbst und kam satt und dick erst in der Nacht nach Haus. Die Maus fragte gleich nach dem Namen, den das dritte Kind bekommen hätte. »Er wird dir wohl auch nicht gefallen,« sagte die Katze, »er heißt Ganzaus.« »Ganzaus!« rief die Maus, »das ist der allerbedenklichste Namen, gedruckt ist er mir noch nicht vorgekommen. Ganzaus! was soll das bedeuten?« Sie schüttelte den Kopf, rollte sich zusammen und legte sich schlafen.

Von nun an wollte niemand mehr die Katze zu Gevatter bitten, als aber der Winter herangekommen und draußen nichts mehr zu finden war, gedachte die Maus ihres Vorrats und sprach »komm, Katze, wir wollen zu unserm Fettopfe gehen, den wir uns aufgespart haben, der wird uns schmecken.« »Jawohl,« antwortete die Katze, »der wird dir schmecken als wenn du deine feine Zunge zum Fenster hinausstreckst.« Sie machten sich auf den Weg, und als sie anlangten, stand zwar der Fettopf noch an seinem Platz, er war aber leer. »Ach,« sagte die Maus, »jetzt merke ich, was geschehen ist, jetzt kommts an den Tag, du bist mir die wahre Freundin! aufgefressen hast du alles, wie du zu Gevatter gestanden hast: erst Haut ab, dann halb aus, dann ...« »Willst du schweigen,« rief die Katze, »noch ein Wort, und ich fresse dich auf.« »Ganz aus« hatte die arme Maus schon auf der Zunge, kaum war es heraus, so tat die Katze einen Satz nach ihr, packte sie und schluckte sie hinunter. Siehst du, so gehts in der Welt.

3. Marienkind.

Vor einem großen Walde lebte ein Holzhacker mit seiner Frau, der hatte nur ein einziges Kind, das war ein Mädchen von drei Jahren. Sie waren aber so arm, daß sie nicht mehr das tägliche Brot hatten und nicht wußten, was sie ihm sollten zu essen geben. Eines Morgens ging der Holzhacker voller Sorgen hinaus in den Wald an seine Arbeit, und wie er da Holz hackte, stand auf einmal eine schöne große Frau vor ihm, die hatte eine Krone von leuchtenden Sternen auf dem Haupt und sprach zu ihm »ich bin die Jungfrau Maria, die Mutter des Christkindleins: du bist arm und dürftig, bring mir dein Kind, ich will es mit mir nehmen, seine Mutter sein und für es sorgen.« Der Holzhacker gehorchte, holte sein Kind und übergab es der Jungfrau Maria, die nahm es mit sich hinauf in den Himmel. Da ging es ihm wohl, es aß Zuckerbrot und trank süße Milch, und seine Kleider waren von Gold, und die Englein spielten mit ihm. Als es nun vierzehn Jahr alt geworden war, rief es einmal die Jungfrau Maria zu sich und sprach »liebes Kind, ich habe eine große Reise vor, da nimm die Schlüssel zu den dreizehn Türen des Himmelreichs in Verwahrung: zwölf davon darfst du aufschließen und die Herrlichkeiten darin betrachten, aber die dreizehnte, wozu die ser kleine Schlüssel gehört, die ist dir verboten: hüte dich, daß du sie nicht aufschließest, sonst wirst du unglücklich.« Das Mädchen versprach, gehorsam zu sein, und als nun die Jungfrau Maria weg war, fing sie an und besah die Wohnungen des Himmelreichs: jeden Tag schloß es eine auf, bis die zwölfe herum waren. In jeder aber saß ein Apostel, und war von großem Glanz umgeben, und es freute sich über all die Pracht und Herrlichkeit, und die Englein, die es immer begleiteten, freuten sich mit ihm. Nun war die verbotene Tür allein noch übrig, da empfand es eine große Lust zu wissen, was dahinter verborgen wäre, und sprach zu den Englein »ganz aufmachen will ich sie nicht und will auch nicht hineingehen, aber ich will sie aufschließen, damit wir ein wenig durch den Ritz sehen.« »Ach nein,« sagten die Englein, »das wäre Sünde: die Jungfrau Maria hats verboten, und es könnte leicht dein Unglück werden.« Da schwieg es still, aber die Begierde in seinem Herzen schwieg nicht still, sondern nagte und pickte ordentlich daran und ließ ihm keine Ruhe. Und als die Englein einmal alle hinausgegangen waren, dachte es »nun bin ich ganz allein und könnte hineingucken, es weiß es ja niemand, wenn ichs tue.« Es suchte den Schlüssel heraus, und als es ihn in der Hand hielt, steckte es ihn auch in das Schloß, und als es ihn hineingesteckt hatte, drehte es auch um. Da sprang die Türe auf, und es sah da die Dreieinigkeit im Feuer und Glanz sitzen. Es blieb ein Weilchen stehen und betrachtete alles mit Erstaunen, dann rührte es ein wenig mit dem Finger an den Glanz, da ward der Finger ganz golden. Alsbald empfand es eine gewaltige Angst, schlug die Türe heftig zu und lief fort. Die Angst wollte auch nicht wieder weichen, es mochte anfangen, was es wollte, und das Herz klopfte in einem fort und wollte nicht ruhig werden: auch das Gold blieb an dem Finger und ging nicht ab, es mochte waschen und reiben, soviel es wollte.

Gar nicht lange, so kam die Jungfrau Maria von ihrer Reise zurück. Sie rief das Mädchen zu sich und forderte ihm die Himmelsschlüssel wieder ab. Als es den Bund hinreichte, blickte ihm die Jungfrau in die Augen und sprach »hast du auch nicht die dreizehnte Tür geöffnet?« »Nein,« antwortete es. Da legte sie ihre Hand auf sein Herz, fühlte, wie es klopfte und klopfte, und merkte wohl, daß es ihr Gebot übertreten und die Türe aufgeschlossen hatte. Da sprach sie noch einmal »hast du es gewiß nicht getan?« »Nein,« sagte das Mädchen zum zweitenmal. Da erblickte sie den Finger, der von der Berührung des himmlischen Feuers golden geworden war, sah wohl, daß es gesündigt hatte, und sprach zum drittenmal »hast du es nicht getan?« »Nein,« sagte das Mädchen zum drittenmal. Da sprach die Jungfrau Maria »du hast mir nicht gehorcht, und hast noch dazu gelogen, du bist nicht mehr würdig, im Himmel zu sein.«

Da versank das Mädchen in einen tiefen Schlaf, und als es erwachte, lag es unten auf der Erde, mitten in einer Wildnis. Es wollte rufen, aber es konnte keinen Laut hervorbringen. Es sprang auf und wollte fortlaufen, aber wo es sich hinwendete, immer ward es von dichten Dornhecken zurückgehalten, die es nicht durchbrechen konnte. In der Einöde, in welche es eingeschlossen war, stand ein alter hohler Baum, das mußte seine Wohnung sein. Da kroch es hinein, wenn die Nacht kam, und schlief darin, und wenn es stürmte und regnete, fand es darin Schutz: aber es war ein jämmerliches Leben, und wenn es daran dachte, wie es im Himmel so schön gewesen war, und die Engel mit ihm gespielt hatten, so weinte es bitterlich. Wurzeln und Waldbeeren waren seine einzige Nahrung, die suchte es sich, so weit es kommen konnte. Im Herbst sammelte es die herabgefallenen Nüsse und Blätter und trug sie in die Höhle, die Nüsse waren im Winter seine Speise, und wenn Schnee und Eis kam, so kroch es wie ein armes Tierchen in die Blätter, daß es nicht fror. Nicht lange, so zerrissen seine Kleider und fiel ein Stück nach dem andern vom Leibe herab. Sobald dann die Sonne wieder warm schien, ging es heraus und setzte sich vor den Baum, und seine langen Haare bedeckten es von allen Seiten wie ein Mantel. So saß es ein Jahr nach dem andern und fühlte den Jammer und das Elend der Welt.

Einmal, als die Bäume wieder in frischem Grün standen, jagte der König des Landes in dem Wald und verfolgte ein Reh, und weil es in das Gebüsch geflohen war, das den Waldplatz einschloß, stieg er vom Pferd, riß das Gestrüppe auseinander und hieb sich mit seinem Schwert einen Weg. Als er endlich hindurchgedrungen war, sah er unter dem Baum ein wunderschönes Mädchen sitzen, das saß da und war von seinem goldenen Haar bis zu den Fußzehen bedeckt. Er stand still und betrachtete es voll Erstaunen, dann redete er es an und sprach »wer bist du? warum sitzest du hier in der Einöde?« Es gab aber keine Antwort, denn es konnte seinen Mund nicht auftun. Der König sprach weiter »willst du mit mir auf mein Schloß gehen?« Da nickte es nur ein wenig mit dem Kopf. Der König nahm es auf seinen Arm, trug es auf sein Pferd und ritt mit ihm heim, und als er auf das königliche Schloß kam, ließ er ihm schöne Kleider anziehen und gab ihm alles im Überfluß. Und ob es gleich nicht sprechen konnte, so war es doch schön und holdselig, daß er es von Herzen lieb gewann, und es dauerte nicht lange, da vermählte er sich mit ihm.

Als etwa ein Jahr verflossen war, brachte die Königin einen Sohn zur Welt. Darauf in der Nacht, wo sie allein in ihrem Bette lag, erschien ihr die Jungfrau Maria und sprach »willst du die Wahrheit sagen und gestehen, daß du die verbotene Tür aufgeschlossen hast, so will ich deinen Mund öffnen und dir die Sprache wiedergeben: verharrst du aber in der Sünde und leugnest hartnäckig, so nehm ich dein neugebornes Kind mit mir.« Da war der Königin verliehen zu antworten, sie blieb aber verstockt und sprach »nein, ich habe die verbotene Tür nicht aufgemacht,« und die Jungfrau Maria nahm das neugeborne Kind ihr aus den Armen und verschwand damit. Am andern Morgen, als das Kind nicht zu finden war, ging ein Gemurmel unter den Leuten, die Königin wäre eine Menschenfresserin und hätte ihr eigenes Kind umgebracht. Sie hörte alles und konnte nichts dagegen sagen, der König aber wollte es nicht glauben, weil er sie so lieb hatte.

Nach einem Jahr gebar die Königin wieder einen Sohn. In der Nacht trat auch wieder die Jungfrau Maria zu ihr herein und sprach »willst du gestehen, daß du die verbotene Türe geöffnet hast, so will ich dir dein Kind wiedergeben und deine Zunge lösen: verharrst du aber in der Sünde und leugnest, so nehme ich auch dieses neugeborne mit mir.« Da sprach die Königin wiederum »nein, ich habe die verbotene Tür nicht geöffnet«, und die Jungfrau nahm ihr das Kind aus den Armen weg und mit sich in den Himmel. Am Morgen, als das Kind abermals verschwunden war, sagten die Leute ganz laut, die Königin hätte es verschlungen, und des Königs Räte verlangten, daß sie sollte gerichtet werden. Der König aber hatte sie so lieb, daß er es nicht glauben wollte, und befahl den Räten bei Leibesund Lebensstrafe, nicht mehr darüber zu sprechen.

Im nächsten Jahr gebar die Königin ein schönes Töchterlein, da erschien ihr zum drittenmal nachts die Jungfrau Maria und sprach »folge mir«. Sie nahm sie bei der Hand und führte sie in den Himmel, und zeigte ihr da ihre beiden ältesten Kinder, die lachten sie an und spielten mit der Weltkugel. Als sich die Königin darüber freute, sprach die Jungfrau Maria »ist dein Herz noch nicht erweicht? wenn du eingestehst, daß du die verbotene Tür geöffnet hast, so will ich dir deine beiden Söhnlein zurückgeben.« Aber die Königin antwortete zum drittenmal »nein, ich habe die verbotene Tür nicht geöffnet.« Da ließ sie die Jungfrau wieder zur Erde hinabsinken und nahm ihr auch das dritte Kind.

Am andern Morgen, als es ruchbar ward, riefen alle Leute laut »die Königin ist eine Menschenfresserin, sie muß verurteilt werden,« und der König konnte seine Räte nicht mehr zurückweisen. Es ward ein Gericht über sie gehalten, und weil sie nicht antworten und sich nicht verteidigen konnte, ward sie verurteilt, auf dem Scheiterhaufen zu sterben. Das Holz wurde zusammengetragen, und als sie an einen Pfahl festgebunden war und das Feuer ringsumher zu brennen anfing, da schmolz das harte Eis des Stolzes und ihr Herz ward von Reue bewegt, und sie dachte »könnt ich nur noch vor meinem Tode gestehen, daß ich die Tür geöffnet habe,« da kam ihr die Stimme, daß sie laut ausrief »ja, Maria, ich habe es getan!« Und alsbald fing der Himmel an zu regnen und löschte die Feuerflammen, und über ihr brach ein Licht hervor, und die Jungfrau Maria kam herab und hatte die beiden Söhnlein zu ihren Seiten und das neugeborene Töchterlein auf dem Arm. Sie sprach freundlich zu ihr »wer seine Sünde bereut und eingesteht, dem ist sie vergeben,« und reichte ihr die drei Kinder, löste ihr die Zunge und gab ihr Glück für das ganze Leben.

4. Märchen von einem, der auszog,

das Fürchten zu lernen.

Ein Vater hatte zwei Söhne, davon war der älteste klug und gescheit, und wußte sich in alles wohl zu schicken, der jüngste aber war dumm, konnte nichts begreifen und lernen: und wenn ihn die Leute sahen, sprachen sie »mit dem wird der Vater noch seine Last haben!« Wenn nun etwas zu tun war, so mußte es der älteste allzeit ausrichten: hieß ihn aber der Vater noch spät oder gar in der Nacht etwas holen, und der Weg ging dabei über den Kirchhof oder sonst einen schaurigen Ort, so antwortete er wohl »ach nein, Vater, ich gehe nicht dahin, es gruselt mir!« denn er fürchtete sich. Oder, wenn abends beim Feuer Geschichten erzählt wurden, wobei einem die Haut schaudert, so sprachen die Zuhörer manchmal »ach, es gruselt mir!« Der jüngste saß in einer Ecke und hörte das mit an, und konnte nicht begreifen, was es heißen sollte. »Immer sagen sie: es gruselt mir! es gruselt mir! mir gruselts nicht: das wird wohl eine Kunst sein, von der ich auch nichts verstehe.«

Nun geschah es, daß der Vater einmal zu ihm sprach »hör du, in der Ecke dort, du wirst groß und stark, du mußt auch etwas lernen, womit du dein Brot verdienst. Siehst du, wie dein Bruder sich Mühe gibt, aber an dir ist Hopfen und Malz verloren.« »Ei, Vater,« antwortete er, »ich will gerne was lernen; ja, wenns anginge, so möchte ich lernen, daß mirs gruselte; davon verstehe ich noch gar nichts.« Der älteste lachte, als er das hörte, und dachte bei sich »du lieber Gott, was ist mein Bruder ein Dummbart, aus dem wird sein Lebtag nichts: was ein Häkchen werden will, muß sich beizeiten krümmen.« Der Vater seufzte und antwortete ihm »das Gruseln, das sollst du schon lernen, aber dein Brot wirst du damit nicht verdienen.«

Bald danach kam der Küster zum Besuch ins Haus, da klagte ihm der Vater seine Not und erzählte, wie sein jüngster Sohn in allen Dingen so schlecht beschlagen wäre, er wüßte nichts und lernte nichts. »Denkt Euch, als ich ihn fragte, womit er sein Brot verdienen wollte, hat er gar verlangt, das Gruseln zu lernen.« »Wenns weiter nichts ist,« antwortete der Küster, »das kann er bei mir lernen; tut ihn nur zu mir, ich werde ihn schon abhobeln.« Der Vater war es zufrieden, weil er dachte »der Junge wird doch ein wenig zugestutzt.« Der Küster nahm ihn also ins Haus, und er mußte die Glocke läuten. Nach ein paar Tagen weckte er ihn um Mitternacht, hieß ihn aufstehen, in den Kirchturm steigen und läuten. »Du sollst schon lernen, was Gruseln ist,« dachte er, ging heimlich voraus, und als der Junge oben war, und sich umdrehte und das Glockenseil fassen wollte, so sah er auf der Treppe, dem Schalloch gegenüber, eine weiße Gestalt stehen. »Wer da?« rief er, aber die Gestalt gab keine Antwort, regte und bewegte sich nicht. »Gib Antwort,« rief der Junge, »oder mache, daß du fortkommst, du hast hier in der Nacht nichts zu schaffen.« Der Küster aber blieb unbeweglich stehen, damit der Junge glauben sollte, es wäre ein Gespenst. Der Junge rief zum zweitenmal »was willst du hier? sprich, wenn du ein ehrlicher Kerl bist, oder ich werfe dich die Treppe hinab.« Der Küster dachte »das wird so schlimm nicht gemeint sein,« gab keinen Laut von sich und stand, als wenn er von Stein wäre. Da rief ihn der Junge zum drittenmal an, und als das auch vergeblich war, nahm er einen Anlauf und stieß das Gespenst die Treppe hinab, daß es zehn Stufen hinabfiel und in einer Ecke liegen blieb. Darauf läutete er die Glocke, ging heim, legte sich, ohne ein Wort zu sagen, ins Bett und schlief fort. Die Küsterfrau wartete lange Zeit auf ihren Mann, aber er wollte nicht wiederkommen. Da ward ihr endlich angst, sie weckte den Jungen und fragte »weißt du nicht, wo mein Mann geblieben ist? er ist vor dir auf den Turm gestiegen.« »Nein,« antwortete der Junge, »aber da hat einer dem Schalloch gegenüber auf der Treppe gestanden, und weil er keine Antwort geben und auch nicht weggehen wollte, so habe ich ihn für einen Spitzbuben gehalten und hinuntergestoßen. Geht nur hin, so werdet Ihr sehen ob ers gewesen ist, es sollte mir leid tun.« Die Frau sprang fort und fand ihren Mann, der in einer Ecke lag und jammerte, und ein Bein gebrochen hatte.

Sie trug ihn herab und eilte dann mit lautem Geschrei zu dem Vater des Jungen. »Euer Junge,« rief sie, »hat ein großes Unglück angerichtet, meinen Mann hat er die Treppe hinabgeworfen, daß er ein Bein gebrochen hat: schafft den Taugenichts aus unserm Haus.« Der Vater erschrak, kam herbeigelaufen und schalt den Jungen aus. »Was sind das für gottlose Streiche, die muß dir der Böse eingegeben haben.« »Vater,« antwortete er, »hört nur an, ich bin ganz unschuldig: er stand da in der Nacht wie einer, der Böses im Sinne hat. Ich wußte nicht, wers war, und hab ihn dreimal ermahnt, zu reden oder wegzugehen.« »Ach,« sprach der Vater, »mit dir erleb ich nur Unglück, geh mir aus den Augen, ich will dich nicht mehr ansehen.« »Ja, Vater, recht gerne, wartet nur, bis Tag ist, da will ich ausgehen und das Gruseln lernen, so versteh ich doch eine Kunst, die mich ernähren kann.« »Lerne, was du willst,« sprach der Vater, »mir ist alles einerlei. Da hast du fünfzig Taler, damit geh in die weite Welt und sage keinem Menschen, wo du her bist und wer dein Vater ist, denn ich muß mich deiner schämen.« »Ja, Vater, wie Ihrs haben wollt, wenn Ihr nicht mehr verlangt, das kann ich leicht in acht behalten.«

Als nun der Tag anbrach, steckte der Junge seine fünfzig Taler in die Tasche, ging hinaus auf die große Landstraße und sprach immer vor sich hin »wenn mirs nur gruselte! wenn mirs nur gruselte!« Da kam ein Mann heran, der hörte das Gespräch, das der Junge mit sich selber führte, und als sie ein Stück weiter waren, daß man den Galgen sehen konnte, sagte der Mann zu ihm »siehst du, dort ist der Baum, wo siebene mit des Seilers Tochter Hochzeit gehalten haben und jetzt das Fliegen lernen: setz dich darunter und warte, bis die Nacht kommt, so wirst du schon das Gruseln lernen.« »Wenn weiter nichts dazu gehört,« antwortete der Junge, »das ist leicht getan; lerne ich aber so geschwind das Gruseln, so sollst du meine fünfzig Taler haben, komm nur morgen früh wieder zu mir.« Da ging der Junge zu dem Galgen, setzte sich darunter und wartete, bis der Abend kam. Und weil ihn fror, machte er sich ein Feuer an: aber um Mitternacht ging der Wind so kalt, daß er trotz des Feuers nicht warm werden wollte. Und als der Wind die Gehenkten gegeneinander stieß, daß sie sich hinund herbewegten, so dachte er »du frierst unten bei dem Feuer, was mögen die da oben erst frieren und zappeln.« Und weil er mitleidig war, legte er die Leiter an, stieg hinauf, knüpfte einen nach dem andern los, und holte sie alle siebene herab. Darauf schürte er das Feuer, blies es an und setzte sie ringsherum, daß sie sich wärmen sollten. Aber sie saßen da und regten sich nicht, und das Feuer ergriff ihre Kleider. Da sprach er »nehmt euch in acht, sonst häng ich euch wieder hinauf.« Die Toten aber hörten nicht, schwiegen und ließen ihre Lumpen fortbrennen. Da ward er bös und sprach »wenn ihr nicht achtgeben wollt, so kann ich euch nicht helfen, ich will nicht mit euch verbrennen,« und hing sie nach der Reihe wieder hinauf. Nun setzte er sich zu seinem Feuer und schlief ein, und am andern Morgen, da kam der Mann zu ihm, wollte die fünfzig Taler haben und sprach »nun, weißt du, was Gruseln ist?« »Nein,« antwortete er, »woher sollte ichs wissen? die da droben haben das Maul nicht aufgetan und waren so dumm, daß sie die paar alten Lappen, die sie am Leibe haben, brennen ließen.« Da sah der Mann, daß er die fünfzig Taler heute nicht davontragen würde, ging fort und sprach »so einer ist mir noch nicht vorgekommen.«

Der Junge ging auch seines Wegs und fing wieder an vor sich hin zu reden »ach, wenn mirs nur gruselte! ach, wenn mirs nur gruselte!« Das hörte ein Fuhrmann, der hinter ihm herschritt, und fragte »wer bist du?« »Ich weiß nicht,« antwortete der Junge. Der Fuhrmann fragte weiter »wo bist du her?« »Ich weiß nicht.« »Wer ist dein Vater?« »Das darf ich nicht sagen.« »Was brummst du beständig in den Bart hinein?« »Ei,« antwortete der Junge, »ich wollte, daß mirs gruselte, aber niemand kann michs lehren.« »Laß dein dummes Geschwätz,« sprach der Fuhrmann, »komm, geh mit mir, ich will sehen, daß ich dich unterbringe.« Der Junge ging mit dem Fuhrmann, und abends gelangten sie zu einem Wirtshaus, wo sie übernachten wollten. Da sprach er beim Eintritt in die Stube wieder ganz laut »wenn mirs nur gruselte! wenn mirs nur gruselte!« Der Wirt, der das hörte, lachte und sprach »wenn dich danach lüstet, dazu sollte hier wohl Gelegenheit sein.« »Ach schweig stille,« sprach die Wirtsfrau, »so mancher Vorwitzige hat schon sein Leben eingebüßt, es wäre Jammer und Schade um die schönen Augen, wenn die das Tageslicht nicht wieder sehen sollten.« Der Junge aber sagte »wenns noch so schwer wäre, ich wills einmal lernen, deshalb bin ich ja ausgezogen.« Er ließ dem Wirt auch keine Ruhe, bis dieser erzählte, nicht weit davon stände ein verwünschtes Schloß, wo einer wohl lernen könnte, was Gruseln wäre, wenn er nur drei Nächte darin wachen wollte. Der König hätte dem, ders wagen sollte, seine Tochter zur Frau versprochen, und die wäre die schönste Jungfrau, welche die Sonne beschien: in dem Schlosse steckten auch große Schätze, von bösen Geistern bewacht, die würden dann frei und könnten einen Armen reich genug ma chen. Schon viele wären wohl hinein-, aber noch keiner wieder herausgekommen. Da ging der Junge am andern Morgen vor den König und sprach »wenns erlaubt wäre, so wollte ich wohl drei Nächte in dem verwünschten Schlosse wachen.« Der König sah ihn an, und weil er ihm gefiel, sprach er »du darfst dir noch dreierlei ausbitten, aber es müssen leblose Dinge sein, und das darfst du mit ins Schloß nehmen.« Da antwortete er »so bitt ich um ein Feuer, eine Drehbank und eine Schnitzbank mit dem Messer.«

Der König ließ ihm das alles bei Tage in das Schloß tragen. Als es Nacht werden wollte, ging der Junge hinauf, machte sich in einer Kammer ein helles Feuer an, stellte die Schnitzbank mit dem Messer daneben und setzte sich auf die Drehbank. »Ach, wenn mirs nur gruselte!« sprach er, »aber hier werde ichs auch nicht lernen.« Gegen Mitternacht wollte er sich sein Feuer einmal aufschüren: wie er so hineinblies, da schries plötzlich aus einer Ecke »au, miau! was uns friert!« »Ihr Narren,« rief er, »was schreit ihr? wenn euch friert, kommt, setzt euch ans Feuer und wärmt euch.« Und wie er das gesagt hatte, kamen zwei große schwarze Katzen in einem gewaltigen Sprunge herbei, setzten sich ihm zu beiden Seiten und sahen ihn mit ihren feurigen Augen ganz wild an. Über ein Weilchen, als sie sich gewärmt hatten, sprachen sie »Kamerad, wollen wir eins in der Karte spielen?« »Warum nicht?« antwortete er, »aber zeigt einmal eure Pfoten her.« Da streckten sie die Krallen aus. »Ei,« sagte er, »was habt ihr lange Nägel! wartet, die muß ich euch erst abschneiden.« Damit packte er sie beim Kragen, hob sie auf die Schnitzbank und schraubte ihnen die Pfoten fest. »Euch habe ich auf die Finger gesehen,« sprach er, »da vergeht mir die Lust zum Kartenspiel,« schlug sie tot und warf sie hinaus ins Wasser. Als er aber die zwei zur Ruhe gebracht hatte und sich wieder zu seinem Feuer setzen wollte, da kamen aus allen Ecken und Enden schwarze Katzen und schwarze Hunde an glühenden Ketten, immer mehr und mehr, daß er sich nicht mehr bergen konnte: die schrieen greulich, traten ihm auf sein Feuer, zerrten es auseinander und wollten es ausmachen. Das sah er ein Weilchen ruhig mit an, als es ihm aber zu arg ward, faßte er sein Schnitzmesser und rief »fort mit dir, du Gesindel«, und haute auf sie los. Ein Teil sprang weg, die andern schlug er tot und warf sie hinaus in den Teich. Als er wiedergekommen war, blies er aus den Funken sein Feuer frisch an und wärmte sich. Und als er so saß, wollten ihm die Augen nicht länger offen bleiben, und er bekam Lust zu schlafen. Da blickte er um sich und sah in der Ecke ein großes Bett, »das ist mir eben recht,« sprach er und legte sich hinein. Als er aber die Augen zutun wollte, so fing das Bett von selbst an zu fahren, und fuhr im ganzen Schloß herum. »Recht so,« sprach er, »nur besser zu.« Da rollte das Bett fort, als wären sechs Pferde vorgespannt, über Schwellen und Treppen auf und ab: auf einmal hopp hopp! warf es um, das unterste zu oberst, daß es wie ein Berg auf ihm lag. Aber er schleuderte Decken und Kissen in die Höhe, stieg heraus und sagte »nun mag fahren, wer Lust hat,« legte sich an sein Feuer und schlief, bis es Tag war. Am Morgen kam der König, und als er ihn da auf der Erde liegen sah, meinte er, die Gespenster hätten ihn umgebracht, und er wäre tot. Da sprach er »es ist doch schade um den schönen Menschen.« Das hörte der Junge, richtete sich auf und sprach »so weit ists noch nicht!« Da verwunderte sich der König, freute sich aber und fragte, wie es ihm gegangen wäre. »Recht gut,« antwortete er, »eine Nacht wäre herum, die zwei andern werden auch herumgehen.« Als er zum Wirt kam, da machte der große Augen. »Ich dachte nicht,« sprach er, »daß ich dich wieder lebendig sehen würde; hast du nun gelernt, was Gruseln ist?« »Nein,« sagte er, »es ist alles vergeblich: wenn mirs nur einer sagen könnte!«

Die zweite Nacht ging er abermals hinauf ins alte Schloß, setzte sich zum Feuer und fing sein altes Lied wieder an »wenn mirs nur gruselte!« Wie Mitternacht herankam, ließ sich ein Lärm und Gepolter hören, erst sachte, dann immer stärker, dann wars ein bißchen still, endlich kam mit lautem Geschrei ein halber Mensch den Schornstein herab und fiel vor ihm hin. »Heda!« rief er, »noch ein halber gehört dazu, das ist zu wenig.« Da ging der Lärm von frischem an, es tobte und heulte, und fiel die andere Hälfte auch herab. »Wart,« sprach er, »ich will dir erst das Feuer ein wenig anblasen.« Wie er das getan hatte und sich wieder umsah, da waren die beiden Stücke zusammengefahren, und saß da ein greulicher Mann auf seinem Platz. »So haben wir nicht gewettet,« sprach der Junge, »die Bank ist mein.« Der Mann wollte ihn wegdrängen, aber der Junge ließ sichs nicht gefallen, schob ihn mit Gewalt weg und setzte sich wieder auf seinen Platz. Da fielen noch mehr Männer herab, einer nach dem andern, die holten neun Totenbeine und zwei Totenköpfe, setzten auf und spielten Kegel. Der Junge bekam auch Lust und fragte »hört ihr, kann ich mit sein?« »Ja, wenn du Geld hast.« »Geld genug,« antwortete er, »aber eure Kugeln sind nicht recht rund.« Da nahm er die Totenköpfe, setzte sie in die Drehbank und drehte sie rund. »So, jetzt werden sie besser schüppeln,« sprach er »heida! nun gehts lustig!« Er spielte mit und verlor etwas von seinem Geld, als es aber zwölf schlug, war alles vor seinen Augen verschwunden. Er legte sich nieder und schlief ruhig ein. Am andern Morgen kam der König und wollte sich erkundigen. »Wie ist dirs diesmal ergangen?« fragte er. »Ich habe gekegelt,« antwortete er, »und ein paar Heller verloren.« »Hat dir denn nicht gegruselt?« »Ei was,« sprach er, »lustig hab ich mich gemacht. Wenn ich nur wüßte, was Gruseln wäre!«

In der dritten Nacht setzte er sich wieder auf seine Bank und sprach ganz verdrießlich »wenn es mir nur gruselte!« Als es spät ward, kamen sechs große Männer und brachten eine Totenlade hereingetragen. Da sprach er »ha ha, das ist gewiß mein Vetterchen, das erst vor ein paar Tagen gestorben ist,« winkte mit dem Finger und rief »komm Vetterchen, komm!« Sie stellten den Sarg auf die Erde, er aber ging hinzu und nahm den Deckel ab: da lag ein toter Mann darin. Er fühlte ihm ans Gesicht, aber es war kalt wie Eis. »Wart,« sprach er, »ich will dich ein bißchen wärmen,« ging ans Feuer, wärmte seine Hand und legte sie ihm aufs Gesicht, aber der Tote blieb kalt. Nun nahm er ihn heraus, setzte sich ans Feuer und legte ihn auf seinen Schoß, und rieb ihm die Arme, damit das Blut wieder in Bewegung kommen sollte. Als auch das nichts helfen wollte, fiel ihm ein »wenn zwei zusammen im Bett liegen, so wärmen sie sich,« brachte ihn ins Bett, deckte ihn zu und legte sich neben ihn. Über ein Weilchen ward auch der Tote warm und fing an sich zu regen. Da sprach der Junge »siehst du, Vetterchen, hätt ich dich nicht gewärmt!« Der Tote aber hub an und rief »jetzt will ich dich er würgen.« »Was,« sagte er, »ist das mein Dank? gleich sollst du wieder in deinen Sarg,« hub ihn auf, warf ihn hinein und machte den Deckel zu; da kamen die sechs Männer, und trugen ihn wieder fort. »Es will mir nicht gruseln,« sagte er, »hier lerne ichs mein Lebtag nicht.«

Da trat ein Mann herein, der war größer als alle andere, und sah fürchterlich aus; er war aber alt und hatte einen langen weißen Bart. »O du Wicht,« rief er, »nun sollst du bald lernen, was Gruseln ist, denn du sollst sterben.« »Nicht so schnell«, antwortete der Junge, »soll ich sterben, so muß ich auch dabei sein.« »Dich will ich schon packen,« sprach der Unhold. »Sachte, sachte, mach dich nicht so breit; so stark wie du bin ich auch, und wohl noch stärker.« »Das wollen wir sehn,« sprach der Alte, »bist du stärker als ich, so will ich dich gehn lassen; komm, wir wollens versuchen.« Da führte er ihn durch dunkle Gänge zu einem Schmiedefeuer, nahm eine Axt und schlug den einen Amboß mit einem Schlag in die Erde. »Das kann ich noch besser,« sprach der Junge und ging zu dem andern Amboß: der Alte stellte sich neben hin und wollte zusehen, und sein weißer Bart hing herab. Da faßte der Junge die Axt, spaltete den Amboß auf einen Hieb und klemmte den Bart des Alten mit hinein. »Nun hab ich dich,« sprach der Junge, »jetzt ist das Sterben an dir.« Dann faßte er eine Eisenstange und schlug auf den Alten los, bis er wimmerte und bat, er möchte aufhören, er wollte ihm große Reichtümer geben. Der Junge zog die Axt raus, und ließ ihn los. Der Alte führte ihn wieder ins Schloß zurück und zeigte ihm in einem Keller drei Kasten voll Gold. »Davon,« sprach er, »ist ein Teil den Armen, der andere dem König, der dritte dein.« Indem schlug es zwölfe, und der Geist verschwand, also daß der Junge im Finstern stand. »Ich werde mir doch heraushelfen können«, sprach er, tappte herum, fand den Weg in die Kammer und schlief dort bei seinem Feuer ein. Am andern Morgen kam der König und sagte »nun wirst du gelernt haben, was Gruseln ist?« »Nein,« antwortete er, »was ists nur? mein toter Vetter war da, und ein bärtiger Mann ist gekommen, der hat mir da unten viel Geld gezeigt, aber was Gruseln ist, hat mir keiner gesagt.« Da sprach der König »du hast das Schloß erlöst und sollst meine Tochter heiraten.« »Das ist all recht gut,« antwortete er, »aber ich weiß noch immer nicht, was Gruseln ist.«

Da ward das Gold heraufgebracht und die Hochzeit gefeiert, aber der junge König, so lieb er seine Gemahlin hatte und so vergnügt er war, sagte doch immer »wenn mir nur gruselte, wenn mir nur gruselte.« Das verdroß sie endlich. Ihr Kammermädchen sprach »ich will Hilfe schaffen, das Gruseln soll er schon lernen.« Sie ging hinaus zum Bach, der durch den Garten floß, und ließ sich einen ganzen Eimer voll Gründlinge holen. Nachts, als der junge König schlief, mußte seine Gemahlin ihm die Decke wegziehen und den Eimer voll kalt Wasser mit den Gründlingen über ihn herschütten, daß die kleinen Fische um ihn herumzappelten. Da wachte er auf und rief »ach was gruselt mir, was gruselt mir, liebe Frau! Ja, nun weiß ich, was Gruseln ist.«

5. Der Wolf und die sieben jungen Geißlein.

Es war einmal eine alte Geiß, die hatte sieben junge Geißlein, und hatte sie lieb, wie eine Mutter ihre Kinder lieb hat. Eines Tages wollte sie in den Wald gehen und Futter holen, da rief sie alle sieben herbei und sprach »liebe Kinder, ich will hinaus in den Wald, seid auf eurer Hut vor dem Wolf, wenn er hereinkommt, so frißt er euch alle mit Haut und Haar. Der Bösewicht verstellt sich oft, aber an seiner rauhen Stimme und an seinen schwarzen Füßen werdet ihr ihn gleich erkennen.« Die Geißlein sagten »liebe Mutter, wir wollen uns schon in acht nehmen, Ihr könnt ohne Sorge fortgehen.« Da meckerte die Alte und machte sich getrost auf den Weg.

Es dauerte nicht lange, so klopfte jemand an die Haustür und rief »macht auf, ihr lieben Kinder, eure Mutter ist da und hat jedem von euch etwas mitgebracht.« Aber die Geißerchen hörten an der rauhen Stimme, daß es der Wolf war, »wir machen nicht auf,« riefen sie, »du bist unsere Mutter nicht, die hat eine feine und liebliche Stimme, aber deine Stimme ist rauh; du bist der Wolf.« Da ging der Wolf fort zu einem Krämer und kaufte sich ein großes Stück Kreide: die aß er und machte damit seine Stimme fein. Dann kam er zurück, klopfte an die Haustür und rief »macht auf, ihr lieben Kinder, eure Mutter ist da und hat jedem von euch etwas mitgebracht.« Aber der Wolf hatte seine schwarze Pfote in das Fenster gelegt, das sahen die Kinder und riefen »wir machen nicht auf, unsere Mutter hat keinen schwarzen Fuß wie du: du bist der Wolf.« Da lief der Wolf zu einem Bäcker und sprach »ich habe mich an den Fuß gestoßen, streich mir Teig darüber.« Und als ihm der Bäcker die Pfote bestrichen hatte, so lief er zum Müller und sprach »streu mir weißes Mehl auf meine Pfote.« Der Müller dachte »der Wolf will einen betrügen,« und weigerte sich, aber der Wolf sprach »wenn du es nicht tust, so fresse ich dich.« Da fürchtete sich der Müller und machte ihm die Pfote weiß. Ja, so sind die Menschen.

Nun ging der Bösewicht zum drittenmal zu der Haustüre, klopfte an und sprach »macht mir auf, Kinder, euer liebes Mütterchen ist heimgekommen und hat jedem von euch etwas aus dem Walde mitgebracht.« Die Geißerchen riefen »zeig uns erst deine Pfote, damit wir wissen, daß du unser liebes Mütterchen bist.« Da legte er die Pfote ins Fenster, und als sie sahen, daß sie weiß war, so glaubten sie, es wäre alles wahr, was er sagte, und machten die Türe auf. Wer aber hereinkam, das war der Wolf. Sie erschraken und wollten sich verstecken. Das eine sprang unter den Tisch, das zweite ins Bett, das dritte in den Ofen, das vierte in die Küche, das fünfte in den Schrank, das sechste unter die Waschschüssel, das siebente in den Kasten der Wanduhr. Aber der Wolf fand sie alle und machte nicht langes Federlesen: eins nach dem andern schluckte er in seinen Rachen; nur das jüngste in dem Uhrkasten, das fand er nicht. Als der Wolf seine Lust gebüßt hatte, trollte er sich fort, legte sich draußen auf der grünen Wiese unter einen Baum und fing an zu schlafen.

Nicht lange danach kam die alte Geiß aus dem Walde wieder heim. Ach, was mußte sie da erblicken! Die Haustüre stand sperrweit auf: Tisch, Stühle und Bänke waren umgeworfen, die Waschschüssel lag in Scherben, Decke und Kissen waren aus dem Bett gezogen. Sie suchte ihre Kinder, aber nirgend waren sie zu finden. Sie rief sie nacheinander bei Namen, aber niemand antwortete. Endlich, als sie an das jüngste kam, da rief eine feine Stimme »liebe Mutter, ich stecke im Uhrkasten.« Sie holte es heraus, und es erzählte ihr, daß der Wolf gekommen wäre und die andern alle gefressen hätte. Da könnt ihr denken, wie sie über ihre armen Kinder geweint hat.

Endlich ging sie in ihrem Jammer hinaus, und das jüngste Geißlein lief mit. Als sie auf die Wiese kam, so lag da der Wolf an dem Baum und schnarchte, daß die Äste zitterten. Sie betrachtete ihn von allen Seiten und sah, daß in seinem angefüllten Bauch sich etwas regte und zappelte. »Ach Gott,« dachte sie, »sollten meine armen Kinder, die er zum Abendbrot hinuntergewürgt hat, noch am Leben sein?« Da mußte das Geißlein nach Haus laufen und Schere, Nadel und Zwirn holen. Dann schnitt sie dem Ungetüm den Wanst auf, und kaum hatte sie einen Schnitt getan, so streckte schon ein Geißlein den Kopf heraus, und als sie weiter schnitt so sprangen nacheinander alle sechse heraus, und waren noch alle am Leben, und hatten nicht einmal Schaden gelitten, denn das Ungetüm hatte sie in der Gier ganz hinuntergeschluckt. Das war eine Freude! Da herzten sie ihre liebe Mutter und hüpften wie ein Schneider, der Hochzeit hält. Die Alte aber sagte »jetzt geht und sucht Wackersteine, damit wollen wir dem gottlosen Tier den Bauch füllen, solange es noch im Schlafe liegt.« Da schleppten die sieben Geißerchen in aller Eile die Steine herbei und steckten sie ihm in den Bauch, so viel sie hineinbringen konnten. Dann nähte ihn die Alte in aller Geschwindigkeit wieder zu, daß er nichts merkte und sich nicht einmal regte.

Als der Wolf endlich ausgeschlafen hatte, machte er sich auf die Beine, und weil ihm die Steine im Magen so großen Durst erregten, so wollte er zu einem Brunnen gehen und trinken. Als er aber anfing zu gehen und sich hin und her zu bewegen, so stießen die Steine in seinem Bauch aneinander und rappelten. Da rief er

»was rumpelt und pumpelt
in meinem Bauch herum?
ich meinte, es wären sechs Geißlein,
so sinds lauter Wackerstein.«

Und als er an den Brunnen kam und sich über das Wasser bückte und trinken wollte, da zogen ihn die schweren Steine hinein und er mußte jämmerlich ersaufen. Als die sieben Geißlein das sahen, da kamen sie herbeigelaufen, riefen laut »der Wolf ist tot! der Wolf ist tot!« und tanzten mit ihrer Mutter vor Freude um den Brunnen herum.

6. Der treue Johannes.

Es war einmal ein alter König, der war krank und dachte »es wird wohl das Totenbett sein, auf dem ich liege.« Da sprach er »laßt mir den getreuen Johannes kommen.« Der getreue Johannes war sein liebster Diener, und hieß so, weil er ihm sein lebelang so treu gewesen war. Als er nun vor das Bett kam, sprach der König zu ihm »getreuester Johannes, ich fühle, daß mein Ende herannaht, und da habe ich keine andere Sorge als um meinen Sohn: er ist noch in jungen Jahren, wo er sich nicht immer zu raten weiß, und wenn du mir nicht versprichst, ihn zu unterrichten in allem, was er wissen muß, und sein Pflegevater zu sein, so kann ich meine Augen nicht in Ruhe schließen.« Da antwortete der getreue Johannes »ich will ihn nicht verlassen, und will ihm mit Treue dienen, wenns auch mein Leben kostet.« Da sagte der alte König »so sterb ich getrost und in Frieden.« Und sprach dann weiter »nach meinem Tode sollst du ihm das ganze Schloß zeigen, alle Kammern, Säle und Gewölbe, und alle Schätze, die darin liegen: aber die letzte Kammer in dem langen Gange sollst du ihm nicht zeigen, worin das Bild der Königstochter vom goldenen Dache verborgen steht. Wenn er das Bild erblickt, wird er eine heftige Liebe zu ihr empfinden, und wird in Ohnmacht niederfallen und wird ihretwegen in große Gefahren geraten; davor sollst du ihn hüten.« Und als der treue Johannes nochmals dem alten König die Hand darauf gegeben hatte, ward dieser still, legte sein Haupt auf das Kissen und starb.

Als der alte König zu Grabe getragen war, da erzählte der treue Johannes dem jungen König, was er seinem Vater auf dem Sterbelager versprochen hatte, und sagte »das will ich gewißlich halten, und will dir treu sein, wie ich ihm gewesen bin, und sollte es mein Leben kosten.« Die Trauer ging vorüber, da sprach der treue Johannes zu ihm »es ist nun Zeit, daß du dein Erbe siehst: ich will dir dein väterliches Schloß zeigen.« Da führte er ihn überall herum, auf und ab, und ließ ihn alle die Reichtümer und prächtigen Kammern sehen: nur die eine Kammer öffnete er nicht, worin das gefährliche Bild stand. Das Bild war aber so gestellt, daß, wenn die Türe aufging, man gerade darauf sah, und war so herrlich gemacht, daß man meinte, es leibte und lebte, und es gäbe nichts Lieblicheres und Schöneres auf der ganzen Welt. Der junge König aber merkte wohl, daß der getreue Johannes immer an einer Tür vorüberging, und sprach »warum schließest du mir diese niemals auf?« »Es ist etwas darin,« antwortete er, »vor dem du erschrickst.« Aber der König antwortete »ich habe das ganze Schloß gesehen, so will ich auch wissen, was darin ist,« ging und wollte die Türe mit Gewalt öffnen. Da hielt ihn der getreue Johannes zurück und sagte »ich habe es deinem Vater vor seinem Tode versprochen, daß du nicht sehen sollst, was in der Kammer steht: es könnte dir und mir zu großem Unglück ausschlagen.« »Ach nein,« antwortete der junge König, »wenn ich nicht hineinkomme, so ists mein sicheres Verderben: ich würde Tag und Nacht keine Ruhe haben, bis ichs mit meinen Augen gesehen hätte. Nun gehe ich nicht von der Stelle, bis du aufgeschlossen hast.«

Da sah der getreue Johannes, daß es nicht mehr zu ändern war, und suchte mit schwerem Herzen und vielem Seufzen aus dem großen Bund den Schlüssel heraus. Als er die Türe geöffnet hatte, trat er zuerst hinein und dachte, er wolle das Bildnis bedecken, daß es der König vor ihm nicht sähe: aber was half das? der König stellte sich auf die Fußspitzen und sah ihm über die Schulter. Und als er das Bildnis der Jungfrau erblickte, das so herrlich war und von Gold und Edelsteinen glänzte, da fiel er ohnmächtig zur Erde nieder. Der getreue Johannes hob ihn auf, trug ihn in sein Bett und dachte voll Sorgen »das Unglück ist geschehen, Herr Gott, was will daraus werden!« dann stärkte er ihn mit Wein, bis er wieder zu sich selbst kam. Das erste Wort, das er sprach, war »ach! wer ist das schöne Bild?« »Das ist die Königstochter vom goldenen Dache,« antwortete der treue Johannes. Da sprach der König weiter »meine Liebe zu ihr ist so groß, wenn alle Blätter an den Bäumen Zungen wären, sie könntens nicht aussagen; mein Leben setze ich daran, daß ich sie erlange. Du bist mein getreuester Johannes, du mußt mir beistehen.«

Der treue Diener besann sich lange, wie die Sache anzufangen wäre, denn es hielt schwer, nur vor das Angesicht der Königstochter zu kommen. Endlich hatte er ein Mittel ausgedacht und sprach zu dem König »alles, was sie um sich hat, ist von Gold, Tische, Stühle, Schüsseln, Becher, Näpfe und alles Hausgerät: in deinem Schatze liegen fünf Tonnen Goldes, laß eine von den Goldschmieden des Reichs verarbeiten zu allerhand Gefäßen und Gerätschaften, zu allerhand Vögeln, Gewild und wunderbaren Tieren, das wird ihr gefallen, wir wollen damit hinfahren und unser Glück versuchen.« Der König hieß alle Goldschmiede herbeiholen, die mußten Tag und Nacht arbeiten, bis endlich die herrlichsten Dinge fertig waren. Als alles auf ein Schiff geladen war, zog der getreue Johannes Kaufmannskleider an, und der König mußte ein Gleiches tun, um sich ganz unkenntlich zu machen. Dann fuhren sie über das Meer, und fuhren so lange, bis sie zu der Stadt kamen, worin die Königstochter vom goldenen Dache wohnte.

Der treue Johannes hieß den König auf dem Schiffe zurückbleiben und auf ihn warten. »Vielleicht,« sprach er, »bring ich die Königstochter mit, darum sorgt, daß alles in Ordnung ist, laßt die Goldgefäße aufstellen und das ganze Schiff ausschmücken.« Darauf suchte er sich in sein Schürzchen allerlei von den Goldsachen zusammen, stieg ans Land und ging gerade nach dem königlichen Schloß. Als er in den Schloßhof kam, stand da beim Brunnen ein schönes Mädchen, das hatte zwei goldene Eimer in der Hand und schöpfte damit. Und als es das blinkende Wasser forttragen wollte und sich umdrehte, sah es den fremden Mann und fragte, wer er wäre. Da antwortete er »ich bin ein Kaufmann«, und öffnete sein Schürzchen und ließ sie hineinschauen. Da rief sie »ei, was für schönes Goldzeug!« setzte die Eimer nieder und betrachtete eins nach dem andern. Da sprach das Mädchen »das muß die Königstochter sehen, die hat so große Freude an den Goldsachen, daß sie Euch alles abkauft.« Es nahm ihn bei der Hand und führte ihn hinauf, denn es war die Kammerjungfer. Als die Königstochter die

Ware sah, war sie ganz vergnügt und sprach »es ist so schön gearbeitet, daß ich dir alles abkaufen will.« Aber der getreue Johannes sprach »ich bin nur der Diener von einem reichen Kaufmann: was ich hier habe, ist nichts gegen das, was mein Herr auf seinem Schiff stehen hat, und das ist das Künstlichste und Köstlichste, was je in Gold gearbeitet worden.« Sie wollte alles heraufgebracht haben, aber er sprach »dazu gehören viele Tage, so groß ist die Menge, und so viel Säle, um es aufzustellen, daß Euer Haus nicht Raum dafür hat.« Da ward ihre Neugierde und Lust immer mehr angeregt, so daß sie endlich sagte »führe mich hin zu dem Schiff, ich will selbst hingehen und deines Herrn Schätze betrachten.«

Da führte sie der treue Johannes zu dem Schiffe hin und war ganz freudig, und der König, als er sie erblickte, sah, daß ihre Schönheit noch größer war, als das Bild sie dargestellt hatte, und meinte nicht anders, als das Herz wollte ihm zerspringen. Nun stieg sie in das Schiff, und der König führte sie hinein; der getreue Johannes aber blieb zurück bei dem Steuermann und hieß das Schiff abstoßen, »spannt alle Segel auf, daß es fliegt wie ein Vogel in der Luft.« Der König aber zeigte ihr drinnen das goldene Geschirr, jedes einzeln, die Schüsseln, Becher, Näpfe, die Vögel, das Gewild und die wunderbaren Tiere. Viele Stunden gingen herum, während sie alles besah, und in ihrer Freude merkte sie nicht, daß das Schiff dahinfuhr. Nachdem sie das letzte betrachtet hatte, dankte sie dem Kaufmann und wollte heim, als sie aber an des Schiffes Rand kam, sah sie, daß es fern vom Land auf hohem Meere ging und mit vollen Segeln forteilte. »Ach,« rief sie erschrocken, »ich bin betrogen, ich bin entführt und in die Gewalt eines Kaufmanns geraten; lieber wollt ich sterben!« Der König aber faßte sie bei der Hand und sprach »ein Kaufmann bin ich nicht, ich bin ein König und nicht geringer an Geburt, als du es bist: aber daß ich dich mit List entführt habe, das ist aus übergroßer Liebe geschehen. Das erstemal, als ich dein Bildnis gesehen habe, bin ich ohnmächtig zur Erde gefallen.« Als die Königstochter vom goldenen Dache das hörte, ward sie getröstet, und ihr Herz ward ihm geneigt, so daß sie gerne einwilligte, seine Gemahlin zu werden.

Es trug sich aber zu, während sie auf dem hohen Meere dahinfuhren, daß der treue Johannes, als er vorn auf dem Schiffe saß und Musik machte, in der Luft drei Raben erblickte, die dahergeflogen kamen. Da hörte er auf zu spielen und horchte, was sie miteinander sprachen, denn er verstand das wohl. Die eine rief »ei, da führt er die Königstochter vom goldenen Dache heim.« »Ja,« antwortete die zweite, »er hat sie noch nicht.« Sprach die dritte »er hat sie doch, sie sitzt bei ihm im Schiffe.« Da fing die erste wieder an und rief »was hilft ihm das! wenn sie ans Land kommen, wird ihm ein fuchsrotes Pferd entgegenspringen: da wird er sich aufschwingen wollen, und tut er das, so sprengt es mit ihm fort und in die Luft hinein, daß er nimmermehr seine Jungfrau wiedersieht.« Sprach die zweite »ist gar keine Rettung?« »O ja, wenn ein anderer schnell aufsitzt, das Feuergewehr, das in den Halftern stecken muß, herausnimmt, und das Pferd damit totschießt, so ist der junge König gerettet. Aber wer weiß das! und wers weiß und sagts ihm, der wird zu Stein von den Fußzehen bis zum Knie.« Da sprach die zweite »ich weiß noch mehr, wenn das Pferd auch getötet wird, so behält der junge König doch nicht seine Braut: wenn sie zusammen ins Schloß kommen, so liegt dort ein gemachtes Brauthemd in einer Schüssel, und sieht aus, als wärs von Gold und Silber gewebt, ist aber nichts als Schwefel und Pech: wenn ers antut, verbrennt es ihn bis auf Mark und Knochen.« Sprach die dritte »ist da gar keine Rettung?« »O ja,« antwortete die zweite, »wenn einer mit Handschuhen das Hemd packt und wirft es ins Feuer, daß es verbrennt, so ist der junge König gerettet. Aber was hilfts! wers weiß und es ihm sagt, der wird halbes Leibes Stein vom Knie bis zum Herzen.« Da sprach die dritte »ich weiß noch mehr, wird das Brauthemd auch verbrannt, so hat der junge König seine Braut doch noch nicht: wenn nach der Hochzeit der Tanz anhebt, und die junge Königin tanzt, wird sie plötzlich erbleichen und wie tot hinfallen, und hebt sie nicht einer auf und zieht aus ihrer rechten Brust drei Tropfen Blut und speit sie wieder aus, so stirbt sie. Aber verrät das einer, der es weiß, so wird er ganzen Leibes zu Stein vom Wirbel bis zur Fußzehe.« Als die Raben das miteinander gesprochen hatten, flogen sie weiter, und der getreue Johannes hatte alles wohl verstanden, aber von der Zeit an war er still und traurig; denn verschwieg er seinem Herrn, was er gehört hatte, so war dieser unglücklich: entdeckte er es ihm, so mußte er selbst sein Leben hingeben. Endlich aber sprach er bei sich »meinen Herrn will ich retten, und sollte ich selbst darüber zugrunde gehen.« Als sie nun ans Land kamen, da geschah es, wie die Rabe vorhergesagt hatte, und es sprengte ein prächtiger fuchsroter Gaul daher. »Wohlan,« sprach der König, »der soll mich in mein Schloß tragen,« und wollte sich aufsetzen, doch der treue Johannes kam ihm zuvor, schwang sich schnell darauf, zog das Gewehr aus den Halftern und schoß den Gaul nieder. Da riefen die andern Diener des Königs, die dem treuen Johannes doch nicht gut waren, »wie schändlich, das schöne Tier zu töten, das den König in sein Schloß tragen sollte!« Aber der König sprach »schweigt und laßt ihn gehen, es ist mein getreuester Johannes, wer weiß, wozu das gut ist!« Nun gingen sie ins Schloß, und da stand im Saal eine Schüssel, und das gemachte Brauthemd lag darin und sah aus nicht anders, als wäre es von Gold und Silber. Der junge König ging darauf zu und wollte es ergreifen, aber der treue Johannes schob ihn weg, packte es mit Handschuhen an, trug es schnell ins Feuer und ließ es verbrennen. Die anderen Diener fingen wieder an zu murren und sagten »seht, nun verbrennt er gar des Königs Brauthemd.« Aber der junge König sprach »wer weiß wozu es gut ist, laßt ihn gehen, es ist mein getreuester Johannes.« Nun ward die Hochzeit gefeiert: der Tanz hub an, und die Braut trat auch hinein, da hatte der treue Johannes acht und schaute ihr ins Antlitz; auf einmal erbleichte sie und fiel wie tot zur Erde. Da sprang er eilends hinzu, hob sie auf und trug sie in eine Kammer, da legte er sie nieder, kniete und sog die drei Blutstropfen aus ihrer rechten Brust und speite sie aus. Alsbald atmete sie wieder und erholte sich, aber der junge König hatte es mit angesehen, und wußte nicht, warum es der getreue Johannes getan hatte, ward zornig darüber und rief »werft ihn ins

Gefängnis.« Am andern Morgen ward der getreue Johannes verurteilt und zum Galgen geführt, und als er oben stand und gerichtet werden sollte, sprach er »jeder, der sterben soll, darf vor seinem Ende noch einmal reden, soll ich das Recht auch haben?« »Ja,« antwortete der König, »es soll dir vergönnt sein.« Da sprach der treue Johannes »ich bin mit Unrecht verurteilt und bin dir immer treu gewesen,« und erzählte wie er auf dem Meer das Gespräch der Raben gehört, und wie er, um seinen Herrn zu retten, das alles hätte tun müssen. Da rief der König »o mein treuester Johannes, Gnade! Gnade! führt ihn herunter.« Aber der treue Johannes war bei dem letzten Wort, das er geredet hatte, leblos herabgefallen, und war ein Stein.

Darüber trug nun der König und die Königin großes Leid, und der König sprach »ach, was hab ich große Treue so übel belohnt!« und ließ das steinerne Bild aufheben und in seine Schlafkammer neben sein Bett stellen. Sooft er es ansah, weinte er und sprach »ach, könnt ich dich wieder lebendig machen, mein getreuester Johannes.« Es ging eine Zeit herum, da gebar die Königin Zwillinge, zwei Söhnlein, die wuchsen heran und waren ihre Freude. Einmal, als die Königin in der Kirche war, und die zwei Kinder bei dem Vater saßen und spielten, sah dieser wieder das steinerne Bildnis voller Trauer an, seufzte und rief »ach, könnt ich dich wieder lebendig machen, mein getreuester Johannes.« Da fing der Stein an zu reden und sprach »ja, du kannst mich wieder lebendig machen, wenn du dein Liebstes daran wenden willst.« Da rief der König »alles, was ich auf der Welt habe, will ich für dich hingeben.« Sprach der Stein weiter »wenn du mit deiner eigenen Hand deinen beiden Kindern den Kopf abhaust und mich mit ihrem Blute bestreichst, so erhalte ich das Leben wieder.« Der König erschrak, als er hörte, daß er seine liebsten Kinder selbst töten sollte, doch dachte er an die große Treue, und daß der getreue Johannes für ihn gestorben war, zog sein Schwert und hieb mit eigener Hand den Kindern den Kopf ab. Und als er mit ihrem Blute den Stein bestrichen hatte, so kehrte das Leben zurück, und der getreue Johannes stand wieder frisch und gesund vor ihm. Er sprach zum König »deine Treue soll nicht unbelohnt bleiben,« und nahm die Häupter der Kinder, setzte sie auf und bestrich die Wunde mit ihrem Blut, davon wurden sie im Augenblick wieder heil, sprangen herum und spielten fort, als wäre ihnen nichts geschehen. Nun war der König voll Freude, und als er die Königin kommen sah, versteckte er den getreuen Johannes und die beiden Kinder in einen großen Schrank. Wie sie hereintrat, sprach er zu ihr »hast du gebetet in der Kirche?« »Ja,« antwortete sie, »aber ich habe beständig an den treuen Johannes gedacht, daß er so unglücklich durch uns geworden ist.« Da sprach er »liebe Frau, wir können ihm das Leben wiedergeben, aber es kostet uns unsere beiden Söhnlein, die müssen wir opfern.« Die Königin ward bleich und erschrak im Herzen, doch sprach sie »wir sinds ihm schuldig wegen seiner großen Treue.« Da freute er sich, daß sie dachte, wie er gedacht hatte, ging hin und schloß den Schrank auf, holte die Kinder und den treuen Johannes heraus und sprach »Gott sei gelobt, er ist erlöst, und unsere Söhnlein haben wir auch wieder,« und erzählte ihr, wie sich alles zugetragen hatte. Da lebten sie zusammen in Glückseligkeit bis an ihr Ende.

7. Der gute Handel.

Ein Bauer, der hatte seine Kuh auf den Markt getrieben und für sieben Taler verkauft. Auf dem Heimweg mußte er an einem Teich vorbei, und da hörte er schon von weitem, wie die Frösche riefen »ak, ak, ak, ak.« »Ja,« sprach er für sich, »die schreien auch ins Haberfeld hinein: sieben sinds, die ich gelöst habe, keine acht.« Als er zu dem Wasser herankam, rief er ihnen zu »dummes Vieh, das ihr seid! wißt ihrs nicht besser? sieben Taler sinds und keine acht.« Die Frösche blieben aber bei ihrem »ak, ak, ak, ak.« »Nun, wenn ihrs nicht glauben wollt, ich kanns euch vorzählen,« holt das Geld aus der Tasche und zählte die sieben Taler ab, immer vierundzwanzig Groschen auf einen. Die Frösche kehrten sich aber nicht an seine Rechnung und riefen abermals »ak, ak, ak, ak.« »Ei,« rief der Bauer ganz bös, »wollt ihrs besser wissen als ich, so zählt selber,« und warf ihnen das Geld miteinander ins Wasser hinein. Er blieb stehen und wollte warten, bis sie fertig wären und ihm das Seinige wiederbrächten, aber die Frösche beharrten auf ihrem Sinn, schrieen immerfort »ak, ak, ak, ak« und warfen auch das Geld nicht wieder heraus. Er wartete noch eine gute Weile, bis der Abend anbrach und er nach Haus mußte, da schimpfte er die Frösche aus und rief »ihr Wasserpatscher, ihr Dickköpfe, ihr Klotzaugen, ein groß Maul habt ihr und könnt schreien, daß einem die Ohren weh tun, aber sieben Taler könnt ihr nicht zählen: meint ihr, ich wollte da stehen bis ihr fertig wärt?« Damit ging er fort, aber die Frösche riefen noch »ak, ak, ak, ak« hinter ihm her, daß er ganz verdrießlich heimkam.

Über eine Zeit erhandelte er sich wieder eine Kuh, die schlachtete er, und machte die Rechnung, wenn er das Fleisch gut verkaufte, könnte er so viel lösen, als die beiden Kühe wert wären, und das Fell hätte er obendrein. Als er nun mit dem Fleisch zu der Stadt kam, war vor dem Tore ein ganzes Rudel Hunde zusammengelaufen, voran ein großer Windhund: der sprang um das Fleisch, schnupperte und bellte »was, was, was, was.« Als er gar nicht aufhören wollte, sprach der Bauer zu ihm »ja, ich merke wohl, du sagst ›was, was‹, weil du etwas von dem Fleisch verlangst, da sollt ich aber schön ankommen, wenn ich dirs geben wollte.« Der Hund antwortete nichts als »was, was.« »Willst dus auch nicht wegfressen und für deine Kameraden da gutstehen?« »Was, was,« sprach der Hund. »Nun, wenn du dabei beharrst, so will ich dirs lassen, ich kenne dich wohl und weiß, bei wem du dienst: aber das sage ich dir, in drei Tagen muß ich mein Geld haben, sonst geht dirs schlimm: du kannst mirs nur hinausbringen.« Darauf lud er das Fleisch ab und kehrte wieder um: die Hunde machten sich darüber her und bellten laut »was, was.« Der Bauer, der es von weitem hörte, sprach zu sich »horch, jetzt verlangen sie alle was, aber der große muß mir einstehen.«

Als drei Tage herum waren, dachte der Bauer »heute abend hast du dein Geld in der Tasche,« und war ganz vergnügt. Aber es wollte niemand kommen und auszahlen. »Es ist kein Verlaß mehr auf jemand,« sprach er, und endlich riß ihm die Geduld, daß er in die Stadt zu dem Fleischer ging und sein Geld forderte. Der Fleischer meinte, es wäre ein Spaß, aber der Bauer sagte »Spaß beiseite, ich will mein Geld: hat der große Hund Euch nicht die ganze geschlachtete Kuh vor drei Tagen heimgebracht?« Da ward der Fleischer zornig, griff nach einem Besenstiel und jagte ihn hinaus. »Wart,« sprach der Bauer, »es gibt noch Gerechtigkeit auf der Welt!« und ging in das königliche Schloß und bat sich Gehör aus. Er ward vor den König geführt, der da saß mit seiner Tochter und fragte, was ihm für ein Leid widerfahren wäre. »Ach,« sagte er, »die Frösche und die Hunde haben mir das Meinige genommen, und der Metzger hat mich dafür mit dem Stock bezahlt,« und erzählte weitläufig, wie es zugegangen war. Darüber fing die Königstochter laut an zu lachen, und der König sprach zu ihm »recht kann ich dir hier nicht geben, aber dafür sollst du meine Tochter zur Frau haben: ihr Lebtag hat sie noch nicht gelacht, als eben über dich, und ich habe sie dem versprochen, der sie zum Lachen brächte. Du kannst Gott für dein Glück danken.« »O,« antwortete der Bauer, »ich will sie gar nicht: ich habe daheim nur eine einzige Frau, und die ist mir schon zuviel: wenn ich nach Haus komme, so ist mir nicht anders, als ob in jedem Winkel eine stände.« Da ward der König zornig und sagte »du bist ein Grobian.« »Ach, Herr König,« antwortete der Bauer, »was könnt Ihr von einem Ochsen anders erwarten als Rindfleisch!« »Warte,« erwiderte der König, »du sollst einen andern Lohn haben. Jetzt pack dich fort, aber in drei Tagen komm wieder, so sollen dir fünfhundert vollgezählt werden.«

Wie der Bauer hinaus vor die Tür kam, sprach die Schildwache »du hast die Königstochter zum Lachen gebracht, da wirst du was Rechtes bekommen haben.« »Ja, das mein ich,« antwortete der Bauer, »fünfhundert werden mir ausgezahlt.« »Hör,« sprach der Soldat, »gib mir etwas davon! was willst du mit all dem Geld anfangen!« »Weil dus bist,« sprach der Bauer, »so sollst du zweihundert haben, melde dich in drei Tagen beim König, und laß dirs aufzählen.« Ein Jude, der in der Nähe gestanden und das Gespräch mit angehört hatte, lief dem Bauer nach, hielt ihn beim Rock und sprach »Gotteswunder, was seid Ihr ein Glückskind! ich wills Euch wechseln, ich wills Euch umsetzen in Scheidemünz, was wollt Ihr mit den harten Talern?« »Mauschel,« sagte der Bauer, »dreihundert kannst du noch haben, gib mirs gleich in Münze, heute über drei Tage wirst du dafür beim König bezahlt werden.« Der Jude freute sich über das Profitchen und brachte die Summe in schlechten Groschen, wo drei so viel wert sind als zwei gute. Nach Verlauf der drei Tage ging der Bauer, dem Befehl des Königs gemäß, vor den König. »Zieht ihm den Rock aus,« sprach dieser, »er soll seine fünfhundert haben.« »Ach,« sagte der Bauer, »sie gehören nicht mehr mein, zweihundert habe ich an die Schildwache verschenkt, und dreihundert hat mir der Jude eingewechselt, von Rechts wegen gebührt mir gar nichts.« Indem kam der Soldat und der Jude herein, verlangten das Ihrige, das sie dem Bauer abgewonnen hätten, und erhielten die Schläge richtig zugemessen. Der Soldat ertrugs geduldig und wußte schon, wies schmeckte: der Jude aber tat jämmerlich »au weih geschrien! sind das die harten Taler?« Der König mußte über den Bauer lachen, und da aller Zorn verschwunden war, sprach er »weil du deinen Lohn schon verloren hast, bevor er dir zuteil ward, so will ich dir einen Ersatz geben: geh in meine Schatzkammer und hol dir Geld, soviel du willst.« Der Bauer ließ sich das nicht zweimal sagen, und füllte in seine weiten Taschen, was nur hinein wollte. Danach ging er ins Wirtshaus und überzählte sein Geld. Der Jude war ihm nachgeschlichen und hörte, wie er mit sich allein brummte »nun hat mich der Spitzbube von König doch hinters Licht geführt! hätte er mir nicht selbst das Geld geben können, so wüßte ich, was ich hätte, wie kann ich nun wissen, ob das richtig ist, was ich so auf gut Glück eingesteckt habe!« »Gott bewahre,« sprach der Jude für sich, »der spricht despektierlich von unserm Herrn, ich lauf und gebs an, da krieg ich eine Belohnung, und er wird obendrein noch bestraft.« Als der König von den Reden des Bauern hörte, geriet er in Zorn und hieß den Juden hingehen und den Sünder herbeiholen. Der Jude lief zum Bauer, »Ihr sollt gleich zum Herrn König kommen, wie Ihr geht und steht.« »Ich weiß besser, was sich schickt,« antwortete der Bauer, »erst laß ich mir einen neuen Rock machen; meinst du, ein Mann, der so viel Geld in der Tasche hat, sollte in dem alten Lumpenrock hingehen?« Der Jude, als er sah, daß der Bauer ohne einen andern Rock nicht wegzubringen war, und weil er fürchtete, wenn der Zorn des Königs verraucht wäre, so käme er um seine Belohnung und der Bauer um seine Strafe, so sprach er »ich will Euch für die kurze Zelt einen schönen Rock leihen aus bloßer Freundschaft; was tut der Mensch nicht alles aus Liebe!« Der Bauer ließ sich das gefallen, zog den Rock vom Juden an und ging mit ihm fort. Der König hielt dem Bauer die bösen Reden vor, die der Jude hinterbracht hatte. »Ach,« sprach der Bauer, »was ein Jude sagt, ist immer gelogen, dem geht kein wahres Wort aus dem Munde; der Kerl da ist imstand und behauptet, ich hätte seinen Rock an.« »Was soll mir das?« schrie der Jude, »ist der Rock nicht mein? hab ich ihn Euch nicht aus bloßer Freundschaft geborgt, damit Ihr vor den Herrn König treten konntet?« Wie der König das hörte, sprach er »einen hat der Jude gewiß betrogen, mich oder den Bauer,« und ließ ihm noch etwas in harten Talern nachzahlen. Der Bauer aber ging in dem guten Rock und mit dem guten Geld in der Tasche heim und sprach »diesmal hab ichs getroffen.«

8. Der wunderliche Spielmann.

Es war einmal ein wunderlicher Spielmann, der ging durch einen Wald mutterselig allein und dachte hin und her, und als für seine Gedanken nichts mehr übrig war, sprach er zu sich selbst »mir wird hier im Walde Zeit und Weile lang, ich will einen guten Gesellen herbeiholen.« Da nahm er die Geige vom Rücken und fiedelte eins, daß es durch die Bäume schallte. Nicht lange, so kam ein Wolf durch das Dickicht dahergetrabt. »Ach, ein Wolf kommt! nach dem trage ich kein Verlangen,« sagte der Spielmann: aber der Wolf schritt näher und sprach zu ihm »ei, du lieber Spielmann, was fiedelst du so schön! das möcht ich auch lernen.« »Das ist bald gelernt,« antwortete ihm der Spielmann, »du mußt nur alles tun, was ich dich heiße.« »O Spielmann,« sprach der Wolf, »ich will dir gehorchen, wie ein Schüler seinem Meister.« Der Spielmann hieß ihn mitgehen, und als sie ein Stück Wegs zusammen gegangen waren, kamen sie an einen alten Eichbaum, der innen hohl und in der Mitte aufgerissen war. »Sieh her,« sprach der Spielmann, »willst du fiedeln lernen, so lege die Vorderpfoten in diesen Spalt.« Der Wolf gehorchte, aber der Spielmann hob schnell einen Stein auf und keilte ihm die beiden Pfoten mit einem Schlag so fest, daß er wie ein Gefangener da liegen bleiben mußte. »Warte da so lange, bis ich wiederkomme,« sagte der Spielmann und ging seines Weges.

Über eine Weile sprach er abermals zu sich selber »mir wird hier im Walde Zeit und Weile lang, ich will einen andern Gesellen herbeiholen,« nahm seine Geige und fiedelte wieder in den Wald hinein. Nicht lange, so kam ein Fuchs durch die Bäume dahergeschlichen. »Ach, ein Fuchs kommt!« sagte der Spielmann, »nach dem trage ich kein Verlangen.« Der Fuchs kam zu ihm heran und sprach »ei, du lieber Spielmann, was fiedelst du so schön! das möchte ich auch lernen.« »Das ist bald gelernt,« sprach der Spielmann, »du mußt nur alles tun, was ich dich heiße.« »O Spielmann,« antwortete der Fuchs, »ich will dir gehorchen, wie ein Schüler seinem Meister.« »Folge mir,« sagte der Spielmann, und als sie ein Stück Wegs gegangen waren, kamen sie auf einen Fußweg, zu dessen beiden Seiten hohe Sträuche standen. Da hielt der Spielmann still, bog von der einen Seite ein Haselnußbäumchen zur Erde herab und trat mit dem Fuß auf die Spitze, dann bog er von der andern Seite noch ein Bäumchen herab und sprach »wohlan, Füchslein, wenn du etwas lernen willst, so reich mir deine linke Vorderpfote.« Der Fuchs gehorchte und der Spielmann band ihm die Pfote an den linken Stamm. »Füchslein,« sprach er, »nun reich mir die rechte,« die band er ihm an den rechten Stamm. Und als er nachgesehen hatte, ob die Knoten der Stricke auch fest genug waren, ließ er los, und die Bäumchen fuhren in die Höhe und schnellten das Füchslein hinauf, daß es in der Luft schwebte und zappelte. »Warte da so lange, bis ich wiederkomme,« sagte der Spielmann und ging seines Weges.

Wiederum sprach er zu sich »Zeit und Weile wird mir hier im Walde lang; ich will einen andern Gesellen herbeiholen,« nahm seine Geige, und der Klang erschallte durch den Wald. Da kam ein Häschen dahergesprungen. »Ach, ein Hase kommt!« sagte der Spielmann, »den wollte ich nicht haben.« »Ei, du lieber Spielmann,« sagte das Häschen, »was fiedelst du so schön, das möcht ich auch lernen.« »Das ist bald gelernt,« sprach der Spielmann, »du mußt nur alles tun, was ich dich heiße.« »O Spielmann,« antwortete das Häslein, »ich will dir gehorchen, wie ein Schüler seinem Meister.« Sie gingen ein Stück Wegs zusammen, bis sie zu einer lichten Stelle im Wald kamen, wo ein Espenbaum stand. Der Spielmann band dem Häschen einen langen Bindfaden um den Hals, wovon er das andere Ende an den Baum knüpfte. »Munter, Häschen, jetzt spring mir zwanzigmal um den Baum herum,« rief der Spielmann, und das Häschen gehorchte, und wie es zwanzigmal herumgelaufen war, so hatte sich der Bindfaden zwanzigmal um den Stamm gewickelt, und das Häschen war gefangen, und es mochte ziehen und zerren, wie es wollte, es schnitt sich nur den Faden in den weichen Hals. »Warte da so lang, bis ich wiederkomme,« sprach der Spielmann und ging weiter.

Der Wolf indessen hatte gerückt, gezogen, an dem Stein gebissen, und so lange gearbeitet, bis er die Pfoten frei gemacht und wieder aus der Spalte gezogen hatte. Voll Zorn und Wut eilte er hinter dem Spielmann her, und wollte ihn zerreißen. Als ihn der Fuchs laufen sah, fing er an zu jammern und schrie aus Leibeskräften »Bruder Wolf, komm mir zur Hilfe, der Spielmann hat mich betrogen.« Der Wolf zog die Bäumchen herab, biß die Schnüre entzwei und machte den Fuchs frei, der mit ihm ging und an dem Spielmann Rache nehmen wollte. Sie fanden das gebundene Häschen, das sie ebenfalls erlösten, und dann suchten alle zusammen ihren Feind auf.

Der Spielmann hatte auf seinem Weg abermals seine Fiedel erklingen lassen, und diesmal war er glücklicher gewesen. Die Töne drangen zu den Ohren eines armen Holzhauers, der alsbald, er mochte wollen oder nicht, von der Arbeit abließ, und mit dem Beil unter dem Arme herankam, die Musik zu hören. »Endlich kommt doch der rechte Geselle,« sagte der Spielmann, »denn einen Menschen suchte ich und keine wilden Tiere.« Und fing an und spielte so schön und lieblich, daß der arme Mann wie bezaubert dastand, und ihm das Herz vor Freude aufging. Und wie er so stand, kamen der Wolf, der Fuchs und das Häslein heran, und er merkte wohl, daß sie etwas Böses im Schilde führten. Da erhob er seine blinkende Axt und stellte sich vor den Spielmann, als wollte er sagen »wer an ihn will, der hüte sich, der hat es mit mir zu tun.« Da ward den Tieren angst, und liefen in den Wald zurück, der Spielmann aber spielte dem Manne noch eins zum Dank und zog dann weiter.

9. Die zwölf Brüder.

Es war einmal ein König und eine Königin, die lebten in Frieden miteinander und hatten zwölf Kinder, das waren aber lauter Buben. Nun sprach der König zu seiner Frau »wenn das dreizehnte Kind, was du zur Welt bringst, ein Mädchen ist, so sollen die zwölf Buben sterben, damit sein Reichtum groß wird und das Königreich ihm allein zufällt.« Er ließ auch zwölf Särge machen, die waren schon mit Hobelspänen gefüllt, und in jedem lag das Totenkißchen, und ließ sie in eine verschlossene Stube bringen, dann gab er der Königin den Schlüssel und gebot ihr, niemand etwas davon zu sagen.

Die Mutter aber saß nun den ganzen Tag und trauerte, so daß der kleinste Sohn, der immer bei ihr war, und den sie nach der Bibel Benjamin nannte, zu ihr sprach »liebe Mutter, warum bist du so traurig?« »Liebstes Kind,« antwortete sie, »ich darf dirs nicht sagen.« Er ließ ihr aber keine Ruhe, bis sie ging und die Stube aufschloß, und ihm die zwölf mit Hobelspänen schon gefüllten Totenladen zeigte. Darauf sprach sie »mein liebster Benjamin, diese Särge hat dein Vater für dich und deine elf Brüder machen lassen, denn wenn ich ein Mädchen zur Welt bringe, so sollt ihr allesamt getötet und darin begraben werden.« Und als sie weinte, während sie das sprach, so tröstete sie der Sohn und sagte »weine nicht, liebe Mutter, wir wollen uns schon helfen und wollen fortgehen.« Sie aber sprach »geh mit deinen elf Brüdern hinaus in den Wald, und einer setze sich immer auf den höchsten Baum, der zu finden ist, und halte Wacht und schaue nach dem Turm hier im Schloß. Gebär ich ein Söhnlein, so will ich eine weiße Fahne aufstecken, und dann dürft ihr wiederkommen: gebär ich ein Töchterlein, so will ich eine rote Fahne aufstecken, und dann flieht fort, so schnell ihr könnt, und der liebe Gott behüte euch. Alle Nacht will ich aufstehen und für euch beten, im Winter, daß ihr an einem Feuer euch wärmen könnt, im Sommer, daß ihr nicht in der Hitze schmachtet.«

Nachdem sie also ihre Söhne gesegnet hatte, gingen sie hinaus in den Wald. Einer hielt um den andern Wache, saß auf der höchsten Eiche und schaute nach dem Turm. Als elf Tage herum waren und die Reihe an Benjamin kam, da sah er, wie eine Fahne aufgesteckt wurde: es war aber nicht die weiße, sondern die rote Blutfahne, die verkündete, daß sie alle sterben sollten. Wie die Brüder das hörten, wurden sie zornig und sprachen »sollten wir um eines Mädchens willen den Tod leiden! wir schwören, daß wir uns rächen wollen: wo wir ein Mädchen finden, soll sein rotes Blut fließen.«

Darauf gingen sie tiefer in den Wald hinein, und mitten drein, wo er am dunkelsten war, fanden sie ein kleines verwünschtes Häuschen, das leer stand. Da sprachen sie »hier wollen wir wohnen, und du, Benjamin, du bist der jüngste und schwächste, du sollst daheim bleiben und haushalten, wir andern wollen ausgehen und Essen holen.« Nun zogen sie in den Wald und schossen Hasen, wilde Rehe, Vögel und Täuberchen, und was zu essen stand: das brachten sie dem Benjamin, der mußte es ihnen zurecht machen, damit sie ihren Hunger stillen konnten. In dem Häuschen lebten sie zehn Jahre zusammen, und die Zeit ward ihnen nicht lang.

Das Töchterchen, das ihre Mutter, die Königin, geboren hatte, war nun herangewachsen, war gut von Herzen und schön von Angesicht und hatte einen goldenen Stern auf der Stirne. Einmal, als große Wäsche war, sah es darunter zwölf Mannshemden und fragte seine Mutter »wem gehören diese zwölf Hemden, für den Vater sind sie doch viel zu klein?« Da antwortete sie mit schwerem Herzen »liebes Kind, die gehören deinen zwölf Brüdern.« Sprach das Mädchen »wo sind meine zwölf Brüder, ich habe noch niemals von ihnen gehört.« Sie antwortete »das weiß Gott, wo sie sind: sie irren in der Welt herum.« Da nahm sie das Mädchen und schloß ihm das Zimmer auf, und zeigte ihm die zwölf Särge mit den Hobelspänen und den Totenkißchen. »Diese Särge,« sprach sie, »waren für deine Brüder bestimmt, aber sie sind heimlich fortgegangen, eh du geboren warst,« und erzählte ihm, wie sich alles zugetragen hatte. Da sagte das Mädchen »liebe Mutter, weine nicht, ich will gehen und meine Brüder suchen.«

Nun nahm es die zwölf Hemden und ging fort und geradezu in den großen Wald hinein. Es ging den ganzen Tag, und am Abend kam es zu dem verwünschten Häuschen. Da trat es hinein und fand einen jungen Knaben, der fragte »wo kommst du her und wo willst du hin?« und erstaunte, daß sie so schön war, königliche Kleider trug und einen Stern auf der Stirne hatte. Da antwortete sie »ich bin eine Königstochter und suche meine zwölf Brüder und will gehen, so weit der Himmel blau ist, bis ich sie finde.« Sie zeigte ihm auch die zwölf Hemden, die ihnen gehörten. Da sah Benjamin, daß es seine Schwester war, und sprach »ich bin Benjamin, dein jüngster Bruder.« Und sie fing an zu weinen vor Freude, und Benjamin auch, und sie küßten und herzten einander vor großer Liebe. Hernach sprach er »liebe Schwester, es ist noch ein Vorbehalt da, wir hatten verabredet, daß ein jedes Mädchen, das uns begegnete, sterben sollte, weil wir um ein Mädchen unser Königreich verlassen mußten.« Da sagte sie »ich will gerne sterben, wenn ich damit meine zwölf Brüder erlösen kann.« »Nein,« antwortete er, »du sollst nicht sterben, setze dich unter diese Bütte, bis die elf Brüder kommen, dann will ich schon einig mit ihnen werden.« Also tat sie; und wie es Nacht ward, kamen die andern von der Jagd, und die Mahlzeit war bereit. Und als sie am Tische saßen und aßen, fragten sie »was gibts Neues?« Sprach Benjamin »wißt ihr nichts?« »Nein,« antworteten sie. Sprach er weiter »ihr seid im Walde gewesen, und ich bin daheim geblieben, und weiß doch mehr als ihr.« »So erzähle uns,« riefen sie. Antwortete er »versprecht ihr mir auch, daß das erste Mädchen, das uns begegnet, nicht soll getötet werden?« »Ja,« riefen alle, »das soll Gnade haben, erzähl uns nur.« Da sprach er »unsere Schwester ist da,« und hub die Bütte auf, und die Königstochter kam hervor in ihren kömglichen Kleidern mit dem goldenen Stern auf der Stirne, und war so schön, zart und fein. Da freueten sie sich alle, fielen ihr um den Hals und küßten sie und hatten sie vom Herzen lieb.

Nun blieb sie bei Benjamin zu Haus und half ihm in der Arbeit. Die elfe zogen in den Wald, fingen Gewild, Rehe, Vögel und Täuberchen, damit sie zu essen hatten, und die Schwester und Benjamin sorgten, daß es zubereitet wurde. Sie suchte das Holz zum Kochen und die Kräuter zum Gemüs, und stellte die Töpfe ans Feuer, also daß die Mahlzeit immer fertig war, wenn die elfe kamen. Sie hielt auch sonst Ordnung im Häuschen, und deckte die Bettlein hübsch weiß und rein, und die Brüder waren immer zufrieden und lebten in großer Einigkeit mit ihr.

Auf eine Zeit hatten die beiden daheim eine schöne Kost zurechtgemacht, und wie sie nun alle beisammen waren, setzten sie sich, aßen und tranken und waren voller Freude. Es war aber ein kleines Gärtchen an dem verwünschten Häuschen, darin standen zwölf Lilienblumen, die man auch Studenten heißt: nun wollte sie ihren Brüdern ein Vergnügen machen, brach die zwölf Blumen ab und dachte jedem aufs Essen eine zu schenken. Wie sie aber die Blumen abgebrochen hatte, in demselben Augenblick waren die zwölf Brüder in zwölf Raben verwandelt und flogen über den Wald hin fort, und das Haus mit dem Garten war auch verschwunden. Da war nun das arme Mädchen allein in dem wilden Wald, und wie es sich umsah, so stand eine alte Frau neben ihm, die sprach »mein Kind, was hast du angefangen? warum hast du die zwölf weißen Blumen nicht stehen lassen? das waren deine Brüder, die sind nun auf immer in Raben verwandelt.« Das Mädchen sprach weinend »ist denn kein Mittel, sie zu erlösen?« »Nein,« sagte die Alte »es ist keins auf der ganzen Welt als eins, das ist aber so schwer, daß du sie damit nicht befreien wirst, denn du mußt sieben Jahre stumm sein, darfst nicht sprechen und nicht lachen, und sprichst du ein einziges Wort, und es fehlt nur eine Stunde an den sieben Jahren, so ist alles umsonst, und deine Brüder werden von dem einen Wort getötet.«

Da sprach das Mädchen in seinem Herzen »ich weiß gewiß, daß ich meine Brüder erlöse,« und ging und suchte einen hohen Baum, setzte sich darauf und spann, und sprach nicht und lachte nicht. Nun trugs sich zu, daß ein König in dem Walde jagte, der hatte einen großen Windhund, der lief zu dem Baum, wo das Mädchen darauf saß, sprang herum, schrie und bellte hinauf. Da kam der König herbei und sah die schöne Königstochter mit dem goldenen Stern auf der Stirne, und war so entzückt über ihre Schönheit, daß er ihr zurief, ob sie seine Gemahlin werden wollte. Sie gab keine Antwort, nickte aber ein wenig mit dem Kopf. Da stieg er selbst auf den Baum, trug sie herab, setzte sie auf sein Pferd und führte sie heim. Da ward die Hochzeit mit großer Pracht und Freude gefeiert: aber die Braut sprach nicht und lachte nicht. Als sie ein paar Jahre miteinander vergnügt gelebt hatten, fing die Mutter des Königs, die eine böse Frau war, an, die junge Königin zu verleumden und sprach zum König »es ist ein gemeines Bettelmädchen, das du dir mitgebracht hast, wer weiß, was für gottlose Streiche sie heimlich treibt. Wenn sie stumm ist und nicht sprechen kann, so könnte sie doch einmal lachen, aber wer nicht lacht, der hat ein böses Gewissen.« Der König wollte zuerst nicht daran glauben, aber die Alte trieb es so lange und beschuldigte sie so viel böser Dinge, daß der König sich endlich überreden ließ und sie zum Tod verurteilte.

Nun ward im Hof ein großes Feuer angezündet, darin sollte sie verbrannt werden: und der König stand oben am Fenster und sah mit weinenden Augen zu, weil er sie noch immer so lieb hatte. Und als sie schon an den Pfahl festgebunden war, und das Feuer an ihren Kleidern mit roten Zungen leckte, da war eben der letzte Augenblick von den sieben Jahren verflossen. Da ließ sich in der Luft ein Geschwirr hören, und zwölf Raben kamen hergezogen und senkten sich nieder: und wie sie die Erde berührten, waren es ihre zwölf Brüder, die sie erlöst hatte. Sie rissen das Feuer auseinander, löschten die Flammen, machten ihre liebe Schwester frei, und küßten und herzten sie. Nun aber, da sie ihren Mund auftun und reden durfte, erzählte sie dem Könige, warum sie stumm gewesen wäre und niemals gelacht hätte. Der König freute sich, als er hörte, daß sie unschuldig war, und sie lebten nun alle zusammen in Einigkeit bis an ihren Tod. Die böse Stiefmutter ward vor Gericht gestellt und in ein Faß gesteckt, das mit siedendem Öl und giftigen Schlangen angefüllt war, und starb eines bösen Todes.

10. Das Lumpengesindel.

Hähnchen sprach zum Hühnchen »jetzt ist die Zeit, wo die Nüsse reif werden, da wollen wir zusammen auf den Berg gehen und uns einmal recht satt essen, ehe sie das Eichhorn alle wegholt.« »Ja,« antwortete das Hühnchen, »komm, wir wollen uns eine Lust miteinander machen.« Da gingen sie zusammen fort auf den Berg, und weil es ein heller Tag war, blieben sie bis zum Abend. Nun weiß ich nicht, ob sie sich so dick gegessen hatten, oder ob sie übermütig geworden waren, kurz, sie wollten nicht zu Fuß nach Hause gehen, und das Hähnchen mußte einen kleinen Wagen von Nußschalen bauen. Als er fertig war, setzte sich Hühnchen hinein und sagte zum Hähnchen »du kannst dich nur immer vorspannen.« »Du kommst mir recht,« sagte das Hähnchen, »lieber geh ich zu Fuß nach Haus, als daß ich mich vorspannen lasse: nein, so haben wir nicht gewettet. Kutscher will ich wohl sein und auf dem Bock sitzen, aber selbst ziehen, das tu ich nicht.« Wie sie so stritten, schnatterte eine Ente daher »ihr Diebsvolk, wer hat euch geheißen in meinen Nußberg gehen? wartet, das soll euch schlecht bekommen!« ging also mit aufgesperrtem Schnabel auf das Hähnchen los. Aber Hähnchen war auch nicht faul und stieg der Ente tüchtig zu Leib, endlich hackte es mit seinen Sporn so gewaltig auf sie los, daß sie um Gnade bat und sich gern zur Strafe vor den Wagen spannen ließ. Hähnchen setzte sich nun auf den Bock und war Kutscher, und darauf ging es fort in einem Jagen, »Ente, lauf zu, was du kannst!« Als sie ein Stück Weges gefahren waren, begegneten sie zwei Fußgängern, einer Stecknadel und einer Nähnadel. Sie riefen »halt! halt!« und sagten, es würde gleich stichdunkel werden, da könnten sie keinen Schritt weiter, auch wäre es so schmutzig auf der Straße, ob sie nicht ein wenig einsitzen könnten: sie wären auf der Schneiderherberge vor dem Tor gewesen und hätten sich beim Bier verspätet. Hähnchen, da es magere Leute waren, die nicht viel Platz einnahmen, ließ sie beide einsteigen, doch mußten sie versprechen, ihm und seinem Hühnchen nicht auf die Füße zu treten. Spät abends kamen sie zu einem Wirtshaus, und weil sie die Nacht nicht weiterfahren wollten, die Ente auch nicht gut zu Fuß war und von einer Seite auf die andere fiel, so kehrten sie ein. Der Wirt machte anfangs viel Einwendungen, sein Haus wäre schon voll, gedachte auch wohl, es möchte keine vornehme Herrschaft sein, endlich aber, da sie süße Reden führten, er sollte das Ei haben, welches das Hühnchen unterwegs gelegt hatte, auch die Ente behalten, die alle Tage eins legte, so sagte er endlich, sie möchten die Nacht über bleiben. Nun ließen sie wie der frisch auftragen und lebten in Saus und Braus. Frühmorgens, als es dämmerte und noch alles schlief, weckte Hähnchen das Hühnchen, holte das Ei, pickte es auf, und sie verzehrten es zusammen; die Schalen aber warfen sie auf den Feuerherd. Dann gingen sie zu der Nähnadel, die noch schlief, packten sie beim Kopf und steckten sie in das Sesselkissen des Wirts, die Stecknadel aber in sein Handtuch, endlich flogen sie, mir nichts dir nichts, über die Heide davon. Die Ente, die gern unter freiem Himmel schlief und im Hof geblieben war, hörte sie fortschnurren, machte sich munter und fand einen Bach, auf dem sie hinabschwamm; und das ging geschwinder als vor dem Wagen. Ein paar Stunden später machte sich erst der Wirt aus den Federn, wusch sich und wollte sich am Handtuch abtrocknen, da fuhr ihm die Stecknadel über das Gesicht und machte ihm einen roten Strich von einem Ohr zum andern; dann ging er in die Küche, und wollte sich eine Pfeife anstecken, wie er aber an den Herd kam, sprangen ihm die Eierschalen in die Augen. »Heute morgen will mir alles an meinen Kopf«, sagte er und ließ sich verdrießlich auf seinen Großvaterstuhl nieder; aber geschwind fuhr er wieder in die Höhe und schrie »auweh!« denn die Nähnadel hatte ihn noch schlimmer, und nicht in den Kopf gestochen. Nun war er vollends böse und hatte Verdacht auf die Gäste, die so spät gestern abend gekommen waren; und wie er ging und sich nach ihnen umsah, waren sie fort. Da tat er einen Schwur, kein Lumpengesindel mehr in sein Haus zu nehmen, das viel verzehrt, nichts bezahlt, und zum Dank noch obendrein Schabernack treibt.

11. Brüderchen und Schwesterchen.

Brüderchen nahm sein Schwesterchen an der Hand und sprach »seit die Mutter tot ist, haben wir keine gute Stunde mehr; die Stiefmutter schlägt uns alle Tage, und wenn wir zu ihr kommen, stößt sie uns mit den Füßen fort. Die harten Brotkrusten, die übrig bleiben, sind unsere Speise, und dem Hündlein unter dem Tisch gehts besser: dem wirft sie doch manchmal einen guten Bissen zu. Daß Gott erbarm, wenn das unsere Mutter wüßte! Komm, wir wollen miteinander in die weite Welt gehen.« Sie gingen den ganzen Tag über Wiesen, Felder und Steine, und wenn es regnete, sprach das Schwesterchen »Gott und unsere Herzen, die weinen zusammen!« Abends kamen sie in einen großen Wald und waren so müde von Jammer, Hunger und dem langen Weg, daß sie sich in einen hohlen Baum setzten und einschliefen.

Am andern Morgen, als sie aufwachten, stand die Sonne schon hoch am Himmel und schien heiß in den Baum hinein. Da sprach das Brüderchen »Schwesterchen, mich dürstet, wenn ich ein Brünnlein wüßte, ich ging und tränk einmal; ich mein, ich hört eins rauschen.« Brüderchen stand auf, nahm Schwesterchen an der Hand, und sie wollten das Brünnlein suchen. Die böse Stiefmutter aber war eine Hexe und hatte wohl gesehen, wie die beiden Kinder fortgegangen waren, war ihnen nachgeschlichen, heimlich, wie die Hexen schleichen, und hatte alle Brunnen im Walde verwünscht. Als sie nun ein Brünnlein fanden, das so glitzerig über die Steine sprang, wollte das Brüderchen daraus trinken: aber das Schwesterchen hörte, wie es im Rauschen sprach »wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Tiger, wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Tiger.« Da rief das Schwesterchen »ich bitte dich, Brüderchen, trink nicht, sonst wirst du ein wildes Tier und zerreißest mich.« Das Brüderchen trank nicht, ob es gleich so großen Durst hatte, und sprach »ich will warten bis zur nächsten Quelle.« Als sie zum zweiten Brünnlein kamen, hörte das Schwesterchen, wie auch dieses sprach »wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Wolf, wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Wolf!« Da rief das Schwesterchen »Brüderchen, ich bitte dich, trink nicht, sonst wirst du ein Wolf und frissest mich.« Das Brüderchen trank nicht, und sprach »ich will warten, bis wir zur nächsten Quelle kommen, aber dann muß ich trinken, du magst sagen, was du willst: mein Durst ist gar zu groß.« Und als sie zum dritten Brünnlein kamen, hörte das Schwesterlein, wie es im Rauschen sprach »wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Reh, wer aus mir trinkt, wird ein Reh.« Das Schwesterchen sprach »ach Brüderchen, ich bitte dich, trink nicht, sonst wirst du ein Reh und läufst mir fort.« Aber das Brüderchen hatte sich gleich beim Brünnlein niedergeknieet, hinabgebeugt und von dem Wasser getrunken, und wie die ersten Tropfen auf seine Lippen gekommen waren, lag es da als ein Rehkälbchen.

Nun weinte das Schwesterchen über das arme verwünschte Brüderchen, und das Rehchen weinte auch und saß so traurig neben ihm. Da sprach das Mädchen endlich »sei still, liebes Rehchen, ich will dich ja nimmermehr verlassen.« Dann band es sein goldenes Strumpfband ab und tat es dem

Rehchen um den Hals, und rupfte Binsen und flocht ein weiches Seil daraus. Daran band es das Tierchen und führte es weiter, und ging immer tiefer in den Wald hinein. Und als sie lange lange gegangen waren, kamen sie endlich an ein kleines Haus, und das Mädchen schaute hinein, und weil es leer war, dachte es »hier können wir bleiben und wohnen.« Da suchte es dem Rehchen Laub und Moos zu einem weichen Lager, und jeden Morgen ging es aus und sammelte sich Wurzeln, Beeren und Nüsse, und für das Rehchen brachte es zartes Gras mit, das fraß es ihm aus der Hand, war vergnügt und spielte vor ihm herum. Abends, wenn Schwesterchen müde war und sein Gebet gesagt hatte, legte es seinen Kopf auf den Rücken des Rehkälbchens, das war sein Kissen, darauf es sanft einschlief. Und hätte das Brüderchen nur seine menschliche Gestalt gehabt, es wäre ein herrliches Leben gewesen.

Das dauerte eine Zeitlang, daß sie so allein in der Wildnis waren. Es trug sich aber zu, daß der König des Landes eine große Jagd in dem Wald hielt. Da schallte das Hörnerblasen, Hundegebell und das lustige Geschrei der Jäger durch die Bäume, und das Rehlein hörte es und wäre gar zu gerne dabei gewesen. »Ach,« sprach es zum Schwesterlein, »laß mich hinaus in die Jagd, ich kanns nicht länger mehr aushalten,« und bat so lange, bis es einwilligte. »Aber,« sprach es zu ihm, »komm mir ja abends wieder, vor den wilden Jägern schließ ich mein Türlein; und damit ich dich kenne, so klopf und sprich: mein Schwesterlein, laß mich herein; und wenn du nicht so sprichst, so schließ ich mein Türlein nicht auf.« Nun sprang das Rehchen hinaus, und war ihm so wohl und war so lustig in freier Luft. Der König und seine Jäger sahen das schöne Tier und setzten ihm nach, aber sie konnten es nicht einholen, und wenn sie meinten, sie hätten es gewiß, da sprang es über das Gebüsch weg und war verschwunden. Als es dunkel ward, lief es zu dem Häuschen, klopfte und sprach »mein Schwesterlein, laß mich herein.« Da ward ihm die kleine Tür aufgetan, es sprang hinein und ruhete sich die ganze Nacht auf seinem weichen Lager aus. Am andern Morgen ging die Jagd von neuem an, und als das Rehlein wieder das Hifthorn hörte und das ho, ho! der Jäger, da hatte es keine Ruhe und sprach »Schwesterchen, mach mir auf, ich muß hinaus.« Das Schwesterchen öffnete ihm die Türe und sprach »aber zu Abend mußt du wieder da sein und dein Sprüchlein sagen.« Als der König und seine Jäger das Rehlein mit dem goldenen Halsband wieder sahen, jagten sie ihm alle nach, aber es war ihnen zu schnell und behend. Das währte den ganzen Tag, endlich aber hatten es die Jäger abends umzingelt, und einer verwundete es ein wenig am Fuß, so daß es hinken mußte und langsam fortlief. Da schlich ihm ein Jäger nach bis zu dem Häuschen und hörte, wie es rief »mein Schwesterlein, laß mich herein,« und sah, daß die Tür ihm aufgetan und alsbald wieder zugeschlossen ward. Der Jäger behielt das alles wohl im Sinn, ging zum König und erzählte ihm, was er gesehen und gehört hatte. Da sprach der König »morgen soll noch einmal gejagt werden.«

Das Schwesterchen aber erschrak gewaltig, als es sah, daß sein Rehkälbchen verwundet war. Es wusch ihm das Blut ab, legte Kräuter auf und sprach »geh auf dein Lager, lieb Rehchen, daß du wieder heil wirst.«

Die Wunde aber war so gering, daß das Rehchen am Morgen nichts mehr davon spürte. Und als es die Jagdlust wieder draußen hörte, sprach es »ich kanns nicht aushalten, ich muß dabei sein; so bald soll mich keiner kriegen.« Das Schwesterchen weinte und sprach »nun werden sie dich töten, und ich bin hier allein im Wald und bin verlassen von aller Welt: ich laß dich nicht hinaus.« »So sterb ich dir hier vor Betrübnis,« antwortete das Rehchen, »wenn ich das Hifthorn höre, so mein ich, ich müßt aus den Schuhen springen!« Da konnte das Schwesterchen nicht anders und schloß ihm mit schwerem Herzen die Tür auf, und das Rehchen sprang gesund und fröhlich in den Wald. Als es der König erblickte, sprach er zu seinen Jägern »nun jagt ihm nach den ganzen Tag bis in die Nacht, aber daß ihm keiner etwas zuleide tut.« Sobald die Sonne untergegangen war, sprach der König zum Jäger »nun komm und zeige mir das Waldhäuschen.« Und als er vor dem Türlein war, klopfte er an und rief »lieb Schwesterlein, laß mich herein.« Da ging die Tür auf, und der König trat herein, und da stand ein Mädchen, das war so schön, wie er noch keins gesehen hatte. Das Mädchen erschrak, als es sah, daß nicht das Rehlein, sondern ein Mann hereinkam, der eine goldene Krone auf dem Haupt hatte. Aber der König sah es freundlich an, reichte ihm die Hand und sprach »willst du mit mir gehen auf mein Schloß und meine liebe Frau sein?« »Ach ja,« antwortete das Mädchen, »aber das Rehchen muß auch mit, das verlaß ich nicht.« Sprach der König »es soll bei dir bleiben, so lange du lebst, und soll ihm an nichts fehlen.« Indem kam es hereingesprungen, da band es das Schwesterchen wieder an das Binsenseil, nahm es selbst in die Hand und ging mit ihm aus dem Waldhäuschen fort.

Der König nahm das schöne Mädchen auf sein Pferd und führte es in sein Schloß, wo die Hochzeit mit großer Pracht gefeiert wurde, und war es nun die Frau Königin, und lebten sie lange Zeit vergnügt zusammen; das Rehlein ward gehegt und gepflegt und sprang in dem Schloßgarten herum. Die böse Stiefmutter aber, um derentwillen die Kinder in die Welt hineingegangen waren, die meinte nicht anders, als Schwesterchen wäre von den wilden Tieren im Walde zerrissen worden und Brüderchen als ein Rehkalb von den Jägern totgeschossen. Als sie nun hörte, daß sie so glücklich waren und es ihnen so wohl ging, da wurden Neid und Mißgunst in ihrem Herzen rege und ließen ihr keine Ruhe, und sie hatte keinen andern Gedanken, als wie sie die beiden doch noch ins Unglück bringen könnte. Ihre rechte Tochter, die häßlich war wie die Nacht und nur ein Auge hatte, die machte ihr Vorwürfe und sprach »eine Königin zu werden, das Glück hätte mir gebührt.« »Sei nur still,« sagte die Alte und sprach sie zufrieden, »wenns Zeit ist, will ich schon bei der Hand sein.« Als nun die Zeit herangerückt war, und die Königin ein schönes Knäblein zur Welt gebracht hatte, und der König gerade auf der Jagd war, nahm die alte Hexe die Gestalt der Kammerfrau an, trat in die Stube, wo die Königin lag, und sprach zu der Kranken »kommt, das Bad ist fertig, das wird Euch wohltun und frische Kräfte geben: geschwind, eh es kalt wird.« Ihre Tochter war auch bei der Hand, sie trugen die schwache Königin in die Badstube und legten sie in die Wanne: dann schlossen sie die Tür ab und liefen davon. In der Badstube aber hatten sie ein rechtes

Höllenfeuer angemacht, daß die schöne junge Königin bald ersticken mußte.

Als das vollbracht war, nahm die Alte ihre Tochter, setzte ihr eine Haube auf, und legte sie ins Bett an der Königin Stelle. Sie gab ihr auch die Gestalt und das Ansehen der Königin, nur das verlorene Auge konnte sie ihr nicht wiedergeben. Damit es aber der König nicht merkte, mußte sie sich auf die Seite legen, wo sie kein Auge hatte. Am Abend, als er heimkam und hörte, daß ihm ein Söhnlein geboren war, freute er sich herzlich, und wollte ans Bett seiner lieben Frau gehen und sehen, was sie machte. Da rief die Alte geschwind »beileibe, laßt die Vorhänge zu, die Königin darf noch nicht ins Licht sehen und muß Ruhe haben.« Der König ging zurück und wußte nicht, daß eine falsche Königin im Bette lag.

Als es aber Mitternacht war und alles schlief, da sah die Kinderfrau, die in der Kinderstube neben der Wiege saß und allein noch wachte, wie die Türe aufging, und die rechte Königin hereintrat. Sie nahm das Kind aus der Wiege, legte es in ihren Arm und gab ihm zu trinken. Dann schüttelte sie ihm sein Kißchen, legte es wieder hinein und deckte es mit dem Deckbettchen zu. Sie vergaß aber auch das Rehchen nicht, ging in die Ecke, wo es lag, und streichelte ihm über den Rücken. Darauf ging sie ganz stillschweigend wieder zur Türe hinaus, und die Kinderfrau fragte am anderen Morgen die Wächter, ob jemand während der Nacht ins Schloß gegangen wäre, aber sie antworteten »nein, wir haben niemand gesehen.« So kam sie viele Nächte und sprach niemals ein Wort dabei; die Kinderfrau sah sie immer, aber sie getraute sich nicht, jemand etwas davon zu sagen.

Als nun so eine Zeit verflossen war, da hub die Königin in der Nacht an zu reden und sprach

»was macht mein Kind? was macht mein Reh?
Nun komm ich noch zweimal und dann nimmermehr.«

Die Kinderfrau antwortete ihr nicht, aber als sie wieder verschwunden war, ging sie zum König und erzählte ihm alles. Sprach der König »ach Gott, was ist das! ich will in der nächsten Nacht bei dem Kinde wachen.« Abends ging er in die Kinderstube, aber um Mitternacht erschien die Königin wieder und sprach

»was macht mein Kind, was macht mein Reh?
Nun komm ich noch einmal und dann nimmermehr.«

Und pflegte dann des Kindes, wie sie gewöhnlich tat, ehe sie verschwand. Der König getraute sich nicht, sie anzureden, aber er wachte auch in der folgenden Nacht. Sie sprach abermals

»was macht mein Kind? was macht mein Reh?
Nun komm ich noch diesmal und dann nimmermehr.«

Da konnte sich der König nicht zurückhalten, sprang zu ihr und sprach »du kannst niemand anders sein als meine liebe Frau.« Da antwortete sie »ja, ich bin deine liebe Frau,« und hatte in dem Augenblick durch Gottes Gnade das Leben wiedererhalten, war frisch, rot und gesund. Darauf erzählte sie dem König den Frevel, den die böse Hexe und ihre Tochter an ihr verübt hatten. Der König ließ beide vor Gericht führen, und es ward ihnen das Urteil gesprochen. Die Tochter ward in den Wald geführt, wo sie die wilden Tiere zerrissen, die Hexe aber ward ins Feuer gelegt und mußte jammervoll verbrennen. Und wie sie zu Asche verbrannt war, verwandelte sich das Rehkälbchen und erhielt seine menschliche Gestalt wieder; Schwesterchen und Brüderchen aber lebten glücklich zusammen bis an ihr Ende.

12. Rapunzel.

Es war einmal ein Mann und eine Frau, die wünschten sich schon lange vergeblich ein Kind, endlich machte sich die Frau Hoffnung, der liebe Gott werde ihren Wunsch erfüllen. Die Leute hatten in ihrem Hinterhaus ein kleines Fenster, daraus konnte man in einen prächtigen Garten sehen, der voll der schönsten Blumen und Kräuter stand; er war aber von einer hohen Mauer umgeben, und niemand wagte hineinzugehen, weil er einer Zauberin gehörte, die große Macht hatte und von aller Welt gefürchtet ward. Eines Tages stand die Frau an diesem Fenster und sah in den Garten hinab, da erblickte sie ein Beet, das mit den schönsten Rapunzeln bepflanzt war: und sie sahen so frisch und grün aus, daß sie lüstern ward und das größte Verlangen empfand, von den Rapunzeln zu essen. Das Verlangen nahm jeden Tag zu, und da sie wußte, daß sie keine davon bekommen konnte, so fiel sie ganz ab, sah blaß und elend aus. Da erschrak der Mann und fragte »was fehlt dir, liebe Frau?« »Ach,« antwortete sie, »wenn ich keine Rapunzeln aus dem Garten hinter unserm Hause zu essen kriege, so sterbe ich.« Der Mann, der sie lieb hatte, dachte »eh du deine Frau sterben lässest, holst du ihr von den Rapunzeln, es mag kosten, was es will.« In der Abenddämmerung stieg er also über die Mauer in den Garten der Zauberin, stach in aller Eile eine Handvoll Rapunzeln und brachte sie seiner Frau. Sie machte sich sogleich Salat daraus und aß sie in voller Begierde auf. Sie hatten ihr aber so gut, so gut geschmeckt, daß sie den andern Tag noch dreimal soviel Lust bekam. Sollte sie Ruhe haben, so mußte der Mann noch einmal in den Garten steigen. Er machte sich also in der Abenddämmerung wieder hinab, als er aber die Mauer herabgeklettert war, erschrak er gewaltig, denn er sah die Zauberin vor sich stehen. »Wie kannst du es wagen,« sprach sie mit zornigem Blick, »in meinen Garten zu steigen und wie ein Dieb mir meine Rapunzeln zu stehlen? das soll dir schlecht bekommen.« »Ach,« antwortete er, »laßt Gnade für Recht ergehen, ich habe mich nur aus Not dazu entschlossen: meine Frau hat Eure Rapunzeln aus dem Fenster erblickt, und empfindet ein so großes Gelüsten, daß sie sterben würde, wenn sie nicht davon zu essen bekäme.« Da ließ die Zauberin in ihrem Zorne nach und sprach zu ihm »verhält es sich so, wie du sagst, so will ich dir gestatten, Rapunzeln mitzunehmen, soviel du willst, allein ich mache eine Bedingung: du mußt mir das Kind geben, das deine Frau zur Welt bringen wird. Es soll ihm gut gehen, und ich will für es sorgen wie eine Mutter.« Der Mann sagte in der Angst alles zu, und als die Frau in Wochen kam, so erschien sogleich die Zauberin, gab dem Kinde den Namen Rapunzel und nahm es mit sich fort.

Rapunzel ward das schönste Kind unter der Sonne. Als es zwölf Jahre alt war, schloß es die Zauberin in einen Turm, der in einem Walde lag, und weder Treppe noch Türe hatte, nur ganz oben war ein kleines Fensterchen. Wenn die Zauberin hinein wollte, so stellte sie sich unten hin und rief

»Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
laß mir dein Haar herunter.«

Rapunzel hatte lange prächtige Haare, fein wie gesponnen Gold. Wenn sie nun die Stimme der Zauberin vernahm, so band sie ihre Zöpfe los, wickelte sie oben um einen Fensterhaken, und dann fielen die Haare zwanzig Ellen tief herunter, und die Zauberin stieg daran hinauf.

Nach ein paar Jahren trug es sich zu, daß der Sohn des Königs durch den Wald ritt und an dem Turm vorüberkam. Da hörte er einen Gesang, der war so lieblich, daß er still hielt und horchte. Das war Rapunzel, die in ihrer Einsamkeit sich die Zeit damit vertrieb, ihre süße Stimme erschallen zu lassen. Der Königssohn wollte zu ihr hinaufsteigen und suchte nach einer Türe des Turms, aber es war keine zu finden. Er ritt heim, doch der Gesang hatte ihm so sehr das Herz gerührt, daß er jeden Tag hinaus in den Wald ging und zuhörte. Als er einmal so hinter einem Baum stand, sah er, daß eine Zauberin herankam, und hörte, wie sie hinaufrief

»Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
laß dein Haar herunter.«

Da ließ Rapunzel die Haarflechten herab, und die Zauberin stieg zu ihr hinauf. »Ist das die Leiter, auf welcher man hinaufkommt, so will ich auch einmal mein Glück versuchen.« Und den folgenden Tag, als es anfing dunkel zu werden, ging er zu dem Turme und rief:

»Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
laß dein Haar herunter.«

Alsbald fielen die Haare herab, und der Königssohn stieg hinauf.

Anfangs erschrak Rapunzel gewaltig, als ein Mann zu ihr hereinkam, wie ihre Augen noch nie einen erblickt hatten, doch der Königssohn fing an ganz freundlich mit ihr zu reden und erzählte ihr, daß von ihrem Gesang sein Herz so sehr sei bewegt worden, daß es ihm keine Ruhe gelassen und er sie selbst habe sehen müssen. Da verlor Rapunzel ihre Angst, und als er sie fragte, ob sie ihn zum Mann nehmen wollte, und sie sah, daß er jung und schön war, so dachte sie »der wird mich lieber haben als die alte Frau Gotel,« und sagte ja, und legte ihre Hand in seine Hand. Sie sprach »ich will gerne mit dir gehen, aber ich weiß nicht, wie ich herabkommen kann. Wenn du kommst, so bringe jedesmal einen Strang Seide mit, daraus will ich eine Leiter flechten, und wenn die fertig ist, so steige ich herunter und du nimmst mich auf dein Pferd.« Sie verabredeten, daß er bis dahin alle Abend zu ihr kommen sollte, denn bei Tag kam die Alte. Die Zauberin merkte auch nichts davon, bis einmal Rapunzel anfing und zu ihr sagte »sag sie mir doch, Frau Gotel, wie kommt es nur, sie wird mir viel schwerer heraufzuziehen als der junge Königssohn, der ist in einem Augenblick bei mir.« »Ach du gottloses Kind,« rief die Zauberin, »was muß ich von dir hören, ich dachte, ich hätte dich von aller Welt geschieden, und du hast mich doch betrogen!« In ihrem Zorne packte sie die schönen Haare der Rapunzel, schlug sie ein paarmal um ihre linke Hand, griff eine Schere mit der rechten, und ritsch, ratsch waren sie abgeschnitten, und die schönen Flechten lagen auf der Erde. Und sie war so unbarmherzig, daß sie die arme Rapunzel in eine Wüstenei brachte, wo sie in großem Jammer und Elend leben mußte.

Denselben Tag aber, wo sie Rapunzel verstoßen hatte, machte abends die Zauberin die abgeschnittenen Flechten oben am Fensterhaken fest, und als der Königssohn kam und rief

»Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
laß dein Haar herunter,«

so ließ sie die Haare hinab. Der Königssohn stieg hinauf, aber er fand oben nicht seine liebste Rapunzel, sondern die Zauberin, die ihn mit bösen und giftigen Blicken ansah. »Aha,« rief sie höhnisch, »du willst die Frau Liebste holen, aber der schöne Vogel sitzt nicht mehr im Nest und singt nicht mehr, die Katze hat ihn geholt und wird dir auch noch die Augen auskratzen. Für dich ist Rapunzel verloren, du wirst sie nie wieder erblicken.« Der Königssohn geriet außer sich vor Schmerzen, und in der Verzweiflung sprang er den Turm herab: das Leben brachte er davon, aber die Dornen, in die er fiel, zerstachen ihm die Augen. Da irrte er blind im Walde umher, aß nichts als Wurzeln und Beeren, und tat nichts als jammern und weinen über den Verlust seiner liebsten Frau. So wanderte er einige Jahre im Elend umher und geriet endlich in die Wüstenei, wo Rapunzel mit den Zwillingen, die sie geboren hatte, einem Knaben und Mädchen, kümmerlich lebte. Er vernahm eine Stimme, und sie deuchte ihn so bekannt: da ging er darauf zu, und wie er herankam, erkannte ihn Rapunzel und fiel ihm um den Hals und weinte. Zwei von ihren Tränen aber benetzten seine Augen, da wurden sie wieder klar, und er konnte damit sehen wie sonst. Er führte sie in sein Reich, wo er mit Freude empfangen ward, und sie lebten noch lange glücklich und vergnügt.

13. Die drei Männlein im Walde.

Es war ein Mann, dem starb seine Frau, und eine Frau, der starb ihr Mann; und der Mann hatte eine Tochter, und die Frau hatte auch eine Tochter. Die Mädchen waren miteinander bekannt und gingen zusammen spazieren und kamen hernach zu der Frau ins Haus. Da sprach sie zu des Mannes Tochter »hör, sag deinem Vater, ich wollt ihn heiraten, dann sollst du jeden Morgen dich in Milch waschen und Wein trinken, meine Tochter aber soll sich in Wasser waschen und Wasser trinken.« Das Mädchen ging nach Haus und erzählte seinem Vater, was die Frau gesagt hatte. Der Mann sprach »was soll ich tun? das Heiraten ist eine Freude und ist auch eine Qual.« Endlich, weil er keinen Entschluß fassen konnte, zog er seinen Stiefel aus und sagte »nimm diesen Stiefel, der hat in der Sohle ein Loch, geh damit auf den Boden, häng ihn an den großen Nagel und gieß dann Wasser hinein. Hält er das Wasser, so will ich wieder eine Frau nehmen, läufts aber durch, so will ich nicht.« Das Mädchen tat, wie ihm geheißen war: aber das Wasser zog das Loch zusammen, und der Stiefel ward voll bis obenhin. Es verkündete seinem Vater, wies ausgefallen war. Da stieg er selbst hinauf, und als er sah, daß es seine Richtigkeit hatte, ging er zu der Witwe und freite sie, und die Hochzeit ward gehalten.

Am andern Morgen, als die beiden Mädchen sich aufmachten, da stand vor des Mannes Tochter Milch zum Waschen und Wein zum Trinken, vor der Frau Tochter aber stand Wasser zum Waschen und Wasser zum Trinken. Am zweiten Morgen stand Wasser zum Waschen und Wasser zum Trinken so gut vor des Mannes Tochter als vor der Frau Tochter. Und am dritten Morgen stand Wasser zum Waschen und Wasser zum Trinken vor des Mannes Tochter, und Milch zum Waschen und Wein zum Trinken vor der Frau Tochter, und dabei bliebs. Die Frau ward ihrer Stieftochter spinnefeind und wußte nicht, wie sie es ihr von einem Tag zum andern schlimmer machen sollte. Auch war sie neidisch, weil ihre Stieftochter schön und lieblich war, ihre rechte Tochter aber häßlich und widerlich.

Einmal im Winter, als es steinhart gefroren hatte und Berg und Tal vollgeschneit lag, machte die Frau ein Kleid von Papier, rief das Mädchen und sprach »da zieh das Kleid an, geh hinaus in den Wald und hol mir ein Körbchen voll Erdbeeren; ich habe Verlangen danach.« »Du lieber Gott,« sagte das Mädchen, »im Winter wachsen ja keine Erdbeeren, die Erde ist gefroren, und der Schnee hat auch alles zugedeckt. Und warum soll ich in dem Papierkleide gehen? es ist draußen so kalt, daß einem der Atem friert: da weht ja der Wind hindurch, und die Dornen reißen mirs vom Leib.« »Willst du mir noch widersprechen?« sagte die Stiefmutter, »mach daß du fortkommst, und laß dich nicht eher wieder sehen, als bis du das Körbchen voll Erdbeeren hast.« Dann gab sie ihm noch ein Stückchen hartes Brot und sprach »davon kannst du den Tag über essen,« und dachte »draußen wirds erfrieren und verhungern und mir nimmermehr wieder vor die Augen kommen.«

Nun war das Mädchen gehorsam, tat das Papierkleid an und ging mit dem Körbchen hinaus. Da war nichts als Schnee die Weite und Breite, und war kein grünes Hälmchen zu merken. Als es in den Wald kam, sah es ein kleines Häuschen, daraus guckten drei kleine Haulemännerchen. Es wünschte ihnen die Tageszeit und klopfte bescheidentlich an die Tür. Sie riefen herein, und es trat in die Stube und setzte sich auf die Bank am Ofen, da wollte es sich wärmen und sein Frühstück essen. Die Haulemännerchen sprachen »gib uns auch etwas davon.« »Gerne,« sprach es, teilte sein Stückchen Brot entzwei und gab ihnen die Hälfte. Sie fragten »was willst du zur Winterzeit in deinem dünnen Kleidchen hier im Wald?« »Ach,« antwortete es, »ich soll ein Körbchen voll Erdbeeren suchen und darf nicht eher nach Hause kommen, als bis ich es mitbringe.« Als es sein Brot gegessen hatte, gaben sie ihm einen Besen und sprachen »kehre damit an der Hintertüre den Schnee weg.« Wie es aber draußen war, sprachen die drei Männerchen untereinander »was sollen wir ihm schenken, weil es so artig und gut ist und sein Brot mit uns geteilt hat?« Da sagte der erste »ich schenk ihm, daß es jeden Tag schöner wird.« Der zweite sprach »ich schenk ihm, daß Goldstücke ihm aus dem Mund fallen, sooft es ein Wort spricht.« Der dritte sprach »ich schenk ihm, daß ein König kommt und es zu seiner Gemahlin nimmt.«

Das Mädchen aber tat, wie die Haulemännerchen gesagt hatten, kehrte mit dem Besen den Schnee hinter dem kleinen Hause weg, und was glaubt ihr wohl, daß es gefunden hat? lauter reife Erdbeeren, die ganz dunkelrot aus dem Schnee hervorkamen. Da raffte es in seiner Freude sein Körbchen voll, dankte den kleinen Männern, gab jedem die Hand und lief nach Haus, und wollte der Stiefmutter das Verlangte bringen. Wie es eintrat und »guten Abend« sagte, fiel ihm gleich ein Goldstück aus dem Mund. Darauf erzählte es, was ihm im Walde begegnet war, aber bei jedem Worte, das es sprach, fielen ihm die Goldstücke aus dem Mund, so daß bald die ganze Stube damit bedeckt ward. »Nun sehe einer den Übermut,« rief die Stiefschwester, »das Geld so hinzuwerfen,« aber heimlich war sie neidisch darüber und wollte auch hinaus in den Wald und Erdbeeren suchen. Die Mutter: »nein, mein liebes Töchterchen, es ist zu kalt, du könntest mir erfrieren.« Weil sie ihr aber keine Ruhe ließ, gab sie endlich nach, nähte ihm einen prächtigen Pelzrock, den es anziehen mußte, und gab ihm Butterbrot und Kuchen mit auf den Weg.

Das Mädchen ging in den Wald und gerade auf das kleine Häuschen zu. Die drei kleinen Haulemänner guckten wieder, aber es grüßte sie nicht, und ohne sich nach ihnen umzusehen und ohne sie zu grüßen, stolperte es in die Stube hinein, setzte sich an den Ofen und fing an, sein Butterbrot und seinen Kuchen zu essen. »Gib uns etwas davon,« riefen die Kleinen, aber es antwortete »es schickt mir selber nicht, wie kann ich andern noch davon abgeben?« Als es nun fertig war mit dem Essen, sprachen sie »da hast du einen Besen, kehr uns draußen vor der Hintertür rein.« »Ei, kehrt euch selber,« antwortete es, »ich bin eure Magd nicht.« Wie es sah, daß sie ihm nichts schenken wollten, ging es zur Türe hinaus. Da sprachen die kleinen

Männer untereinander »was sollen wir ihm schenken, weil es so unartig ist und ein böses neidisches Herz hat, das niemand etwas gönnt?« Der erste sprach »ich schenk ihm, daß es jeden Tag häßlicher wird.« Der zweite sprach »ich schenk ihm, daß ihm bei jedem Wort, das es spricht, eine Kröte aus dem Munde springt.« Der dritte sprach »ich schenk ihm, daß es eines unglücklichen Todes stirbt.« Das Mädchen suchte draußen nach Erdbeeren, als es aber keine fand, ging es verdrießlich nach Haus. Und wie es den Mund auftat und seiner Mutter erzählen wollte, was ihm im Walde begegnet war, da sprang ihm bei jedem Wort eine Kröte aus dem Mund, so daß alle einen Abscheu vor ihm bekamen.

Nun ärgerte sich die Stiefmutter noch viel mehr und dachte nur darauf, wie sie der Tochter des Mannes alles Herzeleid antun wollte, deren Schönheit doch alle Tage größer ward. Endlich nahm sie einen Kessel, setzte ihn zum Feuer und sott Garn darin. Als es gesotten war, hing sie es dem armen Mädchen auf die Schulter, und gab ihm eine Axt dazu, damit sollte es auf den gefrorenen Fluß gehen, ein Eisloch hauen und das Garn schlittern. Es war gehorsam, ging hin und hackte ein Loch in das Eis, und als es mitten im Hacken war, kam ein prächtiger Wagen hergefahren, worin der König saß. Der Wagen hielt still und der König fragte »mein Kind, wer bist du und was machst du da?« »Ich bin ein armes Mädchen und schlittere Garn.« Da fühlte der König Mitleiden, und als er sah, wie es so gar schön war, sprach er »willst du mit mir fahren?« »Ach ja, von Herzen gern,« antwortete es, denn es war froh, daß es der Mutter und Schwester aus den Augen kommen sollte.

Also stieg es in den Wagen und fuhr mit dem König fort, und als sie auf sein Schloß gekommen waren, ward die Hochzeit mit großer Pracht gefeiert, wie es die kleinen Männlein dem Mädchen geschenkt hatten. Über ein Jahr gebar die junge Königin einen Sohn, und als die Stiefmutter von dem großen Glücke gehört hatte, so kam sie mit ihrer Tochter in das Schloß und tat, als wollte sie einen Besuch machen. Als aber der König einmal hinausgegangen und sonst niemand zugegen war, packte das böse Weib die Königin am Kopf, und ihre Tochter packte sie an den Füßen, hoben sie aus dem Bett und warfen sie zum Fenster hinaus in den vorbeifließenden Strom. Darauf legte sich ihre häßliche Tochter ins Bett, und die Alte deckte sie zu bis über den Kopf. Als der König wieder zurückkam und mit seiner Frau sprechen wollte, rief die Alte »still, still, jetzt geht das nicht, sie liegt in starkem Schweiß, Ihr müßt sie heute ruhen lassen.« Der König dachte nichts Böses dabei und kam erst am andern Morgen wieder, und wie er mit seiner Frau sprach, und sie ihm Antwort gab, sprang bei jedem Wort eine Kröte hervor, während sonst ein Goldstück herausgefallen war. Da fragte er, was das wäre, aber die Alte sprach, das hätte sie von dem starken Schweiß gekriegt, und würde sich schon wieder verlieren.

In der Nacht aber sah der Küchenjunge, wie eine Ente durch die Gosse geschwommen kam, die sprach

»König, was machst du,

schläfst du oder wachst du?«
Und als er keine Antwort gab, sprach sie

»was machen meine Gäste?«

Da antwortete der Küchenjunge

»sie schlafen feste!«

Fragte sie weiter

»was macht mein Kindelein?«

Antwortete er

»es schläft in der Wiege fein.«

Da ging sie in der Königin Gestalt hinauf, gab ihm zu trinken, schüttelte ihm sein Bettchen, deckte es zu und schwamm als Ente wieder durch die Gosse fort. So kam sie zwei Nächte, in der dritten sprach sie zu dem Küchenjungen »geh und sage dem König, daß er sein Schwert nimmt und auf der Schwelle dreimal über mir schwingt.« Da lief der Küchenjunge und sagte es dem König, der kam mit seinem Schwert und schwang es dreimal über dem Geist: und beim drittenmal stand seine Gemahlin vor ihm, frisch, lebendig und gesund, wie sie vorher gewesen war.

Nun war der König in großer Freude, er hielt aber die Königin in einer Kammer verborgen bis auf den Sonntag, wo das Kind getauft werden sollte. Und als es getauft war, sprach er »was gehört einem Menschen, der den andern aus dem Bett trägt und ins Wasser wirft?« »Nichts Besseres,« antwortete die Alte, »als daß man den Bösewicht in ein Faß steckt, das mit Nägeln ausgeschlagen ist, und den Berg hinab ins Wasser rollt.« Da sagte der König »du hast dein Urteil gesprochen,« ließ ein solches Faß holen und die Alte mit ihrer Tochter hineinstecken, dann ward der Boden zugehämmert und das Faß bergab gekullert, bis es in den Fluß rollte.

14. Die drei Spinnerinnen.

Es war ein Mädchen faul und wollte nicht spinnen, und die Mutter mochte sagen, was sie wollte, sie konnte es nicht dazu bringen. Endlich übernahm die Mutter einmal Zorn und Ungeduld, daß sie ihm Schläge gab, worüber es laut zu weinen anfing. Nun fuhr gerade die Königin vorbei, und als sie das Weinen hörte, ließ sie anhalten, trat in das Haus und fragte die Mutter, warum sie ihre Tochter schlüge, daß man draußen auf der Straße das Schreien hörte. Da schämte sich die Frau, daß sie die Faulheit ihrer Tochter offenbaren sollte, und sprach »ich kann sie nicht vom Spinnen abbringen, sie will immer und ewig spinnen, und ich bin arm und kann den Flachs nicht herbeischaffen.« Da antwortete die Königin »ich höre nichts lieber als spinnen, und bin nicht vergnügter, als wenn die Räder schnurren: gebt mir Eure Tochter mit ins Schloß, ich habe Flachs genug, da soll sie spinnen, soviel sie Lust hat.« Die Mutter wars von Herzen gerne zufrieden, und die Königin nahm das Mädchen mit. Als sie ins Schloß gekommen waren, führte sie es hinauf zu drei Kammern, die lagen von unten bis oben voll vom schönsten Flachs. »Nun spinn mir diesen Flachs,« sprach sie, »und wenn du es fertig bringst, so sollst du meinen ältesten Sohn zum Gemahl haben; bist du gleich arm, so acht ich nicht darauf, dein unverdroßner Fleiß ist Ausstattung genug.« Das Mädchen erschrak innerlich, denn es konnte den Flachs nicht spinnen, und wärs dreihundert Jahr alt geworden und hätte jeden Tag vom Morgen bis Abend dabei gesessen. Als es nun allein war, fing es an zu weinen und saß so drei Tage, ohne die Hand zu rühren. Am dritten Tage kam die Königin, und als sie sah, daß noch nichts gesponnen war, verwunderte sie sich, aber das Mädchen entschuldigte sich damit, daß es vor großer Betrübnis über die Entfernung aus seiner Mutter Hause noch nicht hätte anfangen können. Das ließ sich die Königin gefallen, sagte aber beim Weggehen »morgen mußt du mir anfangen zu arbeiten.«

Als das Mädchen wieder allein war, wußte es sich nicht mehr zu raten und zu helfen, und trat in seiner Betrübnis vor das Fenster. Da sah es drei Weiber herkommen, davon hatte die erste einen breiten Platschfuß, die zweite hatte eine so große Unterlippe, daß sie über das Kinn herunterhing, und die dritte hatte einen breiten Daumen. Die blieben vor dem Fenster stehen, schauten hinauf und fragten das Mädchen, was ihm fehlte. Es klagte ihnen seine Not, da trugen sie ihm ihre Hilfe an und sprachen »willst du uns zur Hochzeit einladen, dich unser nicht schämen und uns deine Basen heißen, auch an deinen Tisch setzen, so wollen wir dir den Flachs wegspinnen, und das in kurzer Zeit.« »Von Herzen gern,« antwortete es, »kommt nur herein und fangt gleich die Arbeit an.« Da ließ es die drei seltsamen Weiber herein und machte in der ersten Kammer eine Lücke, wo sie sich hinsetzten und ihr Spinnen anhuben. Die eine zog den Faden und trat das Rad, die andere netzte den Faden, die dritte drehte ihn und schlug mit dem Finger auf den Tisch, und sooft sie schlug, fiel eine Zahl Garn zur Erde, und das war aufs feinste gesponnen. Vor der Königin verbarg sie die drei Spinnerinnen und zeigte ihr, sooft sie kam, die Menge des gesponnenen Garns, daß diese des Lobes kein Ende fand. Als die erste Kammer leer war, gings an die zweite, endlich an die dritte, und die war auch bald aufgeräumt. Nun nahmen die drei Weiber Abschied und sagten zum Mädchen »vergiß nicht, was du uns versprochen hast, es wird dein Glück sein.«

Als das Mädchen der Königin die leeren Kammern und den großen Haufen Garn zeigte, richtete sie die Hochzeit aus, und der Bräutigam freute sich, daß er eine so geschickte und fleißige Frau bekäme, und lobte sie gewaltig. »Ich habe drei Basen,« sprach das Mädchen, »und da sie mir viel Gutes getan haben, so wollte ich sie nicht gern in meinem Glück vergessen: erlaubt doch, daß ich sie zu der Hochzeit einlade und daß sie mit an dem Tisch sitzen.« Die Königin und der Bräutigam sprachen »warum sollen wir das nicht erlauben?« Als nun das Fest anhub, traten die drei Jungfern in wunderlicher Tracht herein, und die Braut sprach »seid willkommen, liebe Basen.« »Ach,« sagte der Bräutigam, »wie kommst du zu der garstigen Freundschaft?« Darauf ging er zu der einen mit dem breiten Platschfuß und fragte »wovon habt Ihr einen solchen breiten Fuß?« »Vom Treten,« antwortete sie, »vom Treten.« Da ging der Bräutigam zur zweiten und sprach »wovon habt Ihr nur die herunterhängende Lippe?« »Vom Lecken,« antwortete sie, »vom Lecken.« Da fragte er die dritte, »wovon habt Ihr den breiten Daumen?« »Vom Fadendrehen,« antwortete sie, »vom Fadendrehen.« Da erschrak der Königssohn und sprach »so soll mir nun und nimmermehr meine schöne Braut ein Spinnrad anrühren.« Damit war sie das böse Flachsspinnen los.

15. Hänsel und Gretel.

Vor einem großen Walde wohnte ein armer Holzhacker mit seiner Frau und seinen zwei Kindern; das Bübchen hieß Hänsel und das Mädchen Gretel. Er hatte wenig zu beißen und zu brechen, und einmal, als große Teuerung ins Land kam, konnte er auch das tägliche Brot nicht mehr schaffen. Wie er sich nun abends im Bette Gedanken machte und sich vor Sorgen herumwälzte, seufzte er und sprach zu seiner Frau »was soll aus uns werden? wie können wir unsere armen Kinder ernähren, da wir für uns selbst nichts mehr haben?« »Weißt du was, Mann,« antwortete die Frau, »wir wollen morgen in aller Frühe die Kinder hinaus in den Wald führen, wo er am dicksten ist: da machen wir ihnen ein Feuer an und geben jedem noch ein Stückchen Brot, dann gehen wir an unsere Arbeit und lassen sie allein. Sie finden den Weg nicht wieder nach Haus und wir sind sie los.« »Nein, Frau,« sagte der Mann, »das tue ich nicht; wie sollt ichs übers Herz bringen, meine Kinder im Walde allein zu lassen, die wilden Tiere würden bald kommen und sie zerreißen.« »O du Narr,« sagte sie, »dann müssen wir alle viere Hungers sterben, du kannst nur die Bretter für die Särge hobeln,« und ließ ihm keine Ruhe, bis er einwilligte. »Aber die armen Kinder dauern mich doch,« sagte der Mann.

Die zwei Kinder hatten vor Hunger auch nicht einschlafen können und hatten gehört, was die Stiefmutter zum Vater gesagt hatte. Gretel weinte bittere Tränen und sprach zu Hänsel »nun ists um uns geschehen.« »Still, Gretel,« sprach Hänsel, »gräme dich nicht, ich will uns schon helfen.« Und als die Alten eingeschlafen waren, stand er auf, zog sein Röcklein an, machte die Untertüre auf und schlich sich hinaus. Da schien der Mond ganz helle, und die weißen Kieselsteine, die vor dem Haus lagen, glänzten wie lauter Batzen. Hänsel bückte sich und steckte so viel in sein Rocktäschlein, als nur hinein wollten. Dann ging er wieder zurück, sprach zu Gretel »sei getrost, liebes Schwesterchen, und schlaf nur ruhig ein, Gott wird uns nicht verlassen,« und legte sich wieder in sein Bett.

Als der Tag anbrach, noch ehe die Sonne aufgegangen war, kam schon die Frau und weckte die beiden Kinder, »steht auf, ihr Faulenzer, wir wollen in den Wald gehen und Holz holen.« Dann gab sie jedem ein Stückchen Brot und sprach »da habt ihr etwas für den Mittag, aber eßts nicht vorher auf, weiter kriegt ihr nichts.« Gretel nahm das Brot unter die Schürze, weil Hänsel die Steine in der Tasche hatte. Danach machten sie sich alle zusammen auf den Weg nach dem Wald. Als sie ein Weilchen gegangen waren, stand Hänsel still und guckte nach dem Haus zurück und tat das wieder und immer wieder. Der Vater sprach »Hänsel, was guckst du da und bleibst zurück, hab acht und vergiß deine Beine nicht.« »Ach, Vater,« sagte Hänsel, »ich sehe nach meinem weißen Kätzchen, das sitzt oben auf dem Dach und will mir Ade sagen.« Die Frau sprach »Narr, das ist dein Kätzchen nicht, das ist die Morgensonne, die auf den Schornstein scheint.« Hänsel aber hatte nicht nach dem Kätzchen gesehen, sondern immer einen von den blanken Kieselsteinen aus seiner Tasche auf den Weg geworfen.

Als sie mitten in den Wald gekommen waren, sprach der Vater »nun sammelt Holz, ihr Kinder, ich will ein Feuer anmachen, damit ihr nicht friert.« Hänsel und Gretel trugen Reisig zusammen, einen kleinen Berg hoch. Das Reisig ward angezündet, und als die Flamme recht hoch brannte, sagte die Frau »nun legt euch ans Feuer, ihr Kinder, und ruht euch aus, wir gehen in den Wald und hauen Holz. Wenn wir fertig sind, kommen wir wieder und holen euch ab.«

Hänsel und Gretel saßen am Feuer, und als der Mittag kam, aß jedes sein Stücklein Brot. Und weil sie die Schläge der Holzaxt hörten, so glaubten sie, ihr Vater wäre in der Nähe. Es war aber nicht die Holzaxt, es war ein Ast, den er an einen dürren Baum gebunden hatte, und den der Wind hin- und herschlug. Und als sie so lange gesessen hatten, fielen ihnen die Augen vor Müdigkeit zu, und sie schliefen fest ein. Als sie endlich erwachten, war es schon finstere Nacht. Gretel fing an zu weinen und sprach »wie sollen wir nun aus dem Wald kommen!« Hänsel aber tröstete sie, »wart nur ein Weilchen, bis der Mond aufgegangen ist, dann vollen wir den Weg schon finden.« Und als der volle Mond aufgestiegen war, so nahm Hänsel sein Schwesterchen an der Hand und ging den Kieselsteinen nach, die schimmerten wie neu geschlagene Batzen und zeigten ihnen den Weg. Sie gingen die ganze Nacht hindurch und kamen bei anbrechendem Tag wieder zu ihres Vaters Haus. Sie klopften an die Tür, und als die Frau aufmachte und sah, daß es Hänsel und Gretel war, sprach sie »ihr bösen Kinder, was habt ihr so lange im Walde geschlafen, wir haben geglaubt, ihr wolltet gar nicht wiederkommen.« Der Vater aber freute sich, denn es war ihm zu Herzen gegangen, daß er sie so allein zurückgelassen hatte.

Nicht lange danach war wieder Not in allen Ecken, und die Kinder hörten, wie die Mutter nachts im Bette zu dem Vater sprach »alles ist wieder aufgezehrt, wir haben noch einen halben Laib Brot, hernach hat das Lied ein Ende. Die Kinder müssen fort, wir wollen sie tiefer in den Wald hineinführen, damit sie den Weg nicht wieder herausfinden; es ist sonst keine Rettung für uns.« Dem Mann fiels schwer aufs Herz und er dachte »es wäre besser, daß du den letzten Bissen mit deinen Kindern teiltest.« Aber die Frau hörte auf nichts, was er sagte, schalt ihn und machte ihm Vorwürfe. Wer A sagt, muß auch B sagen, und weil er das erstemal nachgegeben hatte, so mußte er es auch zum zweitenmal.

Die Kinder waren aber noch wach gewesen und hatten das Gespräch mit angehört. Als die Alten schliefen, stand Hänsel wieder auf, wollte hinaus und Kieselsteine auflesen wie das vorigemal, aber die Frau hatte die Tür verschlossen, und Hänsel konnte nicht heraus. Aber er tröstete sein Schwesterchen und sprach »weine nicht, Gretel, und schlaf nur ruhig, der liebe Gott wird uns schon helfen.«

Am frühen Morgen kam die Frau und holte die Kinder aus dem Bette. Sie erhielten ihr Stückchen Brot, das war aber noch kleiner als das vorigemal. Auf dem Wege nach dem Wald bröckelte es Hänsel in der Tasche, stand oft still und warf ein Bröcklein auf die Erde. »Hänsel, was stehst du und guckst dich um,« sagte der Vater, »geh deiner Wege.« »Ich sehe nach meinem

Täubchen, das sitzt auf dem Dache und will mir Ade sagen,« antwortete Hänsel. »Narr,« sagte die Frau, »das ist dein Täubchen nicht, das ist die Morgensonne, die auf den Schornstein oben scheint.« Hänsel aber warf nach und nach alle Bröcklein auf den Weg.

Die Frau führte die Kinder noch tiefer in den Wald, wo sie ihr Lebtag noch nicht gewesen waren. Da ward wieder ein großes Feuer angemacht, und die Mutter sagte »bleibt nur da sitzen, ihr Kinder, und wenn ihr müde seid, könnt ihr ein wenig schlafen: wir gehen in den Wald und hauen Holz, und abends, wenn wir fertig sind, kommen wir und holen euch ab.« Als es Mittag war, teilte Gretel ihr Brot mit Hänsel, der sein Stück auf den Weg gestreut hatte. Dann schliefen sie ein, und der Abend verging, aber niemand kam zu den armen Kindern. Sie erwachten erst in der finsteren Nacht, und Hänsel tröstete sein Schwesterchen und sagte »wart nur, Gretel, bis der Mond aufgeht, dann werden wir die Brotbröcklein sehen, die ich ausgestreut habe, die zeigen uns den Weg nach Haus.« Als der Mond kam, machten sie sich auf, aber sie fanden kein Bröcklein mehr, denn die viel tausend Vögel, die im Walde und im Felde umherfliegen, die hatten sie weggepickt. Hänsel sagte zu Gretel »wir werden den Weg schon finden,« aber sie fanden ihn nicht. Sie gingen die ganze Nacht und noch einen Tag von Morgen bis Abend, aber sie kamen aus dem Wald nicht heraus, und waren so hungrig, denn sie hatten nichts als die paar Beeren, die auf der Erde standen. Und weil sie so müde waren, daß die Beine sie nicht mehr tragen wollten, so legten sie sich unter einen Baum und schliefen ein.

Nun wars schon der dritte Morgen, daß sie ihres Vaters Haus verlassen hatten. Sie fingen wieder an zu gehen, aber sie gerieten immer tiefer in den Wald, und wenn nicht bald Hilfe kam, so mußten sie verschmachten. Als es Mittag war, sahen sie ein schönes schneeweißes Vöglein auf einem Ast sitzen, das sang so schön, daß sie stehen blieben und ihm zuhörten. Und als es fertig war, schwang es seine Flügel und flog vor ihnen her, und sie gingen ihm nach, bis sie zu einem Häuschen gelangten, auf dessen Dach es sich setzte, und als sie ganz nah herankamen, so sahen sie, daß das Häuslein aus Brot gebaut war und mit Kuchen gedeckt; aber die Fenster waren von hellem Zucker. »Da wollen wir uns dran machen,« sprach Hänsel, »und eine gesegnete Mahlzeit halten. Ich will ein Stück vom Dach essen, Gretel, du kannst vom Fenster essen, das schmeckt süß.« Hänsel reichte in die Höhe und brach sich ein wenig vom Dach ab, um zu versuchen, wie es schmeckte, und Gretel stellte sich an die Scheiben und knuperte daran. Da rief eine feine Stimme aus der Stube heraus

»knuper, knuper, kneischen,
wer knupert an meinem Häuschen?«

Die Kinder antworteten

»der Wind, der Wind,
das himmlische Kind,«

und aßen weiter, ohne sich irre machen zu lassen. Hänsel, dem das Dach sehr gut schmeckte, riß sich ein großes Stück davon herunter, und Gretel stieß eine ganze runde Fensterscheibe heraus, setzte sich nieder und tat sich wohl damit. Da ging auf einmal die Türe auf, und eine steinalte Frau, die sich auf eine Krücke stützte, kam herausgeschlichen. Hänsel und Gretel erschraken so gewaltig, daß sie fallen ließen, was sie in den Händen hielten. Die Alte aber wackelte mit dem Kopfe und sprach »ei, ihr lieben Kinder, wer hat euch hierher gebracht? kommt nur herein und bleibt bei mir, es geschieht euch kein Leid.« Sie faßte beide an der Hand und führte sie in ihr Häuschen. Da ward gutes Essen aufgetragen, Milch und Pfannekuchen mit Zucker, Äpfel und Nüsse. Hernach wurden zwei schöne Bettlein weiß gedeckt, und Hänsel und Gretel legten sich hinein und meinten, sie wären im Himmel. Die Alte hatte sich nur so freundlich angestellt, sie war aber eine böse Hexe, die den Kindern auflauerte, und hatte das Brothäuslein bloß gebaut, um sie herbeizulocken. Wenn eins in ihre Gewalt kam, so machte sie es tot, kochte es und aß es, und das war ihr ein Festtag. Die Hexen haben rote Augen und können nicht weit sehen, aber sie haben eine feine Witterung, wie die Tiere, und merkens, wenn Menschen herankommen. Als Hänsel und Gretel in ihre Nähe kamen, da lachte sie boshaft und sprach höhnisch »die habe ich, die sollen mir nicht wieder entwischen.« Frühmorgens, ehe die Kinder erwacht waren, stand sie schon auf, und als sie beide so lieblich ruhen sah, mit den vollen roten Backen, so murmelte sie vor sich hin »das wird ein guter Bissen werden.« Da packte sie Hänsel mit ihrer dürren Hand und trug ihn in einen kleinen Stall und sperrte ihn mit einer Gittertüre ein: er mochte schreien, wie er wollte, es half ihm nichts. Dann ging sie zu Gretel, rüttelte sie wach und rief »steh auf, Faulenzerin, trag Wasser und koch deinem Bruder etwas Gutes, der sitzt draußen im Stall und soll fett werden. Wenn er fett ist, so will ich ihn essen.« Gretel fing an bitterlich zu weinen, aber es war alles vergeblich, sie mußte tun, was die böse Hexe verlangte. Nun ward dem armen Hänsel das beste Essen gekocht, aber Gretel bekam nichts als Krebsschalen. Jeden Morgen schlich die Alte zu dem Ställchen und rief »Hänsel, streck deine Finger heraus, damit ich fühle, ob du bald fett bist.« Hänsel streckte ihr aber ein Knöchlein heraus, und die Alte, die trübe Augen hatte, konnte es nicht sehen, und meinte, es wären Hänsels Finger, und verwunderte sich, daß er gar nicht fett werden wollte. Als vier Wochen herum waren und Hänsel immer mager blieb, da übernahm sie die Ungeduld, und sie wollte nicht länger warten. »Heda, Gretel,« rief sie dem Mädchen zu, »sei flink und trag Wasser: Hänsel mag fett oder mager sein, morgen will ich ihn schlachten und kochen.« Ach, wie jammerte das arme Schwesterchen, als es das Wasser tragen mußte, und wie flossen ihm die Tränen über die Backen herunter! »Lieber Gott, hilf uns doch,« rief sie aus, »hätten uns nur die wilden Tiere im Wald gefressen, so wären wir doch zusammen gestorben.« »Spar nur dein Geblärre,« sagte die Alte, »es hilft dir alles nichts.« Frühmorgens mußte Gretel heraus, den Kessel mit Wasser aufhängen und Feuer anzünden. »Erst vollen wir backen,« sagte die Alte,

»ich habe den Backofen schon eingeheizt und den Teig geknetet!« Sie stieß das arme Gretel hinaus zu dem Backofen, aus dem die Feuerflammen schon herausschlugen. »Kriech hinein,« sagte die Hexe, »und sieh zu, ob recht eingeheizt ist, damit wir das Brot hineinschießen können.« Und wenn Gretel darin war, wollte sie den Ofen zumachen, und Gretel sollte darin braten, und dann wollte sies auch aufessen. Aber Gretel merkte, was sie im Sinn hatte, und sprach »ich weiß nicht, wie ichs machen soll; wie komm ich da hinein?« »Dumme Gans,« sagte die Alte, »die Öffnung ist groß genug, siehst du wohl, ich könnte selbst hinein,« krabbelte heran und steckte den Kopf in den Backofen. Da gab ihr Gretel einen Stoß, daß sie weit hineinfuhr, machte die eiserne Tür zu und schob den Riegel vor. Hu! da fing sie an zu heulen, ganz grauselig; aber Gretel lief fort, und die gottlose Hexe mußte elendiglich verbrennen. Gretel aber lief schnurstracks zum Hänsel, öffnete sein Ställchen und rief »Hänsel, wir sind erlöst, die alte Hexe ist tot!« Da sprang Hänsel heraus, wie ein Vogel aus dem Käfig, wenn ihm die Türe aufgemacht wird. Wie haben sie sich gefreut, sind sich um den Hals gefallen, sind herumgesprungen und haben sich geküßt! Und weil sie sich nicht mehr zu fürchten brauchten, so gingen sie in das Haus der Hexe hinein, da standen in allen Ecken Kasten mit Perlen und Edelsteinen. »Die sind noch besser als Kieselsteine,« sagte Hänsel und steckte in seine Taschen, was hinein wollte, und Gretel sagte »ich will auch etwas mit nach Haus bringen,« und füllte sich sein Schürzchen voll. »Aber jetzt wollen wir fort,« sagte Hänsel, »damit wir aus dem Hexenwald herauskommen.« Als sie aber ein paar Stunden gegangen waren, gelangten sie an ein großes Wasser. »Wir können nicht hinüber,« sprach Hänsel, »ich seh keinen Steg und keine Brücke.« »Hier fährt auch kein Schiffchen,« antwortete Gretel, »aber da schwimmt eine weiße Ente, wenn ich die bitte, so hilft sie uns hinüber.« Da rief sie.

»Entchen, Entchen,
da steht Gretel und Hänsel.
Kein Steg und keine Brücke,
nimm uns auf deinen weißen Rücken.«

Das Entchen kam auch heran, und Hänsel setzte sich auf und bat sein Schwesterchen, sich zu ihm zu setzen. »Nein,« antwortete Gretel, »es wird dem Entchen zu schwer, es soll uns nacheinander hinüberbringen.« Das tat das gute Tierchen, und als sie glücklich drüben waren und ein Weilchen fortgingen, da kam ihnen der Wald immer bekannter und immer bekannter vor, und endlich erblickten sie von weitem ihres Vaters Haus. Da fingen sie an zu laufen, stürzten in die Stube hinein und fielen ihrem Vater um den Hals. Der Mann hatte keine frohe Stunde gehabt, seitdem er die Kinder im Walde gelassen hatte, die Frau aber war gestorben. Gretel schüttete sein Schürzchen aus, daß die Perlen und Edelsteine in der Stube herumsprangen, und Hänsel warf eine Handvoll nach der anderen aus seiner Tasche dazu. Da hatten alle Sorgen ein Ende, und sie lebten in lauter Freude zusammen. Mein Märchen ist aus, dort läuft eine Maus, wer sie fängt, darf sich eine große große Pelzkappe daraus machen.

16. Die drei Schlangenblätter.

Es war einmal ein armer Mann, der konnte seinen einzigen Sohn nicht mehr ernähren. Da sprach der Sohn »lieber Vater, es geht Euch so kümmerlich, ich falle Euch zur Last, lieber will ich selbst fortgehen und sehen, wie ich mein Brot verdiene.« Da gab ihm der Vater seinen Segen und nahm mit großer Trauer von ihm Abschied. Zu dieser Zeit führte der König eines mächtigen Reichs Krieg, der Jüngling nahm Dienste bei ihm und zog mit ins Feld. Und als er vor den Feind kam, so ward eine Schlacht geliefert, und es war große Gefahr und regnete blaue Bohnen, daß seine Kameraden von allen Seiten niederfielen. Und als auch der Anführer blieb, so wollten die übrigen die Flucht ergreifen, aber der Jüngling trat heraus, sprach ihnen Mut zu und rief »wir wollen unser Vaterland nicht zugrunde gehen lassen.« Da folgten ihm die andern, und er drang ein und schlug den Feind. Der König, als er hörte, daß er ihm allein den Sieg zu danken habe, erhob ihn über alle andern, gab ihm große Schätze und machte ihn zum Ersten in seinem Reich.

Der König hatte eine Tochter, die war sehr schön, aber sie war auch sehr wunderlich. Sie hatte das Gelübde getan, keinen zum Herrn und Gemahl zu neh men, der nicht verspräche, wenn sie zuerst stürbe, sich lebendig mit ihr begraben zu lassen. »Hat er mich von Herzen lieb,« sagte sie, »wozu dient ihm dann noch das Leben?« Dagegen wollte sie ein Gleiches tun, und wenn er zuerst stürbe, mit ihm in das Grab steigen. Dieses seltsame Gelübde hatte bis jetzt alle Freier abgeschreckt, aber der Jüngling wurde von ihrer Schönheit so eingenommen, daß er auf nichts achtete, sondern bei ihrem Vater um sie anhielt. »Weißt du auch,« sprach der König, »was du versprechen mußt?« »Ich muß mit ihr in das Grab gehen,« antwortete er, »wenn ich sie überlebe, aber meine Liebe ist so groß, daß ich der Gefahr nicht achte.« Da willigte der König ein, und die Hochzeit ward mit großer Pracht gefeiert.

Nun lebten sie eine Zeitlang glücklich und vergnügt miteinander, da geschah es, daß die junge Königin in eine schwere Krankheit fiel, und kein Arzt konnte ihr helfen. Und als sie tot dalag, da erinnerte sich der junge König, was er hatte versprechen müssen, und es grauste ihm davor, sich lebendig in das Grab zu legen, aber es war kein Ausweg: der König hatte alle Tore mit Wachen besetzen lassen, und es war nicht möglich, dem Schicksal zu entgehen. Als der Tag kam, wo die Leiche in das königliche Gewölbe beigesetzt wurde, da ward er mit hinabgeführt, und dann das Tor verriegelt und verschlossen.

Neben dem Sarg stand ein Tisch, darauf vier Lichter, vier Laibe Brot und vier Flaschen Wein. Sobald dieser Vorrat zu Ende ging, mußte er verschmachten. Nun saß er da voll Schmerz und Trauer, aß jeden Tag nur ein Bißlein Brot, trank nur einen Schluck Wein, und sah doch, wie der Tod immer näher rückte. Indem er so vor sich hinstarrte, sah er aus der Ecke des Gewölbes eine Schlange hervorkriechen, die sich der Leiche näherte. Und weil er dachte, sie käme, um daran zu nagen, zog er sein Schwert und sprach

»solange ich lebe, sollst du sie nicht anrühren,« und hieb sie in drei Stücke. Über ein Weilchen kroch eine zweite Schlange aus der Ecke hervor, als sie aber die andere tot und zerstückt liegen sah, ging sie zurück, kam bald wieder und hatte drei grüne Blätter im Munde. Dann nahm sie die drei Stücke von der Schlange, legte sie, wie sie zusammengehörten, und tat auf jede Wunde eins von den Blättern. Alsbald fügte sich das Getrennte aneinander, die Schlange regte sich und ward wieder lebendig, und beide eilten miteinander fort. Die Blätter blieben auf der Erde liegen, und dem Unglücklichen, der alles mit angesehen hatte, kam es in die Gedanken, ob nicht die wunderbare Kraft der Blätter, welche die Schlange wieder lebendig gemacht hatte, auch einem Menschen helfen könnte. Er hob also die Blätter auf und legte eins davon auf den Mund der Toten, die beiden andern auf ihre Augen. Und kaum war es geschehen, so bewegte sich das Blut in den Adern, stieg in das bleiche Angesicht und rötete es wieder. Da zog sie Atem, schlug die Augen auf und sprach »ach, Gott, wo bin ich?« »Du bist bei mir, liebe Frau,« antwortete er, und erzählte ihr, wie alles gekommen war und er sie wieder ins Leben erweckt hatte. Dann reichte er ihr etwas Wein und Brot, und als sie wieder zu Kräften gekommen war, erhob sie sich, und sie gingen zu der Türe, und klopften und riefen so laut, daß es die Wachen hörten und dem König meldeten. Der König kam selbst herab und öffnete die Türe, da fand er beide frisch und gesund und freute sich mit ihnen, daß nun alle Not überstanden war. Die drei Schlangenblätter aber nahm der junge König mit, gab sie einem Diener und sprach »verwahr sie mir sorgfältig, und trag sie zu jeder Zeit bei dir, wer weiß, in welcher Not sie uns noch helfen können.«

Es war aber in der Frau, nachdem sie wieder ins Leben war erweckt worden, eine Veränderung vorgegangen: es war, als ob alle Liebe zu ihrem Manne aus ihrem Herzen gewichen wäre. Als er nach einiger Zeit eine Fahrt zu seinem alten Vater über das Meer machen wollte, und sie auf ein Schiff gestiegen waren, so vergaß sie die große Liebe und Treue, die er ihr bewiesen, und womit er sie vom Tode gerettet hatte, und faßte eine böse Neigung zu dem Schiffer. Und als der junge König einmal dalag und schlief, rief sie den Schiffer herbei, und faßte den Schlafenden am Kopfe, und der Schiffer mußte ihn an den Füßen fassen, und so warfen sie ihn hinab ins Meer. Als die Schandtat vollbracht war, sprach sie zu ihm »nun laß uns heimkehren und sagen, er sei unterwegs gestorben. Ich will dich schon bei meinem Vater so herausstreichen und rühmen, daß er mich mit dir vermählt und dich zum Erben seiner Krone einsetzt.« Aber der treue Diener, der alles mit angesehen hatte, machte unbemerkt ein kleines Schifflein von dem großen los, setzte sich hinein, schiffte seinem Herrn nach, und ließ die Verräter fortfahren. Er fischte den Toten wieder auf, und mit Hilfe der drei Schlangenblätter, die er bei sich trug und auf die Augen und den Mund legte, brachte er ihn glücklich wieder ins Leben.

Sie ruderten beide aus allen Kräften Tag und Nacht, und ihr kleines Schiff flog so schnell dahin, daß sie früher als das andere bei dem alten König anlangten. Er verwunderte sich, als er sie allein kommen sah, und fragte, was ihnen begegnet wäre. Als er die Bosheit seiner Tochter vernahm, sprach er »ich kanns nicht glauben, daß sie so schlecht gehandelt hat, aber die Wahrheit wird bald an den Tag kommen,« und hieß beide in eine verborgene Kammer gehen und sich vor jedermann heimlich halten. Bald hernach kam das große Schiff herangefahren, und die gottlose Frau er schien vor ihrem Vater mit einer betrübten Miene. Er sprach »warum kehrst du allein zurück? wo ist dein Mann?« »Ach, lieber Vater,« antwortete sie, »ich komme in großer Trauer wieder heim, mein Mann ist während der Fahrt plötzlich erkrankt und gestorben, und wenn der gute Schiffer mir nicht Beistand geleistet hätte, so wäre es mir schlimm ergangen; er ist bei seinem Tode zugegen gewesen und kann Euch alles erzählen.« Der König sprach »ich will den Toten wieder lebendig machen,« und öffnete die Kammer, und hieß die beiden herausgehen. Die Frau, als sie ihren Mann erblickte, war wie vom Donner gerührt, sank auf die Knie und bat um Gnade. Der König sprach »da ist keine Gnade, er war bereit, mit dir zu sterben, und hat dir dein Leben wiedergegeben, du aber hast ihn im Schlaf umgebracht, und sollst deinen verdienten Lohn empfangen.« Da ward sie mit ihrem Helfershelfer in ein durchlöchertes Schiff gesetzt und hinaus ins Meer getrieben, wo sie bald in den Wellen versanken.

17. Die weiße Schlange.

Es ist nun schon lange her, da lebte ein König, dessen Weisheit im ganzen Lande berühmt war. Nichts blieb ihm unbekannt, und es war, als ob ihm Nachricht von den verborgensten Dingen durch die Luft zugetragen würde. Er hatte aber eine seltsame Sitte. Jeden Mittag, wenn von der Tafel alles abgetragen und niemand mehr zugegen war, mußte ein vertrauter Diener noch eine Schüssel bringen. Sie war aber zugedeckt, und der Diener wußte selbst nicht, was darin lag, und kein Mensch wußte es, denn der König deckte sie nicht eher auf und aß nicht davon, bis er ganz allein war. Das hatte schon lange Zeit gedauert, da überkam eines Tages den Diener, der die Schüssel wieder wegtrug, die Neugierde, daß er nicht widerstehen konnte, sondern die Schüssel in seine Kammer brachte. Als er die Tür sorgfältig verschlossen hatte, hob er den Deckel auf, und da sah er, daß eine weiße Schlange darin lag. Bei ihrem Anblick konnte er die Lust nicht zurückhalten, sie zu kosten; er schnitt ein Stückchen davon ab und steckte es in den Mund. Kaum aber hatte es seine Zunge berührt, so hörte er vor seinem Fenster ein seltsames Gewisper von feinen Stimmen. Er ging hin und horchte, da merkte er, daß es die Sperlinge waren, die miteinander sprachen und sich allerlei erzählten, was sie im Felde und Walde gesehen hatten. Der Genuß der Schlange hatte ihm die Fähigkeit verliehen, die Sprache der Tiere zu verstehen.

Nun trug es sich zu, daß gerade an diesem Tage der Königin ihr schönster Ring fortkam und auf den vertrauten Diener, der überall Zugang hatte, der Verdacht fiel, er habe ihn gestohlen. Der König ließ ihn vor sich kommen und drohte ihm unter heftigen Scheltworten, wenn er bis morgen den Täter nicht zu nennen wüßte, so sollte er dafür angesehen und gerichtet werden. Es half nichts, daß er seine Unschuld beteuerte, er ward mit keinem besseren Bescheid entlassen. In seiner Unruhe und Angst ging er hinab auf den Hof und bedachte, wie er sich aus seiner Not helfen könne. Da saßen die Enten an einem fließenden Wasser friedlich nebeneinander und ruhten, sie putzten sich mit ihren Schnäbeln glatt und hielten ein vertrauliches Gespräch. Der Diener blieb stehen und hörte ihnen zu. Sie erzählten sich, wo sie heute morgen all herumgewackelt wären, und was für ein gutes Futter sie gefunden hätten, da sagte eine verdrießlich »mir liegt etwas schwer im Magen, ich habe einen Ring, der unter der Königin Fenster lag, in der Hast mit hinuntergeschluckt.« Da packte sie der Diener gleich beim Kragen, trug sie in die Küche und sprach zum Koch »schlachte doch diese ab, sie ist wohl genährt.« »Ja,« sagte der Koch und wog sie in der Hand, »die hat keine Mühe gescheut, sich zu mästen, und schon lange darauf gewartet, gebraten zu werden.« Er schnitt ihr den Hals ab, und als sie ausgenommen ward, fand sich der Ring der Königin in ihrem Magen. Der Diener konnte nun leicht vor dem Könige seine Unschuld beweisen, und da dieser sein Unrecht wieder gutmachen wollte, erlaubte er ihm, sich eine Gnade auszubitten, und versprach ihm die größte Ehrenstelle, die er sich an seinem Hofe wünschte.

Der Diener schlug alles aus und bat nur um ein Pferd und Reisegeld, denn er hatte Lust die Welt zu sehen und eine Weile darin herumzuziehen. Als seine Bitte erfüllt war, machte er sich auf den Weg und kam eines Tags an einem Teich vorbei, wo er drei Fische bemerkte, die sich im Rohr gefangen hatten und nach Wasser schnappten. Obgleich man sagt, die Fische wären stumm, so vernahm er doch ihre Klage, daß sie so elend umkommen müßten. Weil er ein mitleidiges Herz hatte, so stieg er vom Pferde ab und setzte die drei Gefangenen wieder ins Wasser. Sie zappelten vor Freude, streckten die Köpfe heraus und riefen ihm zu »wir wollen dirs gedenken und dirs vergelten, daß du uns errettet hast.« Er ritt weiter, und nach einem Weilchen kam es ihm vor, als hörte er zu seinen Füßen in dem Sand eine Stimme. Er horchte und vernahm, wie ein Ameisenkönig klagte »wenn uns nur die Menschen mit den ungeschickten Tieren vom Leib blieben! da tritt mir das dumme Pferd mit seinen schweren Hufen meine Leute ohne Barmherzigkeit nieder!« Er lenkte auf einen Seitenweg ein, und der Ameisenkönig rief ihm zu »wir wollen dirs gedenken und dirs vergelten.« Der Weg führte ihn in einen Wald, und da sah er einen Rabenvater und eine Rabenmutter, die standen bei ihrem Nest und warfen ihre Jungen heraus. »Fort mit euch, ihr Galgenschwengel,« riefen sie, »wir können euch nicht mehr satt machen, ihr seid groß genug, und könnt euch selbst ernähren.« Die armen Jungen lagen auf der Erde, flatterten und schlugen mit ihren Fittichen und schrien »wir hilflosen Kinder, wir sollen uns selbst ernähren und können noch nicht fliegen! was bleibt uns übrig, als hier Hungers zu sterben!« Da stieg der gute Jüngling ab, tötete das Pferd mit seinem Degen und überließ es den jungen Raben zum Futter. Die kamen herbeigehüpft, sättigten sich und riefen »wir wollen dirs gedenken und dirs vergelten.«

Er mußte jetzt seine eigenen Beine gebrauchen, und als er lange Wege gegangen war, kam er in eine große Stadt. Da war großer Lärm und Gedränge in den Straßen, und kam einer zu Pferde und machte bekannt, die Königstochter suche einen Gemahl, wer sich aber um sie bewerben wolle, der müsse eine schwere Aufgabe vollbringen, und könne er es nicht glücklich ausführen, so habe er sein Leben verwirkt. Viele hatten es schon versucht, aber vergeblich ihr Leben daran gesetzt. Der Jüngling, als er die Königstochter sah, ward er von ihrer großen Schönheit so verblendet, daß er alle Gefahr vergaß, vor den König trat und sich als Freier meldete.

Alsbald ward er hinaus ans Meer geführt und vor seinen Augen ein goldener Ring hineingeworfen. Dann hieß ihn der König diesen Ring aus dem Meeresgrund wieder hervorzuholen, und fügte hinzu »wenn du ohne ihn wieder in die Höhe kommst, so wirst du immer aufs neue hinabgestürzt, bis du in den Wellen umkommst.« Alle bedauerten den schönen Jüngling und ließen ihn dann einsam am Meere zurück. Er stand am Ufer und überlegte, was er wohl tun sollte, da sah er auf einmal drei Fische daherschwimmen, und es waren keine andern als jene, welchen er das Leben gerettet hatte. Der mittelste hielt eine Muschel im Munde, die er an den Strand zu den Füßen des Jünglings hinlegte, und als dieser sie aufhob und öffnete, so lag der Goldring darin. Voll Freude brachte er ihn dem Könige und erwartete, daß er ihm den verheißenen Lohn gewähren würde. Die stolze Königstochter aber, als sie vernahm, daß er ihr nicht ebenbürtig war, verschmähte ihn und verlangte, er sollte zuvor eine zweite Aufgabe lösen. Sie ging hinab in den Garten und streute selbst zehn Säcke voll Hirsen ins Gras. »Die muß er morgen, ehe die Sonne hervorkommt, aufgelesen haben,« sprach sie, »und darf kein Körnchen fehlen.« Der Jüngling setzte sich in den Garten und dachte nach, wie es möglich wäre, die Aufgabe zu lösen, aber er konnte nichts ersinnen, saß da ganz traurig und erwartete, bei Anbruch des Morgens zum Tode geführt zu werden. Als aber die ersten Sonnenstrahlen in den Garten fielen, so sah er die zehn Säcke alle wohl gefüllt nebeneinander stehen, und kein Körnchen fehlte darin. Der Ameisenkönig war mit seinen tausend und tausend Ameisen in der Nacht angekommen, und die dankbaren Tiere hatten den Hirsen mit großer Emsigkeit gelesen und in die Säcke gesammelt. Die Königstochter kam selbst in den Garten herab und sah mit Verwunderung, daß der Jüngling vollbracht hatte, was ihm aufgegeben war. Aber sie konnte ihr stolzes Herz noch nicht bezwingen und sprach »hat er auch die beiden Aufgaben gelöst, so soll er doch nicht eher mein Gemahl werden, bis er mir einen Apfel vom Baume des Lebens gebracht hat.« Der Jüngling wußte nicht, wo der Baum des Lebens stand, er machte sich auf und wollte immer zugehen, solange ihn seine Beine trügen, aber er hatte keine Hoffnung, ihn zu finden. Als er schon durch drei Königreiche gewandert war und abends in einen Wald kam, setzte er sich unter einen Baum und wollte schlafen: da hörte er in den Ästen ein Geräusch, und ein goldener Apfel fiel in seine Hand. Zu gleich flogen drei Raben zu ihm herab, setzten sich auf seine Knie und sagten »wir sind die drei jungen Raben, die du vom Hungertod errettet hast; als wir groß geworden waren und hörten, daß du den goldenen Apfel suchtest, so sind wir über das Meer geflogen bis ans Ende der Welt, wo der Baum des Lebens steht, und haben dir den Apfel geholt.« Voll Freude machte sich der Jüngling auf den Heimweg und brachte der schönen Königstochter den goldenen Apfel, der nun keine Ausrede mehr übrig blieb. Sie teilten den Apfel des Lebens und aßen ihn zusammen: da ward ihr Herz mit Liebe zu ihm erfüllt, und sie erreichten in ungestörtem Glück ein hohes Alter.

18. Strohhalm, Kohle und Bohne.

In einem Dorfe wohnte eine arme alte Frau, die hatte ein Gericht Bohnen zusammengebracht und wollte sie kochen. Sie machte also auf ihrem Herd ein Feuer zurecht, und damit es desto schneller brennen sollte, zündete sie es mit einer Handvoll Stroh an. Als sie die Bohnen in den Topf schüttete, entfiel ihr unbemerkt eine, die auf dem Boden neben einen Strohhalm zu liegen kam; bald danach sprang auch eine glühende Kohle vom Herd zu den beiden herab. Da fing der Strohhalm an und sprach »liebe Freunde, von wannen kommt ihr her?« Die Kohle antwortete »ich bin zu gutem Glück dem Feuer entsprungen, und hätte ich das nicht mit Gewalt durchgesetzt, so war mir der Tod gewiß: ich wäre zu Asche verbrannt.« Die Bohne sagte »ich bin auch noch mit heiler Haut davongekommen, aber hätte mich die Alte in den Topf gebracht, ich wäre ohne Barmherzigkeit zu Brei gekocht worden, wie meine Kameraden.« »Wäre mir denn ein besser Schicksal zuteil geworden?« sprach das Stroh, »alle meine Brüder hat die Alte in Feuer und Rauch aufgehen lassen, sechzig hat sie auf einmal gepackt und ums Leben gebracht. Glücklicherweise bin ich ihr zwischen den Fingern durchgeschlüpft.« »Was sollen wir aber nun anfangen?« sprach die Kohle. »Ich meine,« antwortete die Bohne, »weil wir so glücklich dem Tode entronnen sind, so wollen wir uns als gute Gesellen zusammenhalten und, damit uns hier nicht wieder ein neues Unglück ereilt, gemeinschaftlich auswandern und in ein fremdes Land ziehen.«

Der Vorschlag gefiel den beiden andern, und sie machten sich miteinander auf den Weg. Bald aber kamen sie an einen kleinen Bach, und da keine Brücke oder Steg da war, so wußten sie nicht, wie sie hinüberkommen sollten. Der Strohhalm fand guten Rat und sprach »ich will mich querüber legen, so könnt ihr auf mir wie auf einer Brücke hinübergehen.« Der Strohhalm streckte sich also von einem Ufer zum andern, und die Kohle, die von hitziger Natur war, trippelte auch ganz keck auf die neugebaute Brücke. Als sie aber in die Mitte gekommen war und unter ihr das Wasser rauschen hörte, ward ihr doch angst: sie blieb stehen und getraute sich nicht weiter. Der Strohhalm aber fing an zu brennen, zerbrach in zwei Stücke und fiel in den Bach: die Kohle rutschte nach, zischte, wie sie ins Wasser kam, und gab den Geist auf. Die Bohne, die vorsichtigerweise noch auf dem Ufer zurückgeblieben war, mußte über die Geschichte lachen, konnte nicht aufhören und lachte so gewaltig, daß sie zerplatzte. Nun war es ebenfalls um sie geschehen, wenn nicht zu gutem Glück ein Schneider, der auf der Wanderschaft war, sich an dem Bach ausgeruht hätte. Weil er ein mitleidiges Herz hatte, so holte er Nadel und Zwirn heraus und nähte sie zusammen. Die Bohne bedankte sich bei ihm aufs schönste, aber da er schwarzen Zwirn gebraucht hatte, so haben seit der Zeit alle Bohnen eine schwarze Naht.

19. Von dem Fischer un syner Fru.

Dar wöör maal eens en Fischer un syne Fru, de waanden tosamen in’n Pißputt, dicht an der See, un de Fischer güng alle Dage hen un angeld: un he angeld un angeld.

So seet he ook eens by de Angel und seeg jümmer in das blanke Water henin: un he seet un seet.

Do güng de Angel to Grund, deep ünner, un as he se heruphaald, so haald he enen grooten Butt heruut. Do säd de Butt to em »hör mal, Fischer, ik bidd dy, laat my lewen, ik bün keen rechten Butt, ik bün’n verwünschten Prins. Wat helpt dy dat, dat du my doot maakst? i würr dy doch nich recht smecken: sett my wedder in dat Water un laat my swemmen.« »Nu,« säd de Mann, »du bruukst nich so veel Wöörd to maken, eenen Butt, de spreken kann, hadd ik doch wol swemmen laten.« Mit des sett’t he em wedder in dat blanke Water, do güng de Butt to Grund und leet enen langen Strypen Bloot achter sik. So stünn de Fischer up un güng nach syne Fru in’n Pißputt.

»Mann,« säd de Fru, »hest du hüüt niks fungen?« »Ne,« säd de Mann, »ik füng enen Butt, de säd, he wöör en verwünschten Prins, da hebb ik em wedder swemmen laten.« »Hest du dy denn niks wünschd?« söd de Fru. »Ne,« säd de Mann, »wat schull ik my wünschen?« »Ach,« säd de Fru, »dat is doch äwel, hyr man jümmer in’n Pißputt to waanen, dat stinkt un is so eeklig: du haddst uns doch ene lüttje Hütt wünschen kunnt. Ga noch hen un roop em: segg em, wy wählt »ne lüttje Hütt hebben, he dait dat gewiß.« »Ach,« säd de Mann, »wat schull ich door noch hengaan?« »I,« säd de Fru, »du haddst em doch fungen, un hest em wedder swemmen laten, he dait dat gewiß. Ga glyk hen.« De Mann wull noch nicht recht, wull awerst syn Fru ook nicht to weddern syn un güng hen na der See.

As he door köhm, wöör de See ganß gröon un geel un goor nich mee so blank. So güng he staan und säd

»Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
Buttje, Buttje in der See,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

Do köhm de Butt answemmen un säd »na, wat will se denn?« »Ach,« säd de Mann, »ik hebb di doch fungen hatt, nu säd myn Fru, ik hadd my doch wat wünschen schullt. Se mag nich meer in’n Pißputt wanen, se wull geern ‘ne Hütt.« »Ga man hen,« säd de Butt, »se hett se all.«

Do güng de Mann hen, un syne Fru seet nich meer in’n Pißputt, dar stünn awerst ene lüttje Hütt, un syne Fru seet vor de Döhr up ene Bank. Da nöhm syne Fru em by de Hand un säd to em »kumm man herin, süh, nu is dar doch veel beter.« Do güngen se henin, un in de Hütt was een lüttjen Vorplatz un ene lüttje herrliche Stuw un Kamer, wo jem eer Beed stünn, un Kääk un Spysekamer, allens up dat beste mit Gerädschoppen, un up dat schönnste upgefleyt, Tinntüüg un Mischen (Messing), wat sik darin hpredöört. Un achter was ook en lüttjen Hof mit Hönern un Aanten, un en lüttjen Goorn mit Grönigkeiten un Aaft (Obst). »Süh,« säd de Fru, »is dat nich nett?« »Ja,« säd de Mann, »so schall't blywen, nu wähl wy recht vergnöögt lewen.« »Dat wähl wy uns bedenken,« säd de Fru. Mit des eeten se wat un güngen to Bedd.

So güng dat wol 'n acht oder veertein Dag, do säd de Fru »hör, Mann, de Hütt is ook goor to eng, un de Hof un de Goorn is so kleen: de Butt hadd uns ook wol een grötter Huus schenken kunnt. Ich much woll in enem grooten stenern Slott wanen: ga hen tom Butt, he schall uns en Slott schenken.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »de Hütt is jo god noog, wat wähl wy in'n Slott wanen.« »I wat,« säd de Fru, »ga du man hen, de Butt kann dat jümmer doon.« »Ne, Fru,« säd de Mann, »de Butt hett uns eerst de Hütt gewen, ik mag nu nich all wedder kamen, den Butt muchd et vördreten.« »Ga doch,« säd de Fru, »he kann dat recht good und dait dat geern; ga du man hen.« Dem Mann wöör syn Hart so swoor, un wull nich; he säd by sik sülwen »dat is nich recht,« he güng awerst doch hen.

As he an de See köhm, wöör dat Water ganß vigelett un dunkelblau un grau un dick, un goor nich meer so gröön un geel, doch wöör't noch still. Do güng he staan un säd

»Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
Buttje, Buttje in der See,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

»Na wat will se denn?« säd de Butt. »Ach,« säd de Mann half bedrööft, »se will in'n groot stenern Slott wanen.« »Ga man hen, se stait vör der Döhr,« säd de Butt.

Da güng de Mann hen un dachd, he wull na Huus gaan, as he awerst daar köhm, so stünn door 'n grooten stenern Pallast, un syn Fru stünn ewen up de Trepp und wull henin gaan: do nöhm se em by de Hand und säd »kumm man herein.« Mit des güng he mit ehr henin, un in dem Slott wöör ene grote Dehl mit marmelstenern Asters (Estrich), und dar wören so veel Bedeenters, de reten de grooten Dören up, un de Wende wören all blank un mit schöne Tapeten, un in de Zimmers luter gollne Stöhl und Dischen, un krystallen Kroonlüchters hüngen an dem Bähn, un so wöör dat all de Stuwen und Kamers mit Footdeken: un dat Äten un de allerbeste Wyn stünn up den Dischen, as wenn se breken wullen. Un achter dem Huse wöör ook'n grooten Hof mit Peerd- und Kohstall, un Kutschwagens up dat allerbeste, ook was door en grooten herrlichen Goorn mit de schönnsten Blomen un fyne Aaftbömer, un en Lustholt wol 'ne halwe Myl lang, door wören Hirschen un Reh un Hasen drin un allens, wat man sik jümmer wünschen mag. »Na,« säd de Fru, »is dat nun nich schön?« »Ach ja,« säd de Mann, »so schallt't ook blywen, nu wähl wy ook in das schöne Slott wanen un wähl tofreden syn.« »Dat wähl wy uns bedenken,« säd de Fru, »un wählen't beslapen.« Mit des güngen se to Bedd.

Den annern Morgen waakd de Fru to eerst up, dat was jüst Dag, un seeg uut jem ehr Bedd dat herrliche Land vör sik liggen. De Mann reckd sik noch, do stödd se em mit dem Ellbagen in de Syd und säd »Mann, sta up un kyk mal uut dem Fenster. Süh, kunnen wy nich König warden äwer all düt Land? Ga hen tom Butt, wy wählt König syn.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »wat wähln wy König syn! ik mag nich König syn.« »Na,« säd de Fru, »wult du nich König syn, so will ik König syn. Ga hen tom Butt, ik will König syn.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »wat wullst du König syn? dat mag ik em nich seggen.« »Worüm nich?« säd de Fru, »ga stracks hen, ik mutt König syn.« Do güng de Mann hen un wöör ganß bedröft, dat syne Fru König warden wull. »Dat is nich recht un is nicht recht,« dachd de Mann. He wull nich hen gaan, güng awerst doch hen.

Un as he an de See köhm, do wöör de See ganß swartgrau, un dat Water geerd so von ünnen up und stünk ook ganß fuul. Do güng he staan un säd

»Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
Buttje, Buttje in der See,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

»Na wat will se denn?« säd de Butt. »Ach,« säd de Mann, »se will König warden.« »Ga man hen, se is't all,« säd de Butt.

Do güng de Mann hen, und as he na dem Pallast köhm, so wöör dat Slott veel grötter worren, mit enem grooten Toorn un herrlyken Zyraat doran: un de Schildwach stünn vor de Döhr, un dar wören so väle Soldaten un Pauken un Trumpeten. Un as he in dat Huus köhm, so wöör allens von purem Marmelsteen mit Gold, un sammtne Deken un groote gollne Quasten. Do güngen de Dören von dem Saal up, door de ganße Hofstaat wöör, un syne Fru seet up enem hogen Troon von Gold und Demant, un hadd ene groote gollne Kroon up un den Zepter in der Hand von purem Gold un Edelsteen, un up beyden Syden by ehr stünnen ses Jumpfern in ene Reeg, jümmer ene enen Kops lüttjer as de annere. Do güng he staan und säd »ach, Fru, büst du nu König?« »Ja,« säd de Fru, »nu bün ik König.« Do stünn he und seeg se an, un as he do een Flach (eine Zeitlang) so ansehn hadd, säd he »ach, Fru, wat lett dat schöön, wenn du König büst! nu wähl wy ook niks meer wünschen.« »Ne, Mann,« säd de Fru un wöör ganß unruhig, »my waart de Tyd un Wyl al lang, ik kann dat nich meer uthollen. Ga hen tom Butt, König bün ik, nu mutt ik ook Kaiser warden.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »wat wullst du Kaiser warden?« »Mann,« säd se, »ga tom Butt, ik will Kaiser syn.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »Kaiser kann he nich maken, ik mag dem Butt dat nich seggen; Kaiser is man eenmal im Reich: Kaiser kann de Butt jo nich maken, dat kann un kann he nich.« »Wat,« säd de Fru, »ik bünn König, un du büst man myn Mann, wullt du glyk hengaan? glyk ga hen, kann he König maken, kann he ook Kaiser maken, ik will un will Kaiser syn; glyk ga hen.« Do mussd he hengaan. Do de Mann awer hengüng, wöör em ganß bang, un as he so güng, dachd he be sik »düt gait und gait nich good: Kaiser is to uutvörschaamt, de Butt wart am Ende möd.«

Mit des köhm he an de See, do wöör de See noch ganß swart un dick un füng al so von ünnen up to geeren, dat et so Blasen smeet, un et güng so em Keekwind äwer hen, dat et sik so köhrd; un de Mann wurr groen (grauen). Do güng he staan un säd

»Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
Buttje, Buttje in der see,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

»Na, wat will se denn?« säd de Butt. »Ach Butt,« säd he, »myn Fru will Kaiser warden.« »Ga man hen,« säd de Butt, »se is’t all.«

Do güng de Mann hen, un as he door köhm, so wöör dat ganße Slott von poleertem Marmelsteen mit albasternen Figuren un gollnen Zyraten. Vör de Döhr marscheerden die Soldaten und se blösen Trumpeten und slögen Pauken un Trummeln: awerst in dem Huse, da güngen de Baronen un Grawen un Herzogen man so as Bedeenters herüm: do makten se em de Dören up, de von luter Gold wören. Un as he herinköhm, door seet syne Fru up enem Troon, de wöör von een Stück Gold, un wöör wol twe Myl hoog: un hadd ene groote gollne Kroon up, de wöör dre Elen hoog un mit Briljanten un Karfunkelsteen beset’t: in de ene Hand hadde se den Zepter un in de annere Hand den Reichsappel, un up beyden Syden by eer, door stünnen de Trabanten so in twe Regen, jümmer en lüttjer as de annere, von dem allergröttesten Rysen, de wöör twe Myl hoog, bet to dem allerlüttjesten Dwaark, de wöör man so groot as min lüttje Finger. Un vör ehr stünnen so vele Fürsten un Herzogen. Door güng de Mann tüschen staan und säd »Fru, büst du nu Kaiser?« »Ja,« säd se, »ik bün Kaiser.« Do güng he staan un beseeg se sik so recht, un as he se so’n Flach ansehen hadd, so säd he »ach, Fru, wat lett dat schöön, wenn du Kaiser büst.« »Mann,« säd se, »wat staist du door? ik bün nu Kaiser, nu will ik awerst ook Paabst warden, ga hen tom Butt.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, »watt wulst du man nich? Paabst kannst du nich warden, Paabst is man eenmal in der Kristenhait, dat kann he doch nich maken.« »Mann,« säd se, »ik will Paabst warden, ga glyk hen, ik mutt hüüt noch Paabst warden.« »Ne, Fru,« säd de Mann, »dat mag ik em nidi seggen, dat gait nich good, dat is to groff, tom Paabst kann de Butt nich maken.« »Mann, wat Snack!« säd de Fru, »kann he Kaiser maken, kann he ook Paabst maken. Ga foorts hen, ik bünn Kaiser, un du büst man myn Mann, wult du wol hengaan?« Do wurr he bang un güng hen, em wöör awerst ganß flau, un zitterd un beewd, un de Knee un de Waden slakkerden em. Un dar streek so’n Wind äwer dat Land, un de Wolken flögen, as dat düster wurr gegen Awend: de Bläder waiden von den Bömern, und dat Water güng un bruusd, as kaakd dat, un platschd an dat Äver, un von feern seeg he de Schepen, de schöten in der Noot, un danßden un sprüngen up den Bülgen. Doch wöör de Himmel noch so’n bitten blau in de Midd, awerst an den Syden, door toog dat so recht rood up as en swohr Gewitter. Do güng he recht vörzufft (verzagt) staan in de Angst un säd

»Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
Buttje, Buttje in der See,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

»Na, wat will se denn?« säd de Butt. »Ach,« säd de Mann, »se will Paabst warden.« »Ga man hen, se is't all,« säd de Butt.

Do güng he hen, un as he door köhm, so wöör dar as en groote Kirch mit luter Pallastens ümgewen. Door drängd he sik dorch dat Volk: inwendig was awer allens mit dausend un dausend Lichtern erleuchtet, un syne Fru wöör in luter Gold gekledet, un seet noch up enem veel högeren Troon, un hadde dre groote gollne Kronen up, un üm ehr dar wöör so veel von geistlykem Staat, un up beyden Syden by ehr, door stünnen twe Regen Lichter, dat gröttste so dick und groot as de allergröttste Toorn, bet to dem allerkleensten Käkenlicht; un alle de Kaisers un de Königen, de legen vör ehr up de Kne und küßden ehr den Tüffel. »Fru,« säd de Mann und seeg se so recht an, »büst du nun Paabst?« »Ja,« säd se, »ik bün Paabst.« Do güng he staan un seeg se recht an, un dat wöör, as wenn he in de hell Sunn seeg. As he se do en Flach ansehn hadd, so segt he »ach, Fru, wat lett dat schöön, wenn du Paabst büst!« Se seet awerst ganß styf as en Boom, un rüppeld un röhrd sik nich. Do säd he »Fru, nu sy tofreden, nu du Paabst büst, nu kannst du doch niks meer warden.« »Dat will ik my bedenken,« säd de Fru. Mit des güngen se beyde to Bedd, awerst se wöör nich tofreden, un de Girighait leet se nich slapen, se dachd jümmer, wat se noch warden wull.

De Mann sleep recht good un fast, he hadd den Dag veel lopen, de Fru awerst kunn goor nich inslapen, un smeet sik von en Syd to der annern de ganße Nacht un dachd man jümmer, wat se noch wol warden kunn, un kunn sik doch up niks meer besinnen. Mit des wull de Sünn upgan, un as se dat Margenrood seeg, richt'd se sik äwer End im Bedd un seeg door henin, un as se uut dem Fenster de Sünn so herup kamen seeg, »ha,« dachd se, »kunn ik nich ook de Sünn un de Maan upgaan laten?« »Mann,« säd se un stöd em mit dem Ellbagen in de Ribben, »waak up, ga hen tom Butt, ik will warden as de lewe Gott.« De Mann was noch meist in'n Slaap, awerst he vörschrock sik so, dat he uut dem Bedd füll. He meend, he hadd sik vörhöörd, un reef sik de Ogen ut un säd »ach, Fru, wat säd'st du?« »Mann,« säd se, »wenn ik nich de Sünn un de Maan kan upgaan laten, un mutt dat so ansehn, dat de Sünn un de Maan upgaan, ik kann dat nich uuthollen, un hebb kene geruhige Stünd meer, dat ik se nich sülwst kann upgaan laten.« Do seeg se em so recht gräsig an, dat em so'n Schudder äwerleep. »Glyk ga hen, ik will warden as de lewe Gott.« »Ach, Fru,« säd de Mann, un füll vör eer up de Knee, »dat kann de Butt nich. Kaiser un Paabst kann he maken, ik bidd dy, sla in dy un blyf Paabst.« Do köhm se in de Booshait, de Hoor flögen eher so wild üm den Kopp, do reet se sik dat Lyfken up un geef em eens mit dem Foot un schreed »ik holl dat nich uut, un holl dat nich länger uut, wult du hengaan?« Do slööpd he sik de Büxen an un leep wech as unsinnig.

Buten awer güng de Storm, und bruusde, dat he kuum up de Föten staan kunn: de Huser un de Bömer waiden um, un de Baarge beewden, un de Felsenstücken rullden in de See, un de Himmel wöör ganß pickswart, un dat dunnerd un blitzd, un de See güng in so hoge swarte Bülgen as Kirchentöörn un as Baarge, un de hadden bawen alle ene witte Kroon von Schuum up. So schre he, un kun syn egen Woord nich hören,

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Buttje, Buttje in der See,
myne Fru de Ilsebill
will nich so, as ik wol will.«

»Na, wat will se denn?« säd de Butt. »Ach,« säd he, »se will warden as de lewe Gott.« »Ga man hen, se sitt all weder in'n Pißputt.«

Door sitten se noch bet up hüüt un düssen Dag.

20. Das tapfere Schneiderlein.

An einem Sommermorgen saß ein Schneiderlein auf seinem Tisch am Fenster, war guter Dinge und nähte aus Leibeskräften. Da kam eine Bauersfrau die Straße herab und rief »gut Mus feil! gut Mus feil!« Das klang dem Schneiderlein lieblich in die Ohren, er steckte sein zartes Haupt zum Fenster hinaus und rief »hier herauf, liebe Frau, hier wird sie ihre Ware los.« Die Frau stieg die drei Treppen mit ihrem schweren Korbe zu dem Schneider herauf und mußte die Töpfe sämtlich vor ihm auspacken. Er besah sie alle, hob sie in die Höhe, hielt die Nase dran und sagte endlich, »das Mus scheint mir gut, wieg sie mir doch vier Lot ab, liebe Frau, wenns auch ein Viertelpfund ist, kommt es mir nicht darauf an.« Die Frau, welche gehofft hatte, einen guten Absatz zu finden, gab ihm, was er verlangte, ging aber ganz ärgerlich und brummig fort. »Nun, das Mus soll mir Gott gesegnen,« rief das Schneiderlein, »und soll mir Kraft und Stärke geben,« holte das Brot aus dem Schrank, schnitt sich ein Stück über den ganzen Laib und strich das Mus darüber. »Das wird nicht bitter schmecken,« sprach er, »aber erst will ich den Wams fertig machen, eh ich anbeiße.« Er legte das Brot neben sich, nähte weiter und machte vor Freude immer größere Stiche. Indes stieg der Geruch von dem süßen Mus hinauf an die Wand, wo die Fliegen in großer Menge saßen, so daß sie herangelockt wurden und sich scharenweis darauf niederließen. »Ei, wer hat euch eingeladen?« sprach das Schneiderlein und jagte die ungebetenen Gäste fort. Die Fliegen aber, die kein Deutsch verstanden, ließen sich nicht abweisen, sondern kamen in immer größerer Gesellschaft wieder. Da lief dem Schneiderlein endlich, wie man sagt, die Laus über die Leber, es langte aus seiner Hölle nach einem Tuchlappen, und »wart, ich will es euch geben!« schlug es unbarmherzig drauf. Als es abzog und zählte, so lagen nicht weniger als sieben vor ihm tot und streckten die Beine. »Bist du so ein Kerl?« sprach er und mußte selbst seine Tapferkeit bewundern, »das soll die ganze Stadt erfahren.« Und in der Hast schnitt sich das Schneiderlein einen Gürtel, nähte ihn und stickte mit großen Buchstaben darauf »siebene auf einen Streich!« »Ei was Stadt!« sprach er weiter, »die ganze Welt solls erfahren!« und sein Herz wackelte ihm vor Freude wie ein Lämmerschwänzchen.

Der Schneider band sich den Gürtel um den Leib und wollte in die Welt hinaus, weil er meinte, die Werkstätte sei zu klein für seine Tapferkeit. Eh er abzog, suchte er im Haus herum, ob nichts da wäre, was er mitnehmen könnte, er fand aber nichts als einen alten Käs, den steckte er ein. Vor dem Tore bemerkte er einen Vogel, der sich im Gesträuch gefangen hatte, der mußte zu dem Käse in die Tasche. Nun nahm er den Weg tapfer zwischen die Beine, und weil er leicht und behend war, fühlte er keine Müdigkeit. Der Weg führte ihn auf einen Berg, und als er den höchsten Gipfel erreicht hatte, so saß da ein gewaltiger Riese und schaute sich ganz gemächlich um. Das Schneiderlein ging beherzt auf ihn zu, redete ihn an und sprach »guten Tag, Kamerad, gelt, du sitzest da und besiehst dir die weitläufige Welt? ich bin eben auf dem Wege dahin und will mich versuchen. Hast du Lust mitzugehen?« Der Riese sah den Schneider verächtlich an und sprach »du Lump! du miserabler Kerl!« »Das wäre!« antwortete das Schneiderlein, knöpfte den Rock auf und zeigte dem Riesen den Gürtel, »da kannst du lesen, was ich für ein Mann bin.« Der Riese las »siebene auf einen Streich,« meinte, das wären Menschen gewesen, die der Schneider erschlagen hätte, und kriegte ein wenig Respekt vor dem kleinen Kerl. Doch wollte er ihn erst prüfen, nahm einen Stein in die Hand, und drückte ihn zusammen, daß das Wasser heraustropfte. »Das mach mir nach,« sprach der Riese, »wenn du Stärke hast.« »Ists weiter nichts?« sagte das Schneiderlein, »das ist bei unsereinem Spielwerk,« griff in die Tasche, holte den weichen Käs und drückte ihn, daß der Saft herauslief. »Gelt,« sprach er, »das war ein wenig besser?« Der Riese wußte nicht, was er sagen sollte, und konnte es von dem Männlein nicht glauben. Da hob der Riese einen Stein auf und warf ihn so hoch, daß man ihn mit Augen kaum noch sehen konnte: »nun, du Erpelmännchen, das tu mir nach.« »Gut geworfen,« sagte der Schneider, »aber der Stein hat doch wieder zur Erde herabfallen müssen, ich will dir einen werfen, der soll gar nicht wiederkommen«; griff in die Tasche, nahm den Vogel und warf ihn in die Luft. Der Vogel, froh über seine Freiheit, stieg auf, flog fort und kam nicht wieder. »Wie gefällt dir das Stückchen, Kamerad?« fragte der Schneider. »Werfen kannst du wohl,« sagte der Riese, »aber nun wollen wir sehen, ob du imstande bist, etwas Ordentliches zu tragen.« Er führte das Schneiderlein zu einem mächtigen Eichbaum, der da gefällt auf dem Boden lag, und sagte »wenn du stark genug bist, so hilf mir den Baum aus dem Walde heraustragen.« »Gerne,« antwortete der kleine Mann, »nimm du nur den Stamm auf deine Schulter, ich will die Äste mit dem Gezweig aufheben und tragen, das ist doch das Schwerste.« Der Riese nahm den Stamm auf die Schulter, der Schneider aber setzte sich auf einen Ast, und der Riese, der sich nicht umsehen konnte, mußte den ganzen Baum und das Schneiderlein noch obendrein forttragen. Es war da hinten ganz lustig und guter Dinge, pfiff das Liedchen »es ritten drei Schneider zum Tore hinaus,« als wär das Baum tragen ein Kinderspiel. Der Riese, nachdem er ein Stück Wegs die schwere Last fortgeschleppt hatte, konnte nicht weiter und rief »hör, ich muß den Baum fallen lassen.« Der Schneider sprang behendiglich herab, faßte den Baum mit beiden Armen, als wenn er ihn getragen hätte, und sprach zum Riesen »du bist ein so großer Kerl und kannst den Baum nicht einmal tragen.«

Sie gingen zusammen weiter, und als sie an einem Kirschbaum vorbeigingen, faßte der Riese die Krone des Baums, wo die zeitigsten Früchte hingen, bog sie herab, gab sie dem Schneider in die Hand und hieß ihn essen. Das Schneiderlein aber war viel zu schwach, um den Baum zu halten, und als der Riese losließ, fuhr der Baum in die Höhe, und der Schneider ward mit in die Luft geschnellt. Als er wieder ohne Schaden herabgefallen war, sprach der Riese »was ist das, hast du nicht Kraft, die schwache Gerte zu halten?« »An der Kraft fehlt es nicht,« antwortete das Schneiderlein, »meinst du, das wäre etwas für einen, der siebene mit einem

Streich getroffen hat? ich bin über den Baum gesprungen, weil die Jäger da unten in das Gebüsch schießen. Spring nach, wenn dus vermagst.« Der Riese machte den Versuch, konnte aber nicht über den Baum kommen, sondern blieb in den Ästen hängen, also daß das Schneiderlein auch hier die Oberhand behielt.

Der Riese sprach »wenn du ein so tapferer Kerl bist, so komm mit in unsere Höhle und übernachte bei uns.« Das Schneiderlein war bereit und folgte ihm. Als sie in der Höhle anlangten, saßen da noch andere Riesen beim Feuer, und jeder hatte ein gebratenes Schaf in der Hand und aß davon. Das Schneiderlein sah sich um und dachte »es ist doch hier viel weitläuftiger als in meiner Werkstatt.« Der Riese wies ihm ein Bett an und sagte, er sollte sich hineinlegen und ausschlafen. Dem Schneiderlein war aber das Bett zu groß, er legte sich nicht hinein, sondern kroch in eine Ecke. Als es Mitternacht war und der Riese meinte, das Schneiderlein läge in tiefem Schlafe, so stand er auf, nahm eine große Eisenstange und schlug das Bett mit einem Schlag durch, und meinte, er hätte dem Grashüpfer den Garaus gemacht. Mit dem frühsten Morgen gingen die Riesen in den Wald und hatten das Schneiderlein ganz vergessen, da kam es auf einmal ganz lustig und verwegen dahergeschritten. Die Riesen erschraken, fürchteten, es schlüge sie alle tot, und liefen in einer Hast fort.

Das Schneiderlein zog weiter, immer seiner spitzen Nase nach. Nachdem es lange gewandert war, kam es in den Hof eines königlichen Palastes, und da es Müdigkeit empfand, so legte es sich ins Gras und schlief ein. Während es da lag, kamen die Leute, betrachteten es von allen Seiten und lasen auf dem Gürtel »siebene auf einen Streich.« »Ach,« sprachen sie, »was will der große Kriegsheld hier mitten im Frieden? Das muß ein mächtiger Herr sein.« Sie gingen und meldeten es dem König, und meinten, wenn Krieg ausbrechen sollte, wäre das ein wichtiger und nützlicher Mann, den man um keinen Preis fortlassen dürfte. Dem König gefiel der Rat, und er schickte einen von seinen Hofleuten an das Schneiderlein ab, der sollte ihm, wenn es aufgewacht wäre, Kriegsdienste anbieten. Der Abgesandte blieb bei dem Schläfer stehen, wartete, bis er seine Glieder streckte und die Augen aufschlug, und brachte dann seinen Antrag vor. »Eben deshalb bin ich hierher gekommen,« antwortete er, »ich bin bereit, in des Königs Dienste zu treten.« Also ward er ehrenvoll empfangen und ihm eine besondere Wohnung angewiesen.

Die Kriegsleute aber waren dem Schneiderlein aufgesessen und wünschten, es wäre tausend Meilen weit weg. »Was soll daraus werden?« sprachen sie untereinander, »wenn wir Zank mit ihm kriegen und er haut zu, so fallen auf jeden Streich siebene. Da kann unsereiner nicht bestehen.« Also faßten sie einen Entschluß, begaben sich allesamt zum König und baten um ihren Abschied. »Wir sind nicht gemacht,« sprachen sie, »neben einem Mann auszuhalten, der siebene auf einen Streich schlägt.« Der König war traurig, daß er um des einen willen alle seine treuen Diener verlieren sollte, wünschte, daß seine Augen ihn nie gesehen hätten, und wäre ihn gerne wieder los gewesen. Aber er getrauete sich nicht, ihm den Abschied zu geben, weil er fürchtete, er möchte ihn samt seinem Volke totschlagen und sich auf den königlichen Thron setzen. Er sann lange hin und her, endlich fand er einen Rat. Er schickte zu dem Schneiderlein und ließ ihm sagen, weil er ein so großer Kriegsheld wäre, so wollte er ihm ein Anerbieten machen. In einem Walde seines Landes hausten zwei Riesen, die mit Rauben, Morden, Sengen und Brennen großen Schaden stifteten, niemand dürfte sich ihnen nahen, ohne sich in Lebensgefahr zu setzen. Wenn er diese beiden Riesen überwände und tötete, so wollte er ihm seine einzige Tochter zur Gemahlin geben und das halbe Königreich zur Ehesteuer; auch sollten hundert Reiter mitziehen und ihm Beistand leisten. »Das wäre so etwas für einen Mann, wie du bist,« dachte das Schneiderlein, »eine schöne Königstochter und ein halbes Königreich wird einem nicht alle Tage angeboten.« »O ja,« gab er zur Antwort, »die Riesen will ich schon bändigen, und habe die hundert Reiter dabei nicht nötig: wer siebene auf einen Streich trifft, braucht sich vor zweien nicht zu fürchten.«

Das Schneiderlein zog aus, und die hundert Reiter folgten ihm. Als er zu dem Rand des Waldes kam, sprach er zu seinen Begleitern »bleibt hier nur halten, ich will schon allein mit den Riesen fertig werden.« Dann sprang er in den Wald hinein und schaute sich rechts und links um. Über ein Weilchen erblickte er beide Riesen: sie lagen unter einem Baume und schliefen und schnarchten dabei, daß sich die Äste auf- und niederbogen. Das Schneiderlein, nicht faul, las beide Taschen voll Steine und stieg damit auf den Baum. Als es in der Mitte war, rutschte es auf einen Ast, bis es gerade über die Schläfer zu sitzen kam, und ließ dem einen Riesen einen Stein nach dem andern auf die Brust fallen. Der Riese spürte lange nichts, doch endlich wachte er auf, stieß seinen Gesellen an und sprach »was schlägst du mich?« »Du träumst,« sagte der andere, »ich schlage dich nicht.« Sie legten sich wieder zum Schlaf, da warf der Schneider auf den zweiten einen Stein herab. »Was soll das?« rief der andere, »warum wirfst du mich?« »Ich werfe dich nicht,« antwortete der erste und brummte. Sie zankten sich eine Weile herum, doch weil sie müde waren, ließen sies gut sein, und die Augen fielen ihnen wieder zu. Das Schneiderlein fing sein Spiel von neuem an, suchte den dicksten Stein aus und warf ihn dem ersten Riesen mit aller Gewalt auf die Brust. »Das ist zu arg!« schrie er, sprang wie ein Unsinniger auf und stieß seinen Gesellen wider den Baum, daß dieser zitterte. Der andere zahlte mit gleicher Münze, und sie gerieten in solche Wut, daß sie Bäume ausrissen, aufeinander losschlugen, so lang, bis sie endlich beide zugleich tot auf die Erde fielen. Nun sprang das Schneiderlein herab. »Ein Glück nur,« sprach es, »daß sie den Baum, auf dem ich saß, nicht ausgerissen haben, sonst hätte ich wie ein Eichhörnchen auf einen andern springen müssen: doch unsereiner ist flüchtig!« Es zog sein Schwert und versetzte jedem ein paar tüchtige Hiebe in die Brust, dann ging es hinaus zu den Reitern und sprach »die Arbeit ist getan, ich habe beiden den Garaus gemacht: aber hart ist es hergegangen, sie haben in der Not Bäume ausgerissen und sich gewehrt, doch das hilft alles nichts, wenn einer kommt wie ich, der siebene auf einen Streich schlägt.« »Seid Ihr denn nicht verwundet?« fragten die

Reiter. »Das hat gute Wege,« antwortete der Schneider, »kein Haar haben sie mir gekrümmt.« Die Reiter wollten ihm keinen Glauben beimessen und ritten in den Wald hinein: da fanden sie die Riesen in ihrem Blute schwimmend, und ringsherum lagen die ausgerissenen Bäume.

Das Schneiderlein verlangte von dem König die versprochene Belohnung, den aber reute sein Versprechen und er sann aufs neue, wie er sich den Helden vom Halse schaffen könnte. »Ehe du meine Tochter und das halbe Reich erhältst,« sprach er zu ihm, »mußt du noch eine Heldentat vollbringen. In dem Walde läuft ein Einhorn, das großen Schaden anrichtet, das mußt du erst einfangen.« »Vor einem Einhorne fürchte ich mich noch weniger als vor zwei Riesen; siebene auf einen Streich, das ist meine Sache.« Er nahm sich einen Strick und eine Axt mit, ging hinaus in den Wald, und hieß abermals die, welche ihm zugeordnet waren, außen warten. Er brauchte nicht lange zu suchen, das Einhorn kam bald daher und sprang geradezu auf den Schneider los, als wollte es ihn ohne Umstände aufspießen. »Sachte, sachte,« sprach er, »so geschwind geht das nicht,« blieb stehen und wartete, bis das Tier ganz nahe war, dann sprang er behendiglich hinter den Baum. Das Einhorn rannte mit aller Kraft gegen den Baum und spießte sein Horn so fest in den Stamm, daß es nicht Kraft genug hatte, es wieder herauszuziehen, und so war es gefangen. »Jetzt hab ich das Vöglein,« sagte der Schneider, kam hinter dem Baum hervor, legte dem Einhorn den Strick erst um den Hals, dann hieb er mit der Axt das Horn aus dem Baum, und als alles in Ordnung war, führte er das Tier ab und brachte es dem König.

Der König wollte ihm den verheißenen Lohn noch nicht gewähren, und machte eine dritte Forderung. Der Schneider sollte ihm vor der Hochzeit erst ein Wildschwein fangen, das in dem Wald großen Schaden tat; die Jäger sollten ihm Beistand leisten. »Gerne,« sprach der Schneider, »das ist ein Kinderspiel.« Die Jäger nahm er nicht mit in den Wald, und sie warens wohl zufrieden, denn das Wildschwein hatte sie schon mehrmals so empfangen, daß sie keine Lust hatten, ihm nachzustellen. Als das Schwein den Schneider erblickte, lief es mit schäumendem Munde und wetzenden Zähnen auf ihn zu und wollte ihn zur Erde werfen: der flüchtige Held aber sprang in eine Kapelle, die in der Nähe war, und gleich oben zum Fenster in einem Satze wieder hinaus. Das Schwein war hinter ihm hergelaufen, er aber hüpfte außen herum und schlug die Türe hinter ihm zu; da war das wütende Tier gefangen, das viel zu schwer und unbehilflich war, um zu dem Fenster hinauszuspringen. Das Schneiderlein rief die Jäger herbei, die mußten den Gefangenen mit eigenen Augen sehen: der Held aber begab sich zum Könige, der nun, er mochte wollen oder nicht, sein Versprechen halten mußte und ihm seine Tochter und das halbe Königreich übergab. Hätte er gewußt, daß kein Kriegsheld, sondern ein Schneiderlein vor ihm stand, es wäre ihm noch mehr zu Herzen gegangen. Die Hochzeit ward also mit großer Pracht und kleiner Freude gehalten, und aus einem Schneider ein König gemacht.

Nach einiger Zeit hörte die junge Königin in der Nacht, wie ihr Gemahl im Traume sprach »Junge, mach mir den Wams und flick mir die Hosen, oder ich will dir die Elle über die Ohren schlagen.« Da merkte sie, in welcher Gasse der junge Herr geboren war, klagte am andern Morgen ihrem Vater ihr Leid und bat, er möchte ihr von dem Manne helfen, der nichts anders als ein Schneider wäre. Der König sprach ihr Trost zu und sagte »laß in der nächsten Nacht deine Schlafkammer offen, meine Diener sollen außen stehen und, wenn er eingeschlafen ist, hineingehen, ihn binden und auf ein Schiff tragen, das ihn in die weite Welt führt.« Die Frau war damit zufrieden, des Königs Waffenträger aber, der alles mit angehört hatte, war dem jungen Herrn gewogen und hinterbrachte ihm den ganzen Anschlag. »Dem Ding will ich einen Riegel vorschieben,« sagte das Schneiderlein. Abends legte es sich zu gewöhnlicher Zeit mit seiner Frau zu Bett: als sie glaubte, er sei eingeschlafen, stand sie auf, öffnete die Türe und legte sich wieder. Das Schneiderlein, das sich nur stellte, als wenn es schlief, fing an mit heller Stimme zu rufen »Junge, mach den Wams und flick mir die Hosen, oder ich will dir die Elle über die Ohren schlagen! ich habe siebene mit einem Streiche getroffen, zwei Riesen getötet, ein Einhorn fortgeführt und ein Wildschwein gefangen, und sollte mich vor denen fürchten, die draußen vor der Kammer stehen!« Als diese den Schneider so sprechen hörten, überkam sie eine große Furcht, sie liefen, als wenn das wilde Heer hinter ihnen wäre, und keiner wollte sich mehr an ihn wagen. Also war und blieb das Schneiderlein sein Lebtag König.

21. Aschenputtel.

Einem reichen Manne, dem wurde seine Frau krank, und als sie fühlte, daß ihr Ende herankam, rief sie ihr einziges Töchterlein zu sich ans Bett und sprach »liebes Kind, bleibe fromm und gut, so wird dir der liebe Gott immer beistehen, und ich will vom Himmel auf dich herabblicken, und will um dich sein.« Darauf tat sie die Augen zu und verschied. Das Mädchen ging jeden Tag hinaus zu dem Grabe der Mutter und weinte, und blieb fromm und gut. Als der Winter kam, deckte der Schnee ein weißes Tüchlein auf das Grab, und als die Sonne im Frühjahr es wieder herabgezogen hatte, nahm sich der Mann eine andere Frau.

Die Frau hatte zwei Töchter mit ins Haus gebracht, die schön und weiß von Angesicht waren, aber garstig und schwarz von Herzen. Da ging eine schlimme Zeit für das arme Stiefkind an. »Soll die dumme Gans bei uns in der Stube sitzen!« sprachen sie, »wer Brot essen will, muß es verdienen: hinaus mit der Küchenmagd.« Sie nahmen ihm seine schönen Kleider weg, zogen ihm einen grauen alten Kittel an, und gaben ihm hölzerne Schuhe. »Seht einmal die stolze Prinzessin, wie sie geputzt ist!« riefen sie, lachten und führten es in die Küche. Da mußte es von Morgen bis Abend schwere Arbeit tun, früh vor Tag aufstehn, Wasser tragen, Feuer anmachen, kochen und waschen. Obendrein taten ihm die Schwestern alles ersinnliche Herzeleid an, verspotteten es und schütteten ihm die Erbsen und Linsen in die Asche, so daß es sitzen und sie wieder auslesen mußte. Abends, wenn es sich müde gearbeitet hatte, kam es in kein Bett, sondern mußte sich neben den Herd in die Asche legen. Und weil es darum immer staubig und schmutzig aussah, nannten sie es Aschenputtel.

Es trug sich zu, daß der Vater einmal in die Messe ziehen wollte, da fragte er die beiden Stieftöchter, was er ihnen mitbringen sollte. »Schöne Kleider,« sagte die eine, »Perlen und Edelsteine,« die zweite. »Aber du, Aschenputtel,« sprach er, »was willst du haben?« »Vater, das erste Reis, das Euch auf Eurem Heimweg an den Hut stößt, das brecht für mich ab.« Er kaufte nun für die beiden Stiefschwestern schöne Kleider, Perlen und Edelsteine, und auf dem Rückweg, als er durch einen grünen Busch ritt, streifte ihn ein Haselreis und stieß ihm den Hut ab. Da brach er das Reis ab und nahm es mit. Als er nach Haus kam, gab er den Stieftöchtern, was sie sich gewünscht hatten, und dem Aschenputtel gab er das Reis von dem Haselbusch. Aschenputtel dankte ihm, ging zu seiner Mutter Grab und pflanzte das Reis darauf, und weinte so sehr, daß die Tränen darauf niederfielen und es begossen. Es wuchs aber, und ward ein schöner Baum. Aschenputtel ging alle Tage dreimal darunter, weinte und betete, und allemal kam ein weißes Vöglein auf den Baum, und wenn es einen Wunsch aussprach, so warf ihm das Vöglein herab, was es sich gewünscht hatte.

Es begab sich aber, daß der König ein Fest anstellte, das drei Tage dauern sollte, und wozu alle schönen Jungfrauen im Lande eingeladen wurden, damit sich sein Sohn eine Braut aussuchen möchte. Die zwei

Stiefschwestern, als sie hörten, daß sie auch dabei erscheinen sollten, waren guter Dinge, riefen Aschenputtel und sprachen »kämm uns die Haare, bürste uns die Schuhe und mache uns die Schnallen fest, wir gehen zur Hochzeit auf des Königs Schloß.« Aschenputtel gehorchte, weinte aber, weil es auch gern zum Tanz mitgegangen wäre, und bat die Stiefmutter, sie möchte es ihm erlauben. »Du Aschenputtel,« sprach sie, »bist voll Staub und Schmutz, und willst zur Hochzeit? du hast keine Kleider und Schuhe, und willst tanzen!« Als es aber mit Bitten anhielt, sprach sie endlich »da habe ich dir eine Schüssel Linsen in die Asche geschüttet, wenn du die Linsen in zwei Stunden wieder ausgelesen hast, so sollst du mitgehen.« Das Mädchen ging durch die Hintertür nach dem Garten und rief »ihr zahmen Täubchen, ihr Turteltäubchen, all ihr Vöglein unter dem Himmel, kommt und helft mir lesen,

die guten ins Töpfchen,
die schlechten ins Kröpfchen.«

Da kamen zum Küchenfenster zwei weiße Täubchen herein, und danach die Turteltäubchen, und endlich schwirrten und schwärmten alle Vöglein unter dem Himmel herein und ließen sich um die Asche nieder. Und die Täubchen nickten mit den Köpfchen und fingen an pick, pick, pick, pick, und da fingen die übrigen auch an pick, pick, pick, pick, und lasen alle guten Körnlein in die Schüssel. Kaum war eine Stunde herum, so waren sie schon fertig und flogen alle wieder hinaus. Da brachte das Mädchen die Schüssel der Stiefmutter, freute sich und glaubte, es dürfte nun mit auf die Hochzeit gehen. Aber sie sprach »nein, Aschenputtel, du hast keine Kleider, und kannst nicht tanzen: du wirst nur ausgelacht.« Als es nun weinte, sprach sie »wenn du mir zwei Schüsseln voll Linsen in einer Stunde aus der Asche rein lesen kannst, so sollst du mitgehen,« und dachte »das kann es ja nimmermehr.« Als sie die zwei Schüsseln Linsen in die Asche geschüttet hatte, ging das Mädchen durch die Hintertür nach dem Garten und rief »ihr zahmen Täubchen, ihr Turteltäubchen, all ihr Vöglein unter dem Himmel, kommt und helft mir lesen,
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Als nun niemand mehr daheim war, ging Aschenputtel zu seiner Mutter Grab unter den Haselbaum und rief

»Bäumchen, rüttel dich und schüttel dich,
wirf Gold und Silber über mich.«

Da warf ihm der Vogel ein golden und silbern Kleid herunter und mit Seide und Silber ausgestickte Pantoffeln. In aller Eile zog es das Kleid an und ging zur Hochzeit. Seine Schwestern aber und die Stiefmutter kannten es nicht und meinten, es müsse eine fremde Königstochter sein, so schön sah es in dem goldenen Kleide aus. An Aschenputtel dachten sie gar nicht und dachten, es säße daheim im Schmutz und suchte die Linsen aus der Asche. Der Königssohn kam ihm entgegen, nahm es bei der Hand und tanzte mit ihm. Er wollte auch sonst mit niemand tanzen, also daß er ihm die Hand nicht losließ, und wenn ein anderer kam, es aufzufordern, sprach er »das ist meine Tänzerin.«

Es tanzte, bis es Abend war, da wollte es nach Haus gehen. Der Königssohn aber sprach »ich gehe mit und begleite dich,« denn er wollte sehen, wem das schöne Mädchen angehörte. Sie entwischte ihm aber und sprang in das Taubenhaus. Nun wartete der Königssohn, bis der Vater kam, und sagte ihm, das fremde Mädchen wär in das Taubenhaus gesprungen. Der Alte dachte »sollte es Aschenputtel sein?« und sie mußten ihm Axt und Hacken bringen, damit er das Taubenhaus entzweischlagen konnte: aber es war niemand darin. Und als sie ins Haus kamen, lag Aschenputtel in seinen schmutzigen Kleidern in der Asche, und ein trübes Öllämpchen brannte im Schornstein; denn Aschenputtel war geschwind aus dem Taubenhaus hinten herabgesprungen, und war zu dem Haselbäumchen gelaufen: da hatte es die schönen Kleider abgezogen und aufs Grab gelegt, und der Vogel hatte sie wieder weggenommen, und dann hatte es sich in seinem grauen Kittelchen in die Küche zur Asche gesetzt.

Am andern Tag, als das Fest von neuem anhub, und die Eltern und Stiefschwestern wieder fort waren, ging Aschenputtel zu dem Haselbaum und sprach

»Bäumchen, rüttel dich und schüttel dich,
wirf Gold und Silber über mich.«

Da warf der Vogel ein noch viel stolzeres Kleid herab als am vorigen Tag. Und als es mit diesem Kleide auf der Hochzeit erschien, erstaunte jedermann über seine Schönheit. Der Königssohn aber hatte gewartet, bis es kam, nahm es gleich bei der Hand und tanzte nur allein mit ihm. Wenn die andern kamen und es aufforderten, sprach er »das ist meine Tänzerin.« Als es nun Abend war, wollte es fort, und der Königssohn ging ihm nach und wollte sehen, in welches Haus es ging: aber es sprang ihm fort und in den Garten hinter dem Haus. Darin stand ein schöner großer Baum, an dem die herrlichsten Birnen hingen, es kletterte so behend wie ein Eichhörnchen zwischen die Äste, und der Königssohn wußte nicht, wo es hingekommen war. Er wartete aber, bis der Vater kam, und sprach zu ihm »das fremde Mädchen ist mir entwischt, und ich glaube, es ist auf den Birnbaum gesprungen.« Der Vater dachte »sollte es Aschenputtel sein?« ließ sich die Axt holen und hieb den Baum um, aber es war niemand darauf. Und als sie in die Küche kamen, lag Aschenputtel da in der Asche, wie sonst auch, denn es war auf der andern Seite vom Baum herabgesprungen, hatte dem Vogel auf dem Haselbäumchen die schönen Kleider wiedergebracht und sein graues Kittelchen angezogen.

Am dritten Tag, als die Eltern und Schwestern fort waren, ging Aschenputtel wieder zu seiner Mutter Grab und sprach zu dem Bäumchen

»Bäumchen, rüttel dich und schüttel dich,
wirf Gold und Silber über mich.«

Nun warf ihm der Vogel ein Kleid herab, das war so prächtig und glänzend, wie es noch keins gehabt hatte, und die Pantoffeln waren ganz golden. Als es in dem Kleid zu der Hochzeit kam, wußten sie alle nicht, was sie vor Verwunderung sagen sollten. Der Königssohn tanzte ganz allein mit ihm, und wenn es einer aufforderte, sprach er »das ist meine Tänzerin.«

Als es nun Abend war, wollte Aschenputtel fort, und der Königssohn wollte es begleiten, aber es entsprang ihm so geschwind, daß er nicht folgen konnte. Der Königssohn hatte aber eine List gebraucht, und hatte die ganze Treppe mit Pech bestreichen lassen: da war, als es hinabsprang, der linke Pantoffel des Mädchens hängen geblieben. Der Königssohn hob ihn auf, und er war klein und zierlich und ganz golden. Am nächsten Morgen ging er damit zu dem Mann und sagte zu ihm »keine andere soll meine Gemahlin werden als die, an deren Fuß dieser goldene Schuh paßt.« Da freuten sich die beiden Schwestern, denn sie hatten schöne Füße. Die älteste ging mit dem Schuh in die Kammer und wollte ihn anprobieren, und die Mutter stand dabei. Aber sie konnte mit der großen Zehe nicht hineinkommen, und der Schuh war ihr zu klein, da reichte ihr die Mutter ein Messer und sprach »hau die Zehe ab: wann du Königin bist, so brauchst du nicht mehr zu Fuß zu gehen.« Das Mädchen hieb die Zehe ab, zwängte den Fuß in den Schuh, verbiß den Schmerz und ging heraus zum Königssohn. Da nahm er sie als seine Braut aufs Pferd und ritt mit ihr fort. Sie mußten aber an dem Grabe vorbei, da saßen die zwei Täubchen auf dem Haselbäumchen und riefen

»rucke di guck, rucke di guck,
Blut ist im Schuck (Schuh):
Der Schuck ist zu klein,
die rechte Braut sitzt noch daheim.«

Da blickte er auf ihren Fuß und sah, wie das Blut herausquoll. Er wendete sein Pferd um, brachte die falsche Braut wieder nach Hause und sagte, das wäre nicht die rechte, die andere Schwester solle den Schuh anziehen. Da ging diese in die Kammer und kam mit den Zehen glücklich in den Schuh, aber die Ferse war zu groß. Da reichte ihr die Mutter ein Messer und sprach »hau ein Stück von der Ferse ab: wann du Königin bist, brauchst du nicht mehr zu Fuß zu gehen.« Das Mädchen hieb ein Stück von der Ferse ab, zwängte den Fuß in den Schuh, verbiß den Schmerz und ging heraus zum Königssohn. Da nahm er sie als seine Braut aufs Pferd und ritt mit ihr fort. Als sie an dem Haselbäumchen vorbeikamen, saßen die zwei Täubchen darauf und riefen

»rucke di guck, rucke di guck,
Blut ist im Schuck (Schuh):
Der Schuck ist zu klein,
die rechte Braut sitzt noch daheim.«

Er blickte nieder auf ihren Fuß und sah, wie das Blut aus dem Schuh quoll und an den weißen Strümpfen ganz rot heraufgestiegen war. Da wendete er sein Pferd und brachte die falsche Braut wieder nach Haus. »Das ist auch nicht die rechte,« sprach er, »habt ihr keine andere Tochter?« »Nein,« sagte der Mann, »nur von meiner verstorbenen Frau ist noch ein kleines verbuttetes Aschenputtel da: das kann unmöglich die Braut sein.« Der Königssohn sprach, er sollte es heraufschicken, die Mutter aber antwortete »ach nein, das ist viel zu schmutzig, das darf sich nicht sehen lassen.« Er wollte es aber durchaus haben, und Aschenputtel mußte gerufen werden. Da wusch es sich erst Hände und Angesicht rein, ging dann hin und neigte sich vor dem Königssohn, der ihm den goldenen Schuh reichte. Dann setzte es sich auf einen Schemel, zog den Fuß aus dem schweren Holzschuh und steckte ihn in den Pantoffel, der war wie angegossen. Und als es sich in die Höhe richtete und der König ihm ins Gesicht sah, so erkannte er das schöne Mädchen, das mit ihm getanzt hatte, und rief »das ist die rechte Braut.« Die Stiefmutter und die beiden Schwestern erschraken und wurden bleich vor Ärger: er aber nahm Aschenputtel aufs Pferd und ritt mit ihm fort. Als sie an dem Haselbäumchen vorbeikamen, riefen die zwei weißen Täubchen

»rucke di guck, rucke di guck,
kein Blut im Schuck:
Der Schuck ist nicht zu klein,
die rechte Braut, die führt er heim.«

Und als sie das gerufen hatten, kamen sie beide herabgeflogen und setzten sich dem Aschenputtel auf die Schultern, eine rechts, die andere links, und blieben da sitzen.

Als die Hochzeit mit dem Königssohn sollte gehalten werden, kamen die falschen Schwestern, wollten sich einschmeicheln und teil an seinem Glück nehmen. Als die Brautleute nun zur Kirche gingen, war die älteste zur rechten, die jüngste zur linken Seite: da pickten die Tauben einer jeden das eine Auge aus. Hernach, als sie herausgingen, war die älteste zur linken und die jüngste zur rechten: da pickten die Tauben einer jeden das andere Auge aus. Und waren sie also für ihre Bosheit und Falschheit mit Blindheit auf ihr Lebtag bestraft.

22. Das Rätsel.

Es war einmal ein Königssohn, der bekam Lust, in der Welt umherzuziehen, und nahm niemand mit als einen treuen Diener. Eines Tags geriet er in einen großen Wald, und als der Abend kam, konnte er keine Herberge finden und wußte nicht, wo er die Nacht zubringen sollte. Da sah er ein Mädchen, das nach einem kleinen Häuschen zuging, und als er näher kam, sah er, daß das Mädchen jung und schön war. Er redete es an und sprach »liebes Kind, kann ich und mein Diener in dem Häuschen für die Nacht ein Unterkommen finden?« »Ach ja,« sagte das Mädchen mit trauriger Stimme, »das könnt ihr wohl, aber ich rate euch nicht dazu; geht nicht hinein.« »Warum soll ich nicht?« fragte der Königssohn. Das Mädchen seufzte und sprach »meine Stiefmutter treibt böse Künste, sie meints nicht gut mit den Fremden.« Da merkte er wohl, daß er zu dem Hause einer Hexe gekommen war, doch weil es finster ward und er nicht weiter konnte, sich auch nicht fürchtete, so trat er ein. Die Alte saß auf einem Lehnstuhl beim Feuer und sah mit ihren roten Augen die Fremden an. »Guten Abend,« schnarrte sie und tat ganz freundlich, »laßt euch nieder und ruht euch aus.« Sie blies die Kohlen an, bei welchen sie in einem kleinen Topf etwas kochte. Die Tochter warnte die beiden, vorsichtig zu sein, nichts zu essen und nichts zu trinken, denn die Alte braue böse Getränke. Sie schliefen ruhig bis zum frühen Morgen. Als sie sich zur Abreise fertig machten und der Königssohn schon zu Pferde saß, sprach die Alte »warte einen Augenblick, ich will euch erst einen Abschiedstrank reichen.« Während sie ihn holte, ritt der Königssohn fort, und der Diener, der seinen Sattel festschnallen mußte, war allein noch zugegen, als die böse Hexe mit dem Trank kam. »Das bring deinem Herrn,« sagte sie, aber in dem Augenblick sprang das Glas, und das Gift spritzte auf das Pferd, und war so heftig, daß das Tier gleich tot hinstürzte. Der Diener lief seinem Herrn nach und erzählte ihm, was geschehen war, wollte aber den Sattel nicht im Stich lassen und lief zurück, um ihn zu holen. Wie er aber zu dem toten Pferde kam, saß schon ein Rabe darauf und fraß davon. »Wer weiß, ob wir heute noch etwas Besseres finden,« sagte der Diener, tötete den Raben und nahm ihn mit. Nun zogen sie in dem Walde den ganzen Tag weiter, konnten aber nicht herauskommen. Bei Anbruch der Nacht fanden sie ein Wirtshaus und gingen hinein. Der Diener gab dem Wirt den Raben, den er zum Abendessen bereiten sollte. Sie waren aber in eine Mördergrube geraten, und in der Dunkelheit kamen zwölf Mörder und wollten die Fremden umbringen und berauben. Ehe sie sich aber ans Werk machten, setzten sie sich zu Tisch, und der Wirt und die Hexe setzten sich zu ihnen, und sie aßen zusammen eine Schüssel mit Suppe, in die das Fleisch des Raben gehackt war. Kaum aber hatten sie ein paar Bissen hinuntergeschluckt, so fielen sie alle tot nieder, denn dem Raben hatte sich das Gift von dem Pferdefleisch mitgeteilt. Es war nun niemand mehr im Hause übrig als die Tochter des Wirts, die es redlich meinte und an den gottlosen Dingen keinen Teil genommen hatte. Sie öffnete dem Fremden alle

Türen und zeigte ihm die angehäuften Schätze. Der Königssohn aber sagte, sie möchte alles behalten, er wollte nichts davon, und ritt mit seinem Diener weiter.

Nachdem sie lange herumgezogen waren, kamen sie in eine Stadt, worin eine schöne, aber übermütige Königstochter war, die hatte bekanntmachen lassen, wer ihr ein Rätsel vorlegte, das sie nicht erraten könnte, der sollte ihr Gemahl werden: erriete sie es aber, so müßte er sich das Haupt abschlagen lassen. Drei Tage hatte sie Zeit, sich zu besinnen, sie war aber so klug, daß sie immer die vorgelegten Rätsel vor der bestimmten Zeit erriet. Schon waren neune auf diese Weise umgekommen, als der Königssohn anlangte und, von ihrer großen Schönheit geblendet, sein Leben daransetzen wollte. Da trat er vor sie hin und gab ihr sein Rätsel auf, »was ist das,« sagte er, »einer schlug keinen und schlug doch zwölfe.« Sie wußte nicht, was das war, sie sann und sann, aber sie brachte es nicht heraus: sie schlug ihre Rätselbücher auf, aber es stand nicht darin: kurz, ihre Weisheit war zu Ende. Da sie sich nicht zu helfen wußte, befahl sie ihrer Magd, in das Schlafgemach des Herrn zu schleichen, da sollte sie seine Träume behorchen, und dachte, er rede vielleicht im Schlaf und verrate das Rätsel. Aber der kluge Diener hatte sich statt des Herrn ins Bett gelegt, und als die Magd herankam, riß er ihr den Mantel ab, in den sie sich verhüllt hatte, und jagte sie mit Ruten hinaus. In der zweiten Nacht schickte die Königstochter ihre Kammerjungfer, die sollte sehen, ob es ihr mit Horchen besser glückte, aber der Diener nahm auch ihr den Mantel weg und jagte sie mit Ruten hinaus. Nun glaubte der Herr für die dritte Nacht sicher zu sein und legte sich in sein Bett, da kam die Königstochter selbst, hatte einen nebelgrauen Mantel umgetan und setzte sich neben ihn. Und als sie dachte, er schliefe und träumte, so redete sie ihn an und hoffte, er werde im Traume antworten, wie viele tun: aber er war wach und verstand und hörte alles sehr wohl. Da fragte sie »einer schlug keinen, was ist das?« Er antwortete »ein Rabe, der von einem toten und vergifteten Pferde fraß und davon starb.« Weiter fragte sie »und schlug doch zwölfe, was ist das?« »Das sind zwölf Mörder, die den Raben verzehrten und daran starben.« Als sie das Rätsel wußte, wollte sie sich fortschleichen, aber er hielt ihren Mantel fest, daß sie ihn zurücklassen mußte. Am andern Morgen verkündigte die Königstochter, sie habe das Rätsel erraten, und ließ die zwölf Richter kommen und löste es vor ihnen. Aber der Jüngling bat sich Gehör aus und sagte »sie ist in der Nacht zu mir geschlichen und hat mich ausgefragt, denn sonst hätte sie es nicht erraten.« Die Richter sprachen »bringt uns ein Wahrzeichen.« Da wurden die drei Mäntel von dem Diener herbeigebracht, und als die Richter den nebelgrauen erblickten, den die Königstochter zu tragen pflegte, so sagten sie »laßt den Mantel sticken mit Gold und Silber, so wirds Euer Hochzeitsmantel sein.«

23. Von dem Mäuschen, Vögelchen und der Bratwurst.

Es waren einmal ein Mäuschen, ein Vögelchen und eine Bratwurst in Gesellschaft geraten, hatten einen Haushalt geführt, lange wohl und köstlich im Frieden gelebt, und trefflich an Gütern zugenommen. Des Vögelchens Arbeit war, daß es täglich im Wald fliegen und Holz beibringen müßte. Die Maus sollte Wasser tragen, Feuer anmachen und den Tisch decken, die Bratwurst aber sollte kochen.

Wem zu wohl ist, den gelüstet immer nach neuen Dingen! Also eines Tages stieß dem Vöglein unterwegs ein anderer Vogel auf, dem es seine treffliche Gelegenheit erzählte und rühmte. Derselbe andere Vogel schalt es aber einen armen Tropf, der große Arbeit, die beiden zu Haus aber gute Tage hätten. Denn, wenn die Maus ihr Feuer angemacht und Wasser getragen hatte, so begab sie sich in ihr Kämmerlein zur Ruhe, bis man sie hieß den Tisch decken. Das Würstlein blieb beim Hafen, sah zu, daß die Speise wohl kochte, und wenn es bald Essenszeit war, schlingte es sich ein mal viere durch den Brei oder das Gemüs, so war es geschmalzen, gesalzen und bereitet. Kam dann das Vöglein heim und legte seine Bürde ab, so saßen sie zu Tisch, und nach gehabtem Mahl schliefen sie sich die Haut voll bis an den andern Morgen; und das war ein herrlich Leben.

Das Vöglein anderes Tages wollte aus Anstiftung nicht mehr ins Holz, sprechend, es wäre lang genug Knecht gewesen, und hätte gleichsam ihr Narr sein müssen, sie sollten einmal umwechseln und es auf eine andere Weise auch versuchen. Und wiewohl die Maus und auch die Bratwurst heftig dafür bat, so war der Vogel doch Meister: es mußte gewagt sein, spieleten derowegen, und kam das Los auf die Bratwurst, die mußte Holz tragen, die Maus ward Koch, und der Vogel sollte Wasser holen.

Was geschieht? das Bratwürstchen zog fort gen Holz, das Vöglein machte Feuer an, die Maus stellte den Topf zu, und erwarteten allein, bis Bratwürstchen heim käme und Holz für den andern Tag brächte. Es blieb aber das Würstlein so lang unterwegs, daß ihnen beiden nichts Gutes vorkam, und das Vöglein ein Stück Luft hinaus entgegenflog. Unfern aber findet es einen Hund am Weg, der das arme Bratwürstlein als freie Beut angetroffen, angepackt und niedergemacht. Das Vöglein beschwerte sich auch dessen als eines offenbaren Raubes sehr gegen den Hund, aber es half kein Wort, denn, sprach der Hund, er hätte falsche Briefe bei der Bratwurst gefunden, deswegen wäre sie ihm des Lebens verfallen gewesen.

Das Vöglein, traurig, nahm das Holz auf sich, flog heim und erzählte, was es gesehn und gehöret. Sie waren sehr betrübt, verglichen sich aber, das Beste zu tun und beisammen zu bleiben. Derowegen so deckte das Vöglein den Tisch und die Maus rüstete das Essen und wollte anrichten, und in den Hafen, wie zuvor das Würstlein, durch das Gemüs schlingen und schlupfen, dasselbe zu schmälzen: aber ehe sie in die Mitte kam, ward sie angehalten und mußte Haut und Haar und dabei das Leben lassen.

Als das Vöglein kam und wollte das Essen auftragen, da war kein Koch vorhanden. Das Vöglein warf bestürzt das Holz hin und her, rufte und suchte, konnte aber seinen Koch nicht mehr finden. Aus Unachtsamkeit kam das Feuer in das Holz, also daß eine Brunst entstand; das Vöglein eilte, Wasser zu langen, da entfiel ihm der Eimer in den Brunnen, und es mit hinab, daß es sich nicht mehr erholen konnte und da ersaufen mußte.

24. Frau Holle.

Eine Witwe hatte zwei Töchter, davon war die eine schön und fleißig, die andere häßlich und faul. Sie hatte aber die häßliche und faule, weil sie ihre rechte Tochter war, viel lieber, und die andere mußte alle Arbeit tun und der Aschenputtel im Hause sein. Das arme Mädchen mußte sich täglich auf die große Straße bei einem Brunnen setzen, und mußte so viel spinnen, daß ihm das Blut aus den Fingern sprang. Nun trug es sich zu, daß die Spule einmal ganz blutig war, da bückte es sich damit in den Brunnen und wollte sie abwaschen: sie sprang ihm aber aus der Hand und fiel hinab. Es weinte, lief zur Stiefmutter und erzählte ihr das Unglück. Sie schalt es aber so heftig und war so unbarmherzig, daß sie sprach »hast du die Spule hinunterfallen lassen, so hol sie auch wieder herauf.« Da ging das Mädchen zu dem Brunnen zurück und wußte nicht, was es anfangen sollte: und in seiner Herzensangst sprang es in den Brunnen hinein, um die Spule zu holen. Es verlor die Besinnung, und als es erwachte und wieder zu sich selber kam, war es auf einer schönen Wiese, wo die Sonne schien und viel tausend Blumen standen. Auf dieser Wiese ging es fort und kam zu einem Backofen, der war voller Brot; das Brot aber rief »ach, zieh mich raus, zieh mich raus, sonst verbrenn ich: ich bin schon längst ausgebacken.« Da trat es herzu, und holte mit dem Brotschieber alles nacheinander heraus. Danach ging es weiter und kam zu einem Baum, der hing voll Äpfel und rief ihm zu »ach schüttel mich, schüttel mich, wir Äpfel sind alle miteinander reif.« Da schüttelte es den Baum, daß die Äpfel fielen, als regneten sie, und schüttelte, bis keiner mehr oben war; und als es alle in einen Haufen zusammengelegt hatte, ging es wieder weiter. Endlich kam es zu einem kleinen Haus, daraus guckte eine alte Frau, weil sie aber so große Zähne hatte, ward ihm angst, und es wollte fortlaufen. Die alte Frau aber rief ihm nach »was fürchtest du dich, liebes Kind? bleib bei mir, wenn du alle Arbeit im Hause ordentlich tun willst, so soll dirs gut gehn. Du mußt nur acht geben, daß du mein Bett gut machst und es fleißig aufschüttelst, daß die Federn fliegen, dann schneit es in der Welt; ich bin die Frau Holle.« Weil die Alte ihm so gut zusprach, so faßte sich das Mädchen ein Herz, willigte ein und begab sich in ihren Dienst. Es besorgte auch alles nach ihrer Zufriedenheit, und schüttelte ihr das Bett immer gewaltig auf, daß die Federn wie Schneeflocken umherflogen; dafür hatte es auch ein gut Leben bei ihr, kein böses Wort, und alle Tage Gesottenes und Gebratenes. Nun war es eine Zeitlang bei der Frau Holle, da ward es traurig und wußte anfangs selbst nicht, was ihm fehlte, endlich merkte es, daß es Heimweh war; ob es ihm hier gleich viel tausendmal besser ging als zu Hause, so hatte es doch ein Verlangen dahin. Endlich sagte es zu ihr »ich habe den Jammer nach Haus kriegt, und wenn es mir auch noch so gut hier unten geht, so kann ich doch nicht länger bleiben, ich muß wieder hinauf zu den Meinigen.« Die Frau Holle sagte »es gefällt mir, daß du wieder nach Hause verlangst, und weil du mir so treu gedient hast, so will ich dich selbst wieder hinaufbringen.« Sie nahm es darauf bei der Hand und führte es vor ein großes Tor. Das Tor ward aufgetan, und wie das Mädchen gerade darunter stand, fiel ein gewaltiger Goldregen, und alles Gold blieb an ihm hängen, so daß es über und über davon bedeckt war. »Das sollst du haben, weil du so fleißig gewesen bist,« sprach die Frau Holle und gab ihm auch die Spule wieder, die ihm in den Brunnen gefallen war. Darauf ward das Tor verschlossen, und das Mädchen befand sich oben auf der Welt, nicht weit von seiner Mutter Haus: und als es in den Hof kam, saß der Hahn auf dem Brunnen und rief:

»kikeriki,
unsere goldene Jungfrau ist wieder hie.«

Da ging es hinein zu seiner Mutter, und weil es so mit Gold bedeckt ankam, ward es von ihr und der Schwester gut aufgenommen. Das Mädchen erzählte alles, was ihm begegnet war, und als die Mutter hörte, wie es zu dem großen Reichtum gekommen war, wollte sie der andern häßlichen und faulen Tochter gerne dasselbe Glück verschaffen. Sie mußte sich an den Brunnen setzen und spinnen; und damit ihre Spule blutig ward, stach sie sich in die Finger und stieß sich die Hand in die Dornhecke. Dann warf sie die Spule in den Brunnen und sprang selber hinein. Sie kam, wie die andere, auf die schöne Wiese und ging auf demselben Pfade weiter. Als sie zu dem Backofen gelangte, schrie das Brot wieder »ach zieh mich raus, zieh mich raus, sonst verbrenn ich, ich bin schon längst ausgebacken.« Die Faule aber antwortete »da hätt ich Lust, mich schmutzig zu machen,« und ging fort. Bald kam sie zu dem Apfelbaum, der rief »ach schüttel mich, schüttel mich, wir Äpfel sind alle miteinander reif.« Sie antwortete aber »du kommst mir recht, es könnte mir einer auf den Kopf fallen,« und ging damit weiter. Als sie vor der Frau Holle Haus kam, fürchtete sie sich nicht, weil sie von ihren großen Zähnen schon gehört hatte, und verdingte sich gleich zu ihr. Am ersten Tag tat sie sich Gewalt an, war fleißig und folgte der Frau Holle, wenn sie ihr etwas sagte, denn sie dachte an das viele Gold, das sie ihr schenken würde; am zweiten Tag aber fing sie schon an zu faulenzen, am dritten noch mehr, da woll te sie morgens gar nicht aufstehen. Sie machte auch der Frau Holle das Bett nicht, wie sichs gebührte, und schüttelte es nicht, daß die Federn aufflogen. Das ward die Frau Holle bald müde und sagte ihr den Dienst auf. Die Faule war das wohl zufrieden und meinte, nun würde der Goldregen kommen; die Frau Holle führte sie auch zu dem Tor, als sie aber darunter stand, ward statt des Goldes ein großer Kessel voll Pech ausgeschüttet. »Das ist zur Belohnung deiner Dienste,« sagte die Frau Holle und schloß das Tor zu. Da kam die Faule heim, aber sie war ganz mit Pech bedeckt, und der Hahn auf dem Brunnen, als er sie sah, rief

»kikeriki,
unsere schmutzige Jungfrau ist wieder hie.«

Das Pech aber blieb fest an ihr hängen und wollte, solange sie lebte, nicht abgehen.

25. Die sieben Raben.

Ein Mann hatte sieben Söhne und immer noch kein Töchterchen, so sehr er sichs auch wünschte; endlich gab ihm seine Frau wieder gute Hoffnung zu einem Kinde, und wies zur Welt kam, war es auch ein Mädchen. Die Freude war groß, aber das Kind war schmächtig und klein, und sollte wegen seiner Schwachheit die Nottaufe haben. Der Vater schickte einen der Knaben eilends zur Quelle, Taufwasser zu holen: die andern sechs liefen mit, und weil jeder der erste beim Schöpfen sein wollte, so fiel ihnen der Krug in den Brunnen. Da standen sie und wußten nicht, was sie tun sollten, und keiner getraute sich heim. Als sie immer nicht zurückkamen, ward der Vater ungeduldig und sprach »gewiß haben sies wieder über ein Spiel vergessen, die gottlosen Jungen.« Es ward ihm angst, das Mädchen müßte ungetauft verscheiden, und im Ärger rief er »ich wollte, daß die Jungen alle zu Raben würden.« Kaum war das Wort ausgeredet, so hörte er ein Geschwirr über seinem Haupt in der Luft, blickte in die Höhe und sah sieben kohlschwarze Raben auf- und davonfliegen.

Die Eltern konnten die Verwünschung nicht mehr zurücknehmen, und so traurig sie über den Verlust ihrer sieben Söhne waren, trösteten sie sich doch einigermaßen durch ihr liebes Töchterchen, das bald zu Kräften kam, und mit jedem Tage schöner ward. Es wußte lange Zeit nicht einmal, daß es Geschwister gehabt hatte, denn die Eltern hüteten sich, ihrer zu erwähnen, bis es eines Tags von ungefähr die Leute von sich sprechen hörte, das Mädchen wäre wohl schön, aber doch eigentlich schuld an dem Unglück seiner sieben Brüder. Da ward es ganz betrübt, ging zu Vater und Mutter und fragte, ob es denn Brüder gehabt hätte, und wo sie hingeraten wären. Nun durften die Eltern das Geheimnis nicht länger verschweigen, sagten jedoch, es sei so des Himmels Verhängnis und seine Geburt nur der unschuldige Anlaß gewesen. Allein das Mädchen machte sich täglich ein Gewissen daraus und glaubte, es müßte seine Geschwister wieder erlösen. Es hatte nicht Ruhe und Rast, bis es sich heimlich aufmachte und in die weite Welt ging, seine Brüder irgendwo aufzuspüren und zu befreien, es möchte kosten, was es wollte. Es nahm nichts mit sich als ein Ringlein von seinen Eltern zum Andenken, einen Laib Brot für den Hunger, ein Krüglein Wasser für den Durst und ein Stühlchen für die Müdigkeit.

Nun ging es immerzu, weit weit, bis an der Welt Ende. Da kam es zur Sonne, aber die war zu heiß und fürchterlich, und fraß die kleinen Kinder. Eilig lief es weg und lief hin zu dem Mond, aber der war gar zu kalt und auch grausig und bös, und als er das Kind merkte, sprach er »ich rieche rieche Menschenfleisch.« Da machte es sich geschwind fort und kam zu den Sternen, die waren ihm freundlich und gut, und jeder saß auf seinem besondern Stühlchen. Der Morgenstern aber stand auf, gab ihm ein Hinkelbeinchen und sprach »wenn du das Beinchen nicht hast, kannst du den Glasberg nicht aufschließen, und in dem Glasberg, da sind deine Brüder.«

Das Mädchen nahm das Beinchen, wickelte es wohl in ein Tüchlein, und ging wieder fort, so lange, bis es an den Glasberg kam. Das Tor war verschlossen und es wollte das Beinchen hervorholen, aber wie es das Tüchlein aufmachte, so war es leer, und es hatte das Geschenk der guten Sterne verloren. Was sollte es nun anfangen? seine Brüder wollte es erretten und hatte keinen Schlüssel zum Glasberg. Das gute Schwesterchen nahm ein Messer, schnitt sich ein kleines Fingerchen ab, steckte es in das Tor und schloß glücklich auf. Als es eingegangen war, kam ihm ein Zwerglein entgegen, das sprach »mein Kind, was suchst du?« »Ich suche meine Brüder, die sieben Raben,« antwortete es. Der Zwerg sprach »die Herren Raben sind nicht zu Haus, aber willst du hier so lang warten, bis sie kommen, so tritt ein.« Darauf trug das Zwerglein die Speise der Raben herein auf sieben Tellerchen und in sieben Becherchen, und von jedem Tellerchen aß das Schwesterchen ein Bröckchen, und aus jedem Becherchen trank es ein Schlückchen; in das letzte Becherchen aber ließ es das Ringlein fallen, das es mitgenommen hatte.

Auf einmal hörte es in der Luft ein Geschwirr und ein Geweh, da sprach das Zwerglein »jetzt kommen die Herren Raben heim geflogen.« Da kamen sie, wollten essen und trinken, und suchten ihre Tellerchen und Becherchen. Da sprach einer nach dem andern »wer hat von meinem Tellerchen gegessen? wer hat aus meinem Becherchen getrunken? das ist eines Menschen Mund gewesen.« Und wie der siebente auf den Grund des Bechers kam, rollte ihm das Ringlein entgegen. Da sah er es an und erkannte, daß es ein Ring von Vater und Mutter war, und sprach »Gott gebe, unser Schwesterlein wäre da, so wären wir erlöst.« Wie das Mädchen, das hinter der Türe stand und lauschte, den Wunsch hörte, so trat es hervor, und da bekamen alle die Raben ihre menschliche Gestalt wieder. Und sie herzten und küßten einander, und zogen fröhlich heim.

26. Rotkäppchen.

Es war einmal eine kleine süße Dirne, die hatte jedermann lieb, der sie nur ansah, am allerliebsten aber ihre Großmutter, die wußte gar nicht, was sie alles dem Kinde geben sollte. Einmal schenkte sie ihm ein Käppchen von rotem Sammet, und weil ihm das so wohl stand und es nichts anders mehr tragen wollte, hieß es nur das Rotkäppchen. Eines Tages sprach seine Mutter zu ihm »komm, Rotkäppchen, da hast du ein Stück Kuchen und eine Flasche Wein, bring das der Großmutter hinaus; sie ist krank und schwach und wird sich daran laben. Mach dich auf, bevor es heiß wird, und wenn du hinauskommst, so geh hübsch sittsam und lauf nicht vom Weg ab, sonst fällst du und zerbrichst das Glas, und die Großmutter hat nichts. Und wenn du in ihre Stube kommst, so vergiß nicht, guten Morgen zu sagen, und guck nicht erst in alle Ecken herum.«

»Ich will schon alles gut machen,« sagte Rotkäppchen zur Mutter, und gab ihr die Hand darauf. Die Großmutter aber wohnte draußen im Wald, eine halbe Stunde vom Dorf. Wie nun Rotkäppchen in den Wald kam, begegnete ihm der Wolf. Rotkäppchen aber, wußte nicht, was das für ein böses Tier war, und fürchtete sich nicht vor ihm. »Guten Tag, Rotkäppchen«, sprach er. »Schönen Dank, Wolf.« »Wo hinaus so früh, Rotkäppchen?« »Zur Großmutter.« »Was trägst du unter der Schürze?« »Kuchen und Wein: gestern haben wir gebacken, da soll sich die kranke und schwache Großmutter etwas zugut tun und sich damit stärken.« »Rotkäppchen, wo wohnt deine Großmutter?« »Noch eine gute Viertelstunde weiter im Wald, unter den drei großen Eichbäumen, da steht ihr Haus, unten sind die Nußhecken, das wirst du ja wissen,« sagte Rotkäppchen. Der Wolf dachte bei sich »das junge zarte Ding, das ist ein fetter Bissen, der wird noch besser schmecken als die Alte: du mußt es listig anfangen, damit du beide erschnappst.« Da ging er ein Weilchen neben Rotkäppchen her, dann sprach er »Rotkäppchen, sieh einmal die schönen Blumen, die ringsumher stehen, warum guckst du dich nicht um? ich glaube, du hörst gar nicht, wie die Vöglein so lieblich singen? du gehst ja für dich hin, als wenn du zur Schule gingst, und ist so lustig haußen in dem Wald«.

Rotkäppchen schlug die Augen auf, und als es sah, wie die Sonnenstrahlen durch die Bäume hin- und hertanzten und alles voll schöner Blumen stand, dachte es »wenn ich der Großmutter einen frischen Strauß mitbringe, der wird ihr auch Freude machen; es ist so früh am Tag, daß ich doch zu rechter Zeit ankomme,« lief vom Wege ab in den Wald hinein und suchte Blumen. Und wenn es eine gebrochen hatte, meinte es, weiter hinaus stände eine schönere, und lief darnach, und geriet immer tiefer in den Wald hinein. Der Wolf aber ging geradeswegs nach dem Haus der Großmutter, und klopfte an die Türe. »Wer ist draußen?« »Rotkäppchen, das bringt Kuchen und Wein, mach auf.« »Drück nur auf die Klinke,« rief die Großmutter, »ich bin zu schwach und kann nicht aufstehen.« Der Wolf drückte auf die Klinke, die Türe sprang auf und er ging, ohne ein Wort zu sprechen, gerade zum Bett der Großmutter und verschluckte sie. Dann tat er ihre Kleider an, setzte ihre Haube auf, legte sich in ihr Bett und zog die Vorhänge vor.

Rotkäppchen aber war nach den Blumen herumgelaufen, und als es so viel zusammen hatte, daß es keine mehr tragen konnte, fiel ihm die Großmutter wieder ein, und es machte sich auf den Weg zu ihr. Es wunderte sich, daß die Türe aufstand, und wie es in die Stube trat, so kam es ihm so seltsam darin vor, daß dachte »ei, du mein Gott, wie ängstlich wird mirs heute zumut, und ich bin sonst so gerne bei der Großmutter!« Es rief »guten Morgen,« bekam aber keine Antwort. Darauf ging es zum Bett und zog die Vorhänge zurück; da lag die Großmutter, und hatte die Haube tief ins Gesicht gesetzt und sah so wunderlich aus. »Ei, Großmutter, was hast du für große Ohren!« »Daß ich dich besser hören kann.« »Ei, Großmutter, was hast du für große Augen!« »Daß ich dich besser sehen kann.« »Ei, Großmutter, was hast du für große Hände!« »Daß ich dich besser packen kann.« »Aber, Großmutter, was hast du für ein entsetzlich großes Maul!« »Daß ich dich besser fressen kann.« Kaum hatte der Wolf das gesagt, so tat er einen Satz aus dem Bette und verschlang das arme Rotkäppchen.

Wie der Wolf sein Gelüsten gestillt hatte, legte er sich wieder ins Bett, schlief ein und fing an überlaut zu schnarchen. Der Jäger ging eben an dem Haus vorbei und dachte »wie die alte Frau schnarcht, du mußt doch sehen, ob ihr etwas fehlt.« Da trat er in die Stube, und wie er vor das Bette kam, so sah er, daß der Wolf darin lag. »Finde ich dich hier, du alter Sünder,« sagte er, »ich habe dich lange gesucht.« Nun wollte er seine Büchse anlegen, da fiel ihm ein, der Wolf könnte die Großmutter gefressen haben, und sie wäre noch zu retten: schoß nicht, sondern nahm eine Schere und fing an, dem schlafenden Wolf den Bauch aufzuschneiden. Wie er ein paar Schnitte getan hatte, da sah er das rote Käppchen leuchten, und noch ein paar Schnitte, da sprang das Mädchen heraus und rief »ach wie war ich erschrocken, wie wars so dunkel in dem Wolf seinem Leib!« Und dann kam die alte Großmutter auch noch lebendig heraus und konnte kaum atmen. Rotkäppchen aber holte geschwind große Steine, damit füllten sie dem Wolf den Leib, und wie er aufwachte, wollte er fortspringen, aber die Steine waren so schwer, daß er gleich niedersank und sich totfiel.

Da waren alle drei vergnügt; der Jäger zog dem Wolf den Pelz ab und ging damit heim, die Großmutter aß den Kuchen und trank den Wein, den Rotkäppchen gebracht hatte, und erholte sich wieder, Rotkäppchen aber dachte »du willst dein Lebtag nicht wieder allein vom Wege ab in den Wald laufen, wenn dirs die Mutter verboten hat.«

Es wird auch erzählt, daß einmal, als Rotkäppchen der alten Großmutter wieder Gebackenes brachte, ein anderer Wolf ihm zugesprochen und es vom Wege habe ableiten wollen. Rotkäppchen aber hütete sich und ging gerade fort seines Wegs und sagte der Großmutter, daß es dem Wolf begegnet wäre, der ihm guten Tag gewünscht, aber so bös aus den Augen geguckt hätte: »wenns nicht auf offner Straße gewesen wäre, er hätte mich gefressen.« »Komm«, sagte die Großmutter, »wir wollen die Türe verschließen, daß er nicht herein kann.« Bald darnach klopfte der Wolf an und rief »mach auf, Großmutter, ich bin das Rotkäppchen, ich bring dir Gebackenes.« Sie schwiegen aber still und machten die Türe nicht auf: da schlich der Graukopf etlichemal um das Haus, sprang endlich aufs Dach und wollte warten, bis Rotkäppchen abends nach Hause ginge, dann wollte er ihm nachschleichen und wollts in der Dunkelheit fressen. Aber die Großmutter merkte, was er im Sinn hatte. Nun stand vor dem Haus ein großer Steintrog, da sprach sie zu dem Kind »nimm den Eimer, Rotkäppchen, gestern hab ich Würste gekocht, da trag das Wasser, worin sie gekocht sind, in den Trog.« Rotkäppchen trug so lange, bis der große, große Trog ganz voll war. Da stieg der Geruch von den Würsten dem Wolf in die Nase, er schnupperte und guckte hinab, endlich machte er den Hals so lang, daß er sich nicht mehr halten konnte und anfing, zu rutschen: so rutschte er vom Dach herab, gerade in den großen Trog hinein, und ertrank. Rotkäppchen aber ging fröhlich nach Haus, und tat ihm niemand etwas zuleid.

27. Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten.

Es hatte ein Mann einen Esel, der schon lange Jahre die Säcke unverdrossen zur Mühle getragen hatte, dessen Kräfte aber nun zu Ende gingen, so daß er zur Arbeit immer untauglicher ward. Da dachte der Herr daran, ihn aus dem Futter zu schaffen, aber der Esel merkte, daß kein guter Wind wehte, lief fort und machte sich auf den Weg nach Bremen: dort, meinte er, könnte er ja Stadtmusikant werden. Als er ein Weilchen fortgegangen war, fand er einen Jagdhund auf dem Wege liegen, der jappte wie einer, der sich müde gelaufen hat. »Nun, was jappst du so, Packan?« fragte der Esel. »Ach,« sagte der Hund, »weil ich alt bin und jeden Tag schwächer werde, auch auf der Jagd nicht mehr fort kann, hat mich mein Herr wollen totschlagen, da hab ich Reißaus genommen; aber womit soll ich nun mein Brot verdienen?« »Weißt du was,« sprach der Esel, »ich gehe nach Bremen und werde dort Stadtmusikant, geh mit und laß dich auch bei der Musik annehmen. Ich spiele die Laute, und du schlägst die Pauken.« Der Hund wars zufrieden, und sie gingen weiter. Es dauerte nicht lange, so saß da eine Katze an dem Weg und machte ein Gesicht wie drei Tage Regenwetter. »Nun, was ist dir in die Quere gekommen, alter Bartputzer?« sprach der Esel. »Wer kann da lustig sein, wenns einem an den Kragen geht,« antwortete die Katze, »weil ich nun zu Jahren komme, meine Zähne stumpf werden, und ich lieber hinter dem Ofen sitze und spinne, als nach Mäusen herumjage, hat mich meine Frau ersäufen wollen; ich habe mich zwar noch fortgemacht, aber nun ist guter Rat teuer: wo soll ich hin?« »Geh mit uns nach Bremen, du verstehst dich doch auf die Nachtmusik, da kannst du ein Stadtmusikant werden.« Die Katze hielt das für gut und ging mit. Darauf kamen die drei Landesflüchtigen an einem Hof vorbei, da saß auf dem Tor der Haushahn und schrie aus Leibeskräften. »Du schreiest einem durch Mark und Bein,« sprach der Esel, »was hast du vor?« »Da hab ich gut Wetter prophezeit,« sprach der Hahn, »weil unserer lieben Frauen Tag ist, wo sie dem Christkindlein die Hemdchen gewaschen hat und sie trocknen will; aber weil morgen zum Sonntag Gäste kommen, so hat die Hausfrau doch kein Erbarmen, und hat der Köchin gesagt, sie wollte mich morgen in der Suppe essen, und da soll ich mir heute abend den Kopf abschneiden lassen. Nun schrei ich aus vollem Hals, solang ich noch kann.« »Ei was, du Rotkopf,« sagte der Esel, »zieh lieber mit uns fort, wir gehen nach Bremen, etwas Besseres als den Tod findest du überall; du hast eine gute Stimme, und wenn wir zusammen musizieren, so muß es eine Art haben.« Der Hahn ließ sich den Vorschlag gefallen, und sie gingen alle viere zusammen fort.

Sie konnten aber die Stadt Bremen in einem Tag nicht erreichen und kamen abends in einen Wald, wo sie übernachten wollten. Der Esel und der Hund legten sich unter einen großen Baum, die Katze und der Hahn machten sich in die Äste, der Hahn aber flog bis in die Spitze, wo es am sichersten für ihn war. Ehe er einschlief, sah er sich noch einmal nach allen vier Winden um, da deuchte ihn, er sähe in der Ferne ein Fünkchen brennen, und rief seinen Gesellen zu, es müßte nicht gar weit ein Haus sein, denn es scheine ein Licht. Sprach der Esel »so müssen wir uns aufmachen und noch hingehen, denn hier ist die Herberge schlecht.« Der Hund meinte, ein paar Knochen und etwas Fleisch dran täten ihm auch gut. Also machten sie sich auf den Weg nach der Gegend, wo das Licht war, und sahen es bald heller schimmern, und es ward immer größer, bis sie vor ein hell erleuchtetes Räuberhaus kamen. Der Esel, als der größte, näherte sich dem Fenster und schaute hinein. »Was siehst du, Grauschimmel?« fragte der Hahn. »Was ich sehe?« antwortete der Esel, »einen gedeckten Tisch mit schönem Essen und Trinken, und Räuber sitzen daran und lassens sich wohl sein.« »Das wäre was für uns,« sprach der Hahn. »Ja, ja, ach, wären wir da!« sagte der Esel. Da ratschlagten die Tiere, wie sie es anfangen müßten, um die Räuber hinauszujagen, und fanden endlich ein Mittel. Der Esel mußte sich mit den Vorderfüßen auf das Fenster stellen, der Hund auf des Esels Rücken springen, die Katze auf den Hund klettern, und endlich flog der Hahn hinauf, und setzte sich der Katze auf den Kopf. Wie das geschehen war, fingen sie auf ein Zeichen insgesamt an, ihre Musik zu machen: der Esel schrie, der Hund bellte, die Katze miaute, und der Hahn krähte; dann stürzten sie durch das Fenster in die Stube hinein, daß die Scheiben klirrten. Die Räuber fuhren bei dem entsetzlichen Geschrei in die Höhe, meinten nicht anders, als ein Gespenst käme herein, und flohen in größter Furcht in den Wald hinaus. Nun setzten sich die vier Gesellen an den Tisch, nahmen mit dem vorlieb, was übrig geblieben war, und aßen, als wenn sie vier Wochen hungern sollten.

Wie die vier Spielleute fertig waren, löschten sie das Licht aus und suchten sich eine Schlafstätte, jeder nach seiner Natur und Bequemlichkeit. Der Esel legte sich auf den Mist, der Hund hinter die Türe, die Katze auf den Herd bei die warme Asche, und der Hahn setzte sich auf den Hahnenbalken: und weil sie müde waren von ihrem langen Weg, schliefen sie auch bald ein. Als Mitternacht vorbei war und die Räuber von weitem sahen, daß kein Licht mehr im Haus brannte, auch alles ruhig schien, sprach der Hauptmann »wir hätten uns doch nicht sollen ins Bockshorn jagen lassen,« und hieß einen hingehen und das Haus untersuchen. Der Abgeschickte fand alles still, ging in die Küche, ein Licht anzuzünden, und weil er die glühenden, feurigen Augen der Katze für lebendige Kohlen ansah, hielt er ein Schwefelhölzchen daran, daß es Feuer fangen sollte. Aber die Katze verstand keinen Spaß, sprang ihm ins Gesicht, spie und kratzte. Da erschrak er gewaltig, lief und wollte zur Hintertüre hinaus, aber der Hund, der da lag, sprang auf und biß ihn ins Bein: und als er über den Hof an dem Miste vorbeirannte, gab ihm der Esel noch einen tüchtigen Schlag mit dem Hinterfuß; der Hahn aber, der vom Lärmen aus dem Schlaf geweckt und munter geworden war, rief vom Balken herab »kikeriki!« Da lief der Räuber, was er konnte, zu seinem Hauptmann zurück und sprach »ach, in dem Haus sitzt eine greuliche Hexe, die hat mich angehaucht und mit ihren langen Fingern mir das Gesicht zerkratzt; und vor der Türe steht ein Mann mit einem Messer, der hat mich ins Bein gestochen; und auf dem Hof liegt ein schwarzes Ungetüm, das hat mit einer Holzkeule auf mich losgeschlagen;

und oben auf dem Dache, da sitzt der Richter, der rief: bringt mir den Schelm her. Da machte ich, daß ich fortkam.« Von nun an getrauten sich die Räuber nicht weiter in das Haus, den vier Bremer Musikanten gefiels aber so wohl darin, daß sie nicht wieder heraus wollten. Und der das zuletzt erzählt hat, dem ist der Mund noch warm.

28. Der singende Knochen.

Es war einmal in einem Lande große Klage über ein Wildschwein, das den Bauern die Äcker umwühlte, das Vieh tötete und den Menschen mit seinen Hauern den Leib aufriß. Der König versprach einem jeden, der das Land von dieser Plage befreien würde, eine große Belohnung: aber das Tier war so groß und stark, daß sich niemand in die Nähe des Waldes wagte, worin es hauste. Endlich ließ der König bekanntmachen, wer das Wildschwein einfange oder töte, solle seine einzige Tochter zur Gemahlin haben.

Nun lebten zwei Brüder in dem Lande, Söhne eines armen Mannes, die meldeten sich und wollten das Wagnis übernehmen. Der älteste, der listig und klug war, tat es aus Hochmut, der jüngste, der unschuldig und dumm war, aus gutem Herzen. Der König sagte »damit ihr desto sicherer das Tier findet, so sollt ihr von entgegengesetzten Seiten in den Wald gehen.« Da ging der älteste von Abend und der jüngste von Morgen hinein. Und als der jüngste ein Weilchen gegangen war, so trat ein kleines Männlein zu ihm, das hielt einen schwarzen Spieß in der Hand und sprach »diesen Spieß gebe ich dir, weil dein Herz unschuldig und gut ist: damit kannst du getrost auf das wilde Schwein eingehen, es wird dir keinen Schaden zufügen.« Er dankte dem Männlein, nahm den Spieß auf die Schultern und ging ohne Furcht weiter. Nicht lange, so erblickte er das Tier, das auf ihn losrannte, er hielt ihm aber den Spieß entgegen, und in seiner blinden Wut rannte es so gewaltig hinein, daß ihm das Herz entzweigeschnitten ward. Da nahm er das Ungetüm auf die Schulter, ging heimwärts und wollte es dem Könige bringen.

Als er auf der andern Seite des Waldes herauskam, stand da am Eingang ein Haus, wo die Leute sich mit Tanz und Wein lustig machten. Sein ältester Bruder war da eingetreten und hatte gedacht, das Schwein liefe ihm doch nicht fort, erst wollte er sich einen rechten Mut trinken. Als er nun den jüngsten erblickte, der mit seiner Beute beladen aus dem Wald kam, so ließ ihm sein neidisches und boshaftes Herz keine Ruhe. Er rief ihm zu »komm doch herein, lieber Bruder, ruhe dich aus und stärke dich mit einem Becher Wein.« Der jüngste, der nichts Arges dahinter vermutete, ging hinein und erzählte ihm von dem guten Männlein, das ihm einen Spieß gegeben, womit er das Schwein getötet hätte. Der älteste hielt ihn bis zum Abend zurück, da gingen sie zusammen fort. Als sie aber in der Dunkelheit zu der Brücke über einen Bach kamen, ließ der älteste den jüngsten vorangehen, und als er mitten über dem Wasser war, gab er ihm von hinten einen Schlag, daß er tot hinabstürzte. Er begrub ihn unter der Brücke, nahm dann das Schwein und brachte es dem König mit dem Vorgeben, er hätte es getötet; worauf er die Tochter des Königs zur Gemahlin erhielt. Als der jüngste Bruder nicht wiederkommen wollte, sagte er »das Schwein wird ihm den Leib aufgerissen haben,« und das glaubte jedermann.

Weil aber vor Gott nichts verborgen bleibt, sollte auch diese schwarze Tat ans Licht kommen. Nach langen Jahren trieb ein Hirt einmal seine Herde über die Brücke und sah unten im Sande ein schneeweißes Knöchlein liegen und dachte, das gäbe ein gutes Mundstück. Da stieg er herab, hob es auf und schnitzte ein Mundstück daraus für sein Horn. Als er zum erstenmal darauf geblasen hatte, so fing das Knöchlein zu großer Verwunderung des Hirten von selbst an zu singen

»Ach, du liebes Hirtelein,
du bläst auf meinem Knöchelein,
mein Bruder hat mich erschlagen,
unter der Brücke begraben,
um das wilde Schwein,
für des Königs Töchterlein.«

»Was für ein wunderliches Hörnchen,« sagte der Hirt, »das von selber singt, das muß ich dem Herrn König bringen.« Als er damit vor den König kam, fing das Hörnchen abermals an sein Liedchen zu singen. Der König verstand es wohl, und ließ die Erde unter der Brücke aufgraben, da kam das ganze Gerippe des Erschlagenen zum Vorschein. Der böse Bruder konnte die Tat nicht leugnen, ward in einen Sack genäht und lebendig ersäuft, die Gebeine des Gemordeten aber wurden auf den Kirchhof in ein schönes Grab zur Ruhe gelegt.

29. Der Teufel mit den drei goldenen Haaren.

Es war einmal eine arme Frau, die gebar ein Söhnlein, und weil es eine Glückshaut umhatte, als es zur Welt kam, so ward ihm geweissagt, es werde im vierzehnten Jahr die Tochter des Königs zur Frau haben. Es trug sich zu, daß der König bald darauf ins Dorf kam, und niemand wußte, daß es der König war, und als er die Leute fragte, was es Neues gäbe, so antworteten sie »es ist in diesen Tagen ein Kind mit einer Glückshaut geboren: was so einer unternimmt, das schlägt ihm zum Glück aus. Es ist ihm auch vorausgesagt, in seinem vierzehnten Jahre solle er die Tochter des Königs zur Frau haben.« Der König, der ein böses Herz hatte und über die Weissagung sich ärgerte, ging zu den Eltern, tat ganz freundlich und sagte »ihr armen Leute, überlaßt mir euer Kind, ich will es versorgen.« Anfangs weigerten sie sich, da aber der fremde Mann schweres Gold dafür bot und sie dachten »es ist ein Glückskind, es muß doch zu seinem Besten ausschlagen,« so willigten sie endlich ein und gaben ihm das Kind.

Der König legte es in eine Schachtel und ritt damit weiter, bis er zu einem tiefen Wasser kam: da warf er die Schachtel hinein und dachte »von dem unerwarteten Freier habe ich meine Tochter geholfen.« Die Schachtel aber ging nicht unter, sondern schwamm wie ein Schiffchen, und es drang auch kein Tröpfchen Wasser hinein. So schwamm sie bis zwei Meilen von des Königs Hauptstadt, wo eine Mühle war, an dessen Wehr sie hängen blieb. Ein Mahlbursche, der glücklicherweise da stand und sie bemerkte, zog sie mit einem Haken heran und meinte große Schätze zu finden, als er sie aber aufmachte, lag ein schöner Knabe darin, der ganz frisch und munter war. Er brachte ihn zu den Müllersleuten, und weil diese keine Kinder hatten, freuten sie sich und sprachen »Gott hat es uns beschert.« Sie pflegten den Findling wohl, und er wuchs in allen Tugenden heran.

Es trug sich zu, daß der König einmal bei einem Gewitter in die Mühle trat und die Müllersleute fragte, ob der große Junge ihr Sohn wäre. »Nein,« antworteten sie, »es ist ein Findling, er ist vor vierzehn Jahren in einer Schachtel ans Wehr geschwommen, und der Mahlbursche hat ihn aus dem Wasser gezogen.« Da merkte der König, daß es niemand anders als das Glückskind war, das er ins Wasser geworfen hatte, und sprach »ihr guten Leute, könnte der Junge nicht einen Brief an die Frau Königin bringen, ich will ihm zwei Goldstücke zum Lohn geben?« »Wie der Herr König gebietet,« antworteten die Leute, und hießen den Jungen sich bereit halten. Da schrieb der König einen Brief an die Königin, worin stand »so bald der Knabe mit diesem Schreiben angelangt ist, soll er getötet und begraben werden, und das alles soll geschehen sein, ehe ich zurückkomme.«

Der Knabe machte sich mit diesem Briefe auf den Weg, verirrte sich aber und kam abends in einen großen Wald. In der Dunkelheit sah er ein kleines Licht, ging darauf zu und gelangte zu einem Häuschen. Als er hineintrat, saß eine alte Frau beim Feuer ganz allein. Sie erschrak, als sie den Knaben erblickte, und sprach »wo kommst du her und wo willst du hin?« »Ich komme von der Mühle,« antwortete er, »und will zur Frau Königin, der ich einen Brief bringen soll: weil ich mich aber in dem Walde verirrt habe, so wollte ich hier gerne übernachten.« »Du armer Junge,« sprach die Frau, »du bist in ein Räuberhaus geraten, und wenn sie heim kommen, so bringen sie dich um.« »Mag kommen, wer will,« sagte der Junge, »ich fürchte mich nicht: ich bin aber so müde, daß ich nicht weiter kann,« streckte sich auf eine Bank und schlief ein. Bald hernach kamen die Räuber und fragten zornig, was da für ein fremder Knabe läge. »Ach,« sagte die Alte, »es ist ein unschuldiges Kind, es hat sich im Walde verirrt, und ich habe ihn aus Barmherzigkeit aufgenommen: er soll einen Brief an die Frau Königin bringen.« Die Räuber erbrachen den Brief und lasen ihn, und es stand darin, daß der Knabe sogleich, wie er ankäme, sollte ums Leben gebracht werden. Da empfanden die hartherzigen Räuber Mitleid, und der Anführer zerriß den Brief und schrieb einen andern, und es stand darin, sowie der Knabe ankäme, sollte er sogleich mit der Königstochter vermählt werden. Sie ließen ihn dann ruhig bis zum andern Morgen auf der Bank liegen, und als er aufgewacht war, gaben sie ihm den Brief und zeigten ihm den rechten Weg. Die Königin aber, als sie den Brief empfangen und gelesen hatte, tat, wie darin stand, hieß ein prächtiges Hochzeitsfest anstellen, und die Königstochter ward mit dem Glückskind vermählt; und da der Jüngling schön und freundlich war, so lebte sie vergnügt und zufrieden mit ihm.

Nach einiger Zeit kam der König wieder in sein Schloß und sah, daß die Weissagung erfüllt und das Glückskind mit seiner Tochter vermählt war. »Wie ist das zugegangen?« sprach er, »ich habe in meinem Brief einen ganz andern Befehl erteilt.« Da reichte ihm die Königin den Brief und sagte, er möchte selbst sehen, was darin stände. Der König las den Brief und merkte wohl, daß er mit einem andern war vertauscht worden. Er fragte den Jüngling, wie es mit dem anvertrauten Briefe zugegangen wäre, warum er einen andern dafür gebracht hätte. »Ich weiß von nichts,« antwortete er, »er muß mir in der Nacht vertauscht sein, als ich im Walde geschlafen habe.« Voll Zorn sprach der König »so leicht soll es dir nicht werden, wer meine Tochter haben will, der muß mir aus der Hölle drei goldene Haare von dem Haupte des Teufels holen; bringst du mir, was ich verlange, so sollst du meine Tochter behalten.« Damit hoffte der König ihn auf immer los zu werden. Das Glückskind aber antwortete »die goldenen Haare will ich wohl holen, ich fürchte mich vor dem Teufel nicht.« Darauf nahm er Abschied und begann seine Wanderschaft.

Der Weg führte ihn zu einer großen Stadt, wo ihn der Wächter an dem Tore ausfragte, was für ein Gewerbe er verstände und was er wüßte. »Ich weiß alles,« antwortete das Glückskind. »So kannst du uns einen Gefallen tun,« sagte der Wächter, »wenn du uns sagst, warum unser Marktbrunnen, aus dem sonst Wein quoll, trocken geworden ist, und nicht einmal mehr Wasser gibt.« »Das sollt ihr erfahren,« antwortete er, »wartet nur, bis ich wiederkomme.« Da ging er weiter und kam vor eine andere Stadt, da fragte der Torwächter wiederum, was für ein Gewerb er verstünde und was er wüßte. »Ich weiß alles,« antwortete er. »So kannst du uns einen Gefallen tun und uns sagen, warum ein Baum in unserer Stadt, der sonst goldene Äpfel trug, jetzt nicht einmal Blätter hervortreibt.« »Das sollt ihr erfahren,« antwortete er, »wartet nur, bis ich wiederkomme.« Da ging er weiter, und kam an ein großes Wasser, über das er hinüber mußte. Der Fährmann fragte ihn, was er für ein Gewerb verstände und was er wüßte. »Ich weiß alles,« antwortete er. »So kannst du mir einen Gefallen tun,« sprach der Fährmann, »und mir sagen, warum ich immer hin- und herfahren muß und niemals abgelöst werde.« »Das sollst du erfahren,« antwortete er, »warte nur, bis ich wiederkomme.«

Als er über das Wasser hinüber war, so fand er den Eingang zur Hölle. Es war schwarz und rußig darin, und der Teufel war nicht zu Haus, aber seine Ellermutter saß da in einem breiten Sorgenstuhl. »Was willst du?« sprach sie zu ihm, sah aber gar nicht so böse aus. »Ich wollte gerne drei goldene Haare von des Teufels Kopf,« antwortete er, »sonst kann ich meine Frau nicht behalten.« »Das ist viel verlangt,« sagte sie, »wenn der Teufel heim kommt und findet dich, so geht dirs an den Kragen; aber du dauerst mich, ich will sehen, ob ich dir helfen kann.« Sie verwandelte ihn in eine Ameise und sprach »kriech in meine Rockfalten, da bist du sicher.« »Ja,« antwortete er, »das ist schon gut, aber drei Dinge möchte ich gerne noch wissen, warum ein Brunnen, aus dem sonst Wein quoll, trocken geworden ist, jetzt nicht einmal mehr Wasser gibt: warum ein Baum, der sonst goldene Äpfel trug, nicht einmal mehr Laub treibt: und warum ein Fährmann immer herüber- und hinüberfahren muß und nicht abgelöst wird.« »Das sind schwere Fragen,« antwortete sie, »aber halte dich nur still und ruhig, und hab acht, was der Teufel spricht, wann ich ihm die drei goldenen Haare ausziehe.«

Als der Abend einbrach, kam der Teufel nach Haus. Kaum war er eingetreten, so merkte er, daß die Luft nicht rein war. »Ich rieche rieche Menschenfleisch,« sagte er, »es ist hier nicht richtig.« Dann guckte er in alle Ecken und suchte, konnte aber nichts finden. Die Ellermutter schalt ihn aus, »eben ist erst gekehrt,« sprach sie, »und alles in Ordnung gebracht, nun wirfst du mirs wieder untereinander; immer hast du Menschenfleisch in der Nase! Setze dich nieder und iß dein Abendbrot.« Als er gegessen und getrunken hatte, war er müde, legte der Ellermutter seinen Kopf in den Schoß und sagte, sie sollte ihn ein wenig lausen. Es dauerte nicht lange, so schlummerte er ein, blies und schnarchte. Da faßte die Alte ein goldenes Haar, riß es aus und legte es neben sich. »Autsch!« schrie der Teufel, »was hast du vor?« »Ich habe einen schweren Traum gehabt,« antwortete die Ellermutter, »da hab ich dir in die Haare gefaßt.« »Was hat dir denn geträumt?« fragte der Teufel. »Mir hat geträumt, ein Marktbrunnen, aus dem sonst Wein quoll, sei versiegt, und es habe nicht einmal Wasser daraus quellen wollen, was ist wohl schuld daran?« »He, wenn sies wüßten!« antwortete der Teufel, »es sitzt eine Kröte unter einem Stein im Brunnen, wenn sie die töten, so wird der Wein schon wieder fließen.« Die Ellermutter lauste ihn wieder, bis er einschlief und schnarchte, daß die Fenster zitterten. Da riß sie ihm das zweite Haar aus. »Hu! was machst du?« schrie der Teufel zornig. »Nimms nicht übel,« antwortete sie, »ich habe es im Traum getan.«

»Was hat dir wieder geträumt?« fragte er. »Mir hat geträumt, in einem Königreiche stünd ein Obstbaum, der hätte sonst goldene Äpfel getragen und wollte jetzt nicht einmal Laub treiben. Was war wohl die Ursache davon?« »He, wenn sies wüßten!« antwortete der Teufel, »an der Wurzel nagt eine Maus, wenn sie die töten, so wird er schon wieder goldene Äpfel tragen, nagt sie aber noch länger, so verdorrt der Baum gänzlich. Aber laß mich mit deinen Träumen in Ruhe, wenn du mich noch einmal im Schlafe störst, so kriegst du eine Ohrfeige.« Die Ellermutter sprach ihn zu gut und lauste ihn wieder, bis er eingeschlafen war und schnarchte. Da faßte sie das dritte goldene Haar und riß es ihm aus. Der Teufel fuhr in die Höhe, schrie und wollte übel mit ihr wirtschaften, aber sie besänftigte ihn nochmals und sprach »wer kann für böse Träume!« »Was hat dir denn geträumt?« fragte er, und war doch neugierig. »Mir hat von einem Fährmann geträumt, der sich beklagte, daß er immer hin- und herfahren müßte, und nicht abgelöst würde. Was ist wohl schuld?« »He, der Dummbart!« antwortete der Teufel, »wenn einer kommt und will überfahren, so muß er ihm die Stange in die Hand geben, dann muß der andere überfahren, und er ist frei.« Da die Ellermutter ihm die drei goldenen Haare ausgerissen hatte und die drei Fragen beantwortet waren, so ließ sie den alten Drachen in Ruhe, und er schlief, bis der Tag anbrach.

Als der Teufel wieder fortgezogen war, holte die Alte die Ameise aus der Rockfalte, und gab dem Glückskind die menschliche Gestalt zurück. »Da hast du die drei goldenen Haare,« sprach sie, »was der Teufel zu deinen drei Fragen gesagt hat, wirst du wohl gehört haben.« »Ja,« antwortete er, »ich habe es gehört und wills wohl behalten.« »So ist dir geholfen,« sagte sie »und nun kannst du deiner Wege ziehen.« Er bedankte sich bei der Alten für die Hilfe in der Not, verließ die Hölle und war vergnügt, daß ihm alles so wohl geglückt war. Als er zu dem Fährmann kam, sollte er ihm die versprochene Antwort geben. »Fahr mich erst hinüber,« sprach das Glückskind, »so will ich dir sagen, wie du erlöst wirst,« und als er auf dem jenseitigen Ufer angelangt war, gab er ihm des Teufels Rat »wenn wieder einer kommt und will übergefahren sein, so gib ihm nur die Stange in die Hand.« Er ging weiter und kam zu der Stadt, worin der unfruchtbare Baum stand, und wo der Wächter auch Antwort haben wollte. Da sagte er ihm, wie er vom Teufel gehört hatte, »tötet die Maus, die an seiner Wurzel nagt, so wird er wieder goldene Äpfel tragen.« Da dankte ihm der Wächter und gab ihm zur Belohnung zwei mit Gold beladene Esel, die mußten ihm nachfolgen. Zuletzt kam er zu der Stadt, deren Brunnen versiegt war. Da sprach er zu dem Wächter, wie der Teufel gesprochen hatte, »es sitzt eine Kröte im Brunnen unter einem Stein, die müßt ihr aufsuchen und töten, so wird er wieder reichlich Wein geben.« Der Wächter dankte und gab ihm ebenfalls zwei mit Gold beladene Esel.

Endlich langte das Glückskind daheim bei seiner Frau an, die sich herzlich freute, als sie ihn wiedersah und hörte, wie wohl ihm alles gelungen war. Dem König brachte er, was er verlangt hatte, die drei goldenen Haare des Teufels, und als dieser die vier Esel mit dem Golde sah, ward er ganz vergnügt und sprach »nun sind alle Bedingungen erfüllt und du kannst meine Tochter behalten. Aber, lieber Schwiegersohn, sage mir doch, woher ist das viele Gold? das sind ja gewaltige Schätze!« »Ich bin über einen Fluß gefahren,« antwortete er, »und da habe ich es mitgenommen, es liegt dort statt des Sandes am Ufer.« »Kann ich mir auch davon holen?« sprach der König und war ganz begierig. »So viel Ihr nur wollt,« antwortete er, »es ist ein Fährmann auf dem Fluß, von dem laßt Euch überfahren, so könnt Ihr drüben Eure Säcke füllen.« Der habsüchtige König machte sich in aller Eile auf den Weg, und als er zu dem Fluß kam, so winkte er dem Fährmann, der sollte ihn übersetzen. Der Fährmann kam und hieß ihn einsteigen, und als sie an das jenseitige Ufer kamen, gab er ihm die Ruderstange in die Hand und sprang davon. Der König aber mußte von nun an fahren zur Strafe für seine Sünden.

»Fährt er wohl noch?« »Was denn? es wird ihm niemand die Stange abgenommen haben.«

30. Läuschen und Flöhchen.

Ein Läuschen und ein Flöhchen, die lebten zusammen in einem Haushalte und brauten das Bier in einer Eierschale. Da fiel das Läuschen hinein und verbrannte sich. Darüber fing das Flöhchen an laut zu schreien. Da sprach die kleine Stubentüre »was schreist du, Flöhchen?« »Weil Läuschen sich verbrannt hat.« Da fing das Türchen an zu knarren. Da sprach ein Besenchen in der Ecke »was knarrst du, Türchen?« »Soll ich nicht knarren?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint.«

Da fing das Besenchen an entsetzlich zu kehren. Da kam ein Wägelchen vorbei und sprach »was kehrst du, Besenchen?« »Soll ich nicht kehren?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint,
Türchen knarrt.«

Da sprach das Wägelchen »so will ich rennen,« und fing an entsetzlich zu rennen. Da sprach das Mistchen, an dem es vorbeirannte, »was rennst du, Wägelchen?« »Soll ich nicht rennen?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint,
Türchen knarrt,
Besenchen kehrt.«

Da sprach das Mistchen »so will ich entsetzlich brennen,« und fing an in hellem Feuer zu brennen. Da stand ein Bäumchen neben dem Mistchen, das sprach »Mistchen, warum brennst du?« »Soll ich nicht brennen?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint,
Türchen knarrt,
Besenchen kehrt,
Wägelchen rennt.«

Da sprach das Bäumchen »so will ich mich schütteln,« und fing an sich zu schütteln, daß all seine Blätter abfielen. Das sah ein Mädchen, das mit seinem Wasserkrügelchen herankam und sprach »Bäumchen, was schüttelst du dich?« »Soll ich mich nicht schütteln?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint,

Türchen knarrt,
Besenchen kehrt,
Wägelchen rennt,
Mistchen brennt.«

Da sprach das Mädchen »so will ich mein Wasserkrügelchen zerbrechen,« und zerbrach das Wasserkrügelchen. Da sprach das Brünnlein, aus dem das Wasser quoll, »Mädchen, was zerbrichst du dein Wasserkrügelchen?« »Soll ich mein Wasserkrügelchen nicht zerbrechen?

Läuschen hat sich verbrannt,
Flöhchen weint,
Türchen knarrt,
Besenchen kehrt,
Wägelchen rennt,
Mistchen brennt,
Bäumchen schüttelt sich.«

»Ei,« sagte das Brünnchen, »so will ich anfangen zu fließen,« und fing an entsetzlich zu fließen. Und in dem Wasser ist alles ertrunken, das Mädchen, das Bäumchen, das Mistchen, das Wägelchen, das Besenchen, das Türchen, das Flöhchen, das Läuschen, alles miteinander.

31. Das Mädchen ohne Hände.

Ein Müller war nach und nach in Armut geraten und hatte nichts mehr als seine Mühle und einen großen Apfelbaum dahinter. Einmal war er in den Wald gegangen, Holz zu holen, da trat ein alter Mann zu ihm, den er noch niemals gesehen hatte, und sprach »was quälst du dich mit Holzhacken, ich will dich reich machen, wenn du mir versprichst, was hinter deiner Mühle steht.« »Was kann das anders sein als mein Apfelbaum?« dachte der Müller, sagte »ja,« und verschrieb es dem fremden Manne. Der aber lachte höhnisch und sagte »nach drei Jahren will ich kommen und abholen, was mir gehört,« und ging fort. Als der Müller nach Haus kam, trat ihm seine Frau entgegen und sprach »sage mir, Müller, woher kommt der plötzliche Reichtum in unser Haus? auf einmal sind alle Kisten und Kasten voll, kein Mensch hats hereingebracht, und ich weiß nicht, wie es zugegangen ist.« Er antwortete »das kommt von einem fremden Manne, der mir im Walde begegnet ist und mir große Schätze verheißen hat; ich habe ihm dagegen verschrieben, was hinter der Mühle steht: den großen Apfelbaum können wir wohl dafür geben.« »Ach, Mann,« sagte die Frau erschrocken, »das ist der Teufel gewesen: den Apfelbaum hat er nicht gemeint, sondern unsere Tochter, die stand hinter der Mühle und kehrte den Hof.«

Die Müllerstochter war ein schönes und frommes Mädchen und lebte die drei Jahre in Gottesfurcht und ohne Sünde. Als nun die Zeit herum war, und der Tag kam, wo sie der Böse holen wollte, da wusch sie sich rein und machte mit Kreide einen Kranz um sich. Der Teufel erschien ganz frühe, aber er konnte ihr nicht nahekommen. Zornig sprach er zum Müller »tu ihr alles Wasser weg, damit sie sich nicht mehr waschen kann, denn sonst habe ich keine Gewalt über sie.« Der Müller fürchtete sich und tat es. Am andern Morgen kam der Teufel wieder, aber sie hatte auf ihre Hände geweint, und sie waren ganz rein. Da konnte er ihr wiederum nicht nahen und sprach wütend zu dem Müller »hau ihr die Hände ab, sonst kann ich ihr nichts anhaben.« Der Müller entsetzte sich und antwortete »wie könnt ich meinem eigenen Kinde die Hände abhauen!« Da drohte ihm der Böse und sprach »wo du es nicht tust, so bist du mein, und ich hole dich selber.« Dem Vater ward angst, und er versprach, ihm zu gehorchen. Da ging er zu dem Mädchen und sagte »mein Kind, wenn ich dir nicht beide Hände abhaue, so führt mich der Teufel fort, und in der Angst hab ich es ihm versprochen. Hilf mir doch in meiner Not und verzeihe mir, was ich Böses an dir tue.« Sie antwortete »lieber Vater, macht mit mir, was Ihr wollt, ich bin Euer Kind.« Darauf legte sie beide Hände hin und ließ sie sich abhauen. Der Teufel kam zum drittenmal, aber sie hatte so lange und so viel auf die Stümpfe geweint, daß sie doch ganz rein waren. Da mußte er weichen und hatte alles Recht auf sie verloren.

Der Müller sprach zu ihr »ich habe so großes Gut durch dich gewonnen, ich will dich zeitlebens aufs köstlichste halten.« Sie antwortete aber »hier kann ich nicht bleiben: ich will fortgehen: mitleidige Menschen werden mir schon so viel geben, als ich brauche.« Darauf ließ sie sich die verstümmelten Arme auf den Rücken binden, und mit Sonnenaufgang machte sie sich auf den Weg und ging den ganzen Tag, bis es Nacht ward. Da kam sie zu einem königlichen Garten, und beim Mondschimmer sah sie, daß Bäume voll schöner Fruchte darin standen; aber sie konnte nicht hinein, denn es war ein Wasser darum. Und weil sie den ganzen Tag gegangen war und keinen Bissen genossen hatte, und der Hunger sie quälte, so dachte sie »ach, wäre ich darin, damit ich etwas von den Früchten äße, sonst muß ich verschmachten.« Da kniete sie nieder, rief Gott den Herrn an und betete. Auf einmal kam ein Engel daher, der machte eine Schleuse in dem Wasser zu, so daß der Graben trocken ward und sie hindurchgehen konnte. Nun ging sie in den Garten, und der Engel ging mit ihr. Sie sah einen Baum mit Obst, das waren schöne Birnen, aber sie waren alle gezählt. Da trat sie hinzu und aß eine mit dem Munde vom Baume ab, ihren Hunger zu stillen, aber nicht mehr. Der Gärtner sah es mit an, weil aber der Engel dabeistand, fürchtete er sich und meinte, das Mädchen wäre ein Geist, schwieg still und getraute nicht zu rufen oder den Geist anzureden. Als sie die Birne gegessen hatte, war sie gesättigt, und ging und versteckte sich in das Gebüsch. Der König, dem der Garten gehörte, kam am andern Morgen herab, da zählte er und sah, daß eine der Birnen fehlte, und fragte den Gärtner, wo sie hingekommen wäre: sie läge nicht unter dem Baume und wäre doch weg. Da antwortete der Gärtner »vorige Nacht kam ein Geist herein, der hatte keine Hände und aß eine mit dem Munde ab.« Der König sprach »wie ist der Geist über das Wasser hereingekommen? und wo ist er hingegangen, nachdem er die Birne gegessen hatte?« Der Gärtner antwortete »es kam jemand in schneeweißem Kleide vom Himmel, der hat die Schleuse zugemacht und das Wasser gehemmt, damit der Geist durch den Graben gehen konnte. Und weil es ein Engel muß gewesen sein, so habe ich mich gefürchtet, nicht gefragt und nicht gerufen. Als der Geist die Birne gegessen hatte, ist er wieder zurückgegangen.« Der König sprach »verhält es sich, wie du sagst, so will ich diese Nacht bei dir wachen.«

Als es dunkel ward, kam der König in den Garten, und brachte einen Priester mit, der sollte den Geist anreden. Alle drei setzten sich unter den Baum und gaben acht. Um Mitternacht kam das Mädchen aus dem Gebüsch gekrochen, trat zu dem Baum, und aß wieder mit dem Munde eine Birne ab; neben ihr aber stand der Engel im weißen Kleide. Da ging der Priester hervor und sprach »bist du von Gott gekommen oder von der Welt? bist du ein Geist oder ein Mensch?« Sie antwortete »ich bin kein Geist, sondern ein armer Mensch, von allen verlassen, nur von Gott nicht.« Der König sprach »wenn du von aller Welt verlassen bist, so will ich dich nicht verlassen.« Er nahm sie mit sich in sein königliches Schloß, und weil sie so schön und fromm war, liebte er sie von Herzen, ließ ihr silberne Hände machen und nahm sie zu seiner Gemahlin.

Nach einem Jahre mußte der König über Feld ziehen, da befahl er die junge Königin seiner Mutter und sprach »wenn sie ins Kindbett kommt, so haltet und verpflegt sie wohl und schreibt mirs gleich in einem Briefe.« Nun gebar sie einen schönen Sohn. Da schrieb es die alte Mutter eilig und meldete ihm die frohe Nachricht. Der Bote aber ruhte unterwegs an einem Bache, und da er von dem langen Wege ermüdet war, schlief er ein. Da kam der Teufel, welcher der frommen Königin immer zu schaden trachtete, und vertauschte den Brief mit einem andern, darin stand, daß die Königin einen Wechselbalg zur Welt gebracht hätte. Als der König den Brief las, erschrak er und betrübte sich sehr, doch schrieb er zur Antwort, sie sollten die Königin wohl halten und pflegen bis zu seiner Ankunft. Der Bote ging mit dem Brief zurück, ruhte an der nämlichen Stelle und schlief wieder ein. Da kam der Teufel abermals und legte ihm einen andern Brief in die Tasche, darin stand, sie sollten die Königin mit ihrem Kinde töten. Die alte Mutter erschrak heftig, als sie den Brief erhielt, konnte es nicht glauben und schrieb dem Könige noch einmal, aber sie bekam keine andere Antwort, weil der Teufel dem Boten jedesmal einen falschen Brief unterschob: und in dem letzten Briefe stand noch, sie sollten zum Wahrzeichen Zunge und Augen der Königin aufheben.

Aber die alte Mutter weinte, daß so unschuldiges Blut sollte vergossen werden, ließ in der Nacht eine Hirschkuh holen, schnitt ihr Zunge und Augen aus und hob sie auf. Dann sprach sie zu der Königin »ich kann dich nicht töten lassen, wie der König befiehlt, aber länger darfst du nicht hier bleiben: geh mit deinem Kinde in die weite Welt hinein und komm nie wieder zurück.« Sie band ihr das Kind auf den Rücken, und die arme Frau ging mit weiniglichen Augen fort. Sie kam in einen großen wilden Wald, da setzte sie sich auf ihre Knie und betete zu Gott, und der Engel des Herrn erschien ihr und führte sie zu einem kleinen Haus, daran war ein Schildchen mit den Worten »hier wohnt ein jeder frei.« Aus dem Häuschen kam eine schneeweiße Jungfrau, die sprach »willkommen, Frau Königin,« und führte sie hinein. Da band sie ihr den kleinen Knaben von dem Rücken und hielt ihn an ihre Brust, damit er trank, und legte ihn dann auf ein schönes gemachtes Bettchen. Da sprach die arme Frau »woher weißt du, daß ich eine Königin war?« Die weiße Jungfrau antwortete »ich bin ein Engel, von Gott gesandt, dich und dein Kind zu verpflegen.« Da blieb sie in dem Hause sieben Jahre, und war wohl verpflegt, und durch Gottes Gnade wegen ihrer Frömmigkeit wuchsen ihr die abgehauenen Hände wieder.

Der König kam endlich aus dem Felde wieder nach Haus, und sein erstes war, daß er seine Frau mit dem Kinde sehen wollte. Da fing die alte Mutter an zu weinen und sprach »du böser Mann, was hast du mir geschrieben, daß ich zwei unschuldige Seelen ums Leben bringen sollte!« und zeigte ihm die beiden Briefe, die der Böse verfälscht hatte, und sprach weiter »ich habe getan, wie du befohlen hast,« und wies ihm die Wahrzeichen, Zunge und Augen. Da fing der König an noch viel bitterlicher zu weinen über seine arme Frau und sein Söhnlein, daß es die alte Mutter erbarmte und sie zu ihm sprach »gib dich zufrieden, sie lebt noch. Ich habe eine Hirschkuh heimlich schlachten lassen und von dieser die Wahrzeichen genommen, deiner Frau aber habe ich ihr Kind auf den Rücken gebunden, und sie geheißen, in die weite Welt zu gehen, und sie hat versprechen müssen, nie wieder hierher zu kommen, weil du so zornig über sie wärst.« Da sprach der König »ich will gehen, so weit der Himmel blau ist, und nicht essen und nicht trinken, bis ich meine liebe Frau und mein Kind wiedergefunden habe, wenn sie nicht in der Zeit umgekommen oder Hungers gestorben sind.«

Darauf zog der König umher, an die sieben Jahre lang, und suchte sie in allen Steinklippen und Felsenhöhlen, aber er fand sie nicht und dachte, sie wäre verschmachtet. Er aß nicht und trank nicht während dieser ganzen Zeit, aber Gott erhielt ihn. Endlich kam er in einen großen Wald und fand darin das kleine Häuschen, daran das Schildchen war mit den Worten »hier wohnt jeder frei.« Da kam die weiße Jungfrau heraus, nahm ihn bei der Hand, führte ihn hinein und sprach »seid willkommen, Herr König,« und fragte ihn, wo er herkäme. Er antwortete »ich bin bald sieben Jahre umhergezogen, und suche meine Frau mit ihrem Kinde, ich kann sie aber nicht finden.« Der Engel bot ihm Essen und Trinken an, er nahm es aber nicht, und wollte nur ein wenig ruhen. Da legte er sich schlafen, und deckte ein Tuch über sein Gesicht.

Darauf ging der Engel in die Kammer, wo die Königin mit ihrem Sohne saß, den sie gewöhnlich Schmerzenreich nannte, und sprach zu ihr »geh heraus mitsamt deinem Kinde, dein Gemahl ist gekommen.« Da ging sie hin, wo er lag, und das Tuch fiel ihm vom Angesicht. Da sprach sie »Schmerzenreich, heb deinem Vater das Tuch auf und decke ihm sein Gesicht wieder zu.« Das Kind hob es auf und deckte es wieder über sein Gesicht. Das hörte der König im Schlummer und ließ das Tuch noch einmal gerne fallen. Da ward das Knäbchen ungeduldig und sagte »liebe Mutter, wie kann ich meinem Vater das Gesicht zudecken, ich habe ja keinen Vater auf der Welt. Ich habe das Beten gelernt, unser Vater, der du bist im Himmel; da hast du gesagt, mein Vater wär im Himmel und wäre der liebe Gott: wie soll ich einen so wilden Mann kennen? der ist mein Vater nicht.« Wie der König das hörte, richtete er sich auf und fragte, wer sie wäre. Da sagte sie »ich bin deine Frau, und das ist dein Sohn Schmerzenreich.« Und er sah ihre lebendigen Hände und sprach »meine Frau hatte silberne Hände.« Sie antwortete »die natürlichen Hände hat mir der gnädige Gott wieder wachsen lassen;« und der Engel ging in die Kammer, holte die silbernen Hände und zeigte sie ihm. Da sah er erst gewiß, daß es seine liebe Frau und sein liebes Kind war, und küßte sie und war froh, und sagte »ein schwerer Stein ist von meinem Herzen gefallen.« Da speiste sie der Engel Gottes noch einmal zusammen, und dann gingen sie nach Haus zu seiner alten Mutter. Da war große Freude überall, und der König und die Königin hielten noch einmal Hochzeit, und sie lebten vergnügt bis an ihr seliges Ende.

32. Der gescheite Hans.

Hansens Mutter fragt »wohin, Hans?« Hans antwortet »zur Gretel.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel schenkt dem Hans eine Nadel. Hans spricht »adies, Gretel.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans nimmt die Nadel, steckt sie in einen Heuwagen und geht hinter dem Wagen her nach Haus. »Guten Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht, gegeben hat.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Nadel gegeben.« »Wo hast du die Nadel, Hans?« »In Heuwagen gesteckt.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest die Nadel an den Ärmel stecken.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.«

»Wohin, Hans?« »Zur Gretel, Mutter.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel schenkt dem Hans ein Messer. »Adies, Gretel.« »Adies Hans.«

Hans nimmt das Messer, steckts an den Ärmel und geht nach Haus. »Guten Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht, gegeben hat.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Messer gegeben.« »Wo hast das Messer, Hans?« »An den Ärmel gesteckt.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest das Messer in die Tasche stecken.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.« »Wohin, Hans?« »Zur Gretel, Mutter.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel schenkt dem Hans eine junge Ziege. »Adies, Gretel.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans nimmt die Ziege, bindet ihr die Beine und steckt sie in die Tasche. Wie er nach Hause kommt, ist sie erstickt. »Guten Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht, gegeben hat.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Ziege gegeben.« »Wo hast du die Ziege, Hans?« »In die Tasche gesteckt.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest die Ziege an ein Seil binden.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.«

»Wohin, Hans?« »Zur Gretel, Mutter.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel schenkt dem Hans ein Stück Speck. »Adies, Gretel.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans nimmt den Speck, bindet ihn an ein Seil und schleifts hinter sich her. Die Hunde kommen und fressen den Speck ab. Wie er nach Haus kommt, hat er das Seil an der Hand, und ist nichts mehr daran. »Guten

Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht, gegeben hat.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Stück Speck gegeben.« »Wo hast du den Speck, Hans?« »Ans Seil gebunden, heim geführt, Hunde weggeholt.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest den Speck auf dem Kopf tragen.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.«

»Wohin, Hans?« »Zur Gretel, Mutter.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel schenkt dem Hans ein Kalb. »Adies, Gretel.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans nimmt das Kalb, setzt es auf den Kopf, und das Kalb zertritt ihm das Gesicht. »Guten Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht, gegeben hat.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Kalb gegeben.« »Wo hast du das Kalb, Hans?« »Auf den Kopf gesetzt, Gesicht zertreten.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest das Kalb leiten und an die Raufe stellen.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.«

»Wohin, Hans?« »Zur Gretel, Mutter.« »Machs gut, Hans.« »Schon gut machen. Adies, Mutter.« »Adies, Hans.«

Hans kommt zur Gretel. »Guten Tag, Gretel.« »Guten Tag, Hans. Was bringst du Gutes?« »Bring nichts, gegeben han.« Gretel sagt zum Hans »ich will mit dir gehn.«

Hans nimmt die Gretel, bindet sie an ein Seil, leitet sie, führt sie vor die Raufe und knüpft sie fest. Darauf geht Hans zu seiner Mutter. »Guten Abend, Mutter.« »Guten Abend, Hans. Wo bist du gewesen?« »Bei der Gretel gewesen.« »Was hast du ihr gebracht?« »Nichts gebracht.« »Was hat dir Gretel gegeben?« »Nichts gegeben, mitgegangen.« »Wo hast du die Gretel gelassen?« »Am Seil geleitet, vor die Raufe gebunden, Gras vorgeworfen.« »Das hast du dumm gemacht, Hans, mußtest ihr freundliche Augen zuwerfen.« »Tut nichts, besser machen.«

Hans geht in den Stall, sticht allen Kälbern und Schafen die Augen aus und wirft sie der Gretel ins Gesicht. Da wird Gretel böse, reißt sich los und lauft fort, und ist Hansens Braut gewesen.

33. Die drei Sprachen.

In der Schweiz lebte einmal ein alter Graf, der hatte nur einen einzigen Sohn, aber er war dumm und konnte nichts lernen. Da sprach der Vater »höre, mein Sohn, ich bringe nichts in deinen Kopf, ich mag es anfangen, wie ich will. Du mußt fort von hier, ich will dich einem berühmten Meister übergeben, der soll es mit dir versuchen.« Der Junge ward in eine fremde Stadt geschickt, und blieb bei dem Meister ein ganzes Jahr. Nach Verlauf dieser Zeit kam er wieder heim, und der Vater fragte »nun mein Sohn, was hast du gelernt?« »Vater, ich habe gelernt, was die Hunde bellen,« antwortete er. »Daß Gott erbarm,« rief der Vater aus, »ist das alles, was du gelernt hast? ich will dich in eine andere Stadt zu einem andern Meister tun.« Der Junge ward hingebracht, und blieb bei diesem Meister auch ein Jahr. Als er zurückkam, fragte der Vater wiederum »mein Sohn, was hast du gelernt?« Er antwortete »Vater, ich habe gelernt, was die Vögli sprechen.« Da geriet der Vater in Zorn und sprach »o du verlorner Mensch, hast die kostbare Zeit hingebracht und nichts gelernt, und schämst dich nicht, mir unter die Augen zu treten? Ich will dich zu einem dritten Meister schicken, aber lernst du auch diesmal nichts, so will ich dein Vater nicht mehr sein.« Der Sohn blieb bei dem dritten Meister ebenfalls ein ganzes Jahr, und als er wieder nach Haus kam und der Vater fragte »mein Sohn, was hast du gelernt?« so antwortete er »lieber Vater, ich habe dieses Jahr gelernt, was die Frösche quaken.« Da geriet der Vater in den höchsten Zorn, sprang auf, rief seine Leute herbei und sprach »dieser Mensch ist mein Sohn nicht mehr, ich stoße ihn aus und gebiete euch, daß ihr ihn hinaus in den Wald führt und ihm das Leben nehmt.« Sie führten ihn hinaus, aber als sie ihn töten sollten, konnten sie nicht vor Mitleiden und ließen ihn gehen. Sie schnitten einem Reh Augen und Zunge aus, damit sie dem Alten die Wahrzeichen bringen konnten.

Der Jüngling wanderte fort und kam nach einiger Zeit zu einer Burg, wo er um Nachtherberge bat. »Ja,« sagte der Burgherr, »wenn du da unten in dem alten Turm übernachten willst, so gehe hin, aber ich warne dich, es ist lebensgefährlich, denn er ist voll wilder Hunde, die bellen und heulen in einem fort, und zu gewissen Stunden müssen sie einen Menschen ausgeliefert haben, den sie auch gleich verzehren.« Die ganze Gegend war darüber in Trauer und Leid, und konnte doch niemand helfen. Der Jüngling aber war ohne Furcht und sprach »laßt mich nur hinab zu den bellenden Hunden, und gebt mir etwas, das ich ihnen vorwerfen kann; mir sollen sie nichts tun.« Weil er nun selber nicht anders wollte, so gaben sie ihm etwas Essen für die wilden Tiere und brachten ihn hinab zu dem Turm. Als er hineintrat, bellten ihn die Hunde nicht an, wedelten mit den Schwänzen ganz freundlich um ihn herum, fraßen, was er ihnen hinsetzte, und krümmten ihm kein Härchen. Am andern Morgen kam er zu jedermanns Erstaunen gesund und unversehrt wieder zum Vorschein und sagte zu dem Burgherrn »die Hunde haben mir in ihrer Sprache offenbart, warum sie da hausen und dem

Lande Schaden bringen. Sie sind verwünscht und müssen einen großen Schatz hüten, der unten im Turme liegt, und kommen nicht eher zur Ruhe, als bis er gehoben ist, und wie dies geschehen muß, das habe ich ebenfalls aus ihren Reden vernommen.« Da freuten sich alle, die das hörten, und der Burgherr sagte, er wollte ihn an Sohnes Statt annehmen, wenn er es glücklich vollbrächte. Er stieg wieder hinab, und weil er wußte, was er zu tun hatte, so vollführte er es und brachte eine mit Gold gefüllte Truhe herauf. Das Geheul der wilden Hunde ward von nun an nicht mehr gehört, sie waren verschwunden, und das Land war von der Plage befreit.

Über eine Zeit kam es ihm in den Sinn, er wollte nach Rom fahren. Auf dem Weg kam er an einem Sumpf vorbei, in welchem Frösche saßen und quakten. Er horchte auf, und als er vernahm, was sie sprachen, ward er ganz nachdenklich und traurig. Endlich langte er in Rom an, da war gerade der Papst gestorben, und unter den Kardinälen großer Zweifel, wen sie zum Nachfolger bestimmen sollten. Sie wurden zuletzt einig, derjenige sollte zum Papst erwählt werden, an dem sich ein göttliches Wunderzeichen offenbaren würde. Und als das eben beschlossen war, in demselben Augenblick trat der junge Graf in die Kirche, und plötzlich flogen zwei schneeweiße Tauben auf seine beiden Schultern und blieben da sitzen. Die Geistlichkeit erkannte darin das Zeichen Gottes und fragte ihn auf der Stelle, ob er Papst werden wolle. Er war unschlüssig und wußte nicht, ob er dessen würdig wäre, aber die Tauben redeten ihm zu, daß er es tun möchte, und endlich sagte er »ja.« Da wurde er gesalbt und geweiht, und damit war eingetroffen, was er von den Fröschen unterwegs gehört und was ihn so bestürzt gemacht hatte, daß er der heilige Papst werden sollte. Darauf mußte er eine Messe singen und wußte kein Wort davon, aber die zwei Tauben saßen stets auf seinen Schultern und sagten ihm alles ins Ohr.

34. Die kluge Else.

Es war ein Mann, der hatte eine Tochter, die hieß die kluge Else. Als sie nun erwachsen war, sprach der Vater »wir wollen sie heiraten lassen.« »Ja,« sagte die Mutter, »wenn nur einer käme, der sie haben wollte.« Endlich kam von weither einer, der hieß Hans, und hielt um sie an, er machte aber die Bedingung, daß die kluge Else auch recht gescheit wäre. »O,« sprach der Vater, »die hat Zwirn im Kopf,« und die Mutter sagte »ach, die sieht den Wind auf der Gasse laufen und hört die Fliegen husten.« »Ja,« sprach der Hans, »wenn sie nicht recht gescheit ist, so nehm ich sie nicht.« Als sie nun zu Tisch saßen und gegessen hatten, sprach die Mutter »Else, geh in den Keller und hol Bier.« Da nahm die kluge Else den Krug von der Wand, ging in den Keller und klappte unterwegs brav mit dem Deckel, damit ihr die Zeit ja nicht lang würde. Als sie unten war, holte sie ein Stühlchen und stellte es vors Faß, damit sie sich nicht zu bücken brauchte und ihrem Rücken etwa nicht wehe täte und unverhofften Schaden nähme. Dann stellte sie die Kanne vor sich und drehte den Hahn auf, und während der Zeit, daß das Bier hineinlief, wollte sie doch ihre Augen nicht müßig lassen, sah oben an die Wand hinauf und erblickte nach vielem Hin- und Herschauen eine Kreuzhacke gerade über sich, welche die Maurer da aus Versehen hatten stecken lassen. Da fing die kluge Else an zu weinen und sprach »wenn ich den Hans kriege, und wir kriegen ein Kind, und das ist groß, und wir schicken das Kind in den Keller, daß es hier soll Bier zapfen, so fällt ihm die Kreuzhacke auf den Kopf und schlägts tot.« Da saß sie und weinte und schrie aus Leibeskräften über das bevorstehende Unglück. Die oben warteten auf den Trank, aber die kluge Else kam immer nicht. Da sprach die Frau zur Magd »geh doch hinunter in den Keller und sieh, wo die Else bleibt.« Die Magd ging und fand sie vor dem Fasse sitzend und laut schreiend. »Else, was weinst du?« fragte die Magd. »Ach,« antwortete sie, »soll ich nicht weinen? wenn ich den Hans kriege, und wir kriegen ein Kind, und das ist groß, und soll hier Trinken zapfen, so fällt ihm vielleicht die Kreuzhacke auf den Kopf und schlägt es tot.« Da sprach die Magd »was haben wir für eine kluge Else!« setzte sich zu ihr und fing auch an über das Unglück zu weinen. Über eine Weile, als die Magd nicht wiederkam, und die droben durstig nach dem Trank waren, sprach der Mann zum Knecht »geh doch hinunter in den Keller und sieh, wo die Else und die Magd bleibt.« Der Knecht ging hinab, da saß die kluge Else und die Magd, und weinten beide zusammen. Da fragte er »was weint ihr denn?« »Ach,« sprach die Else, »soll ich nicht weinen? wenn ich den Hans kriege, und wir kriegen ein Kind, und das ist groß, und soll hier Trinken zapfen, so fällt ihm die Kreuzhacke auf den Kopf und schlägts tot.« Da sprach der Knecht »was haben wir für eine kluge Else!« setzte sich zu ihr und fing auch an laut zu heulen. Oben warteten sie auf den Knecht, als er aber immer nicht kam, sprach der Mann zur Frau »geh doch hinunter in den Keller und sieh, wo die Else bleibt.« Die Frau ging hinab und fand alle drei in Wehklagen, und fragte nach der

Ursache, da erzählte ihr die Else auch, daß ihr zukünftiges Kind wohl würde von der Kreuzhacke totgeschlagen werden, wenn es erst groß wäre, und Bier zapfen sollte, und die Kreuzhacke fiele herab. Da sprach die Mutter gleichfalls »ach, was haben wir für eine kluge Else!« setzte sich hin und weinte mit. Der Mann oben wartete noch ein Weilchen, als aber seine Frau nicht wiederkam und sein Durst immer stärker ward, sprach er »ich muß nur selber in den Keller gehn und sehen, wo die Else bleibt.« Als er aber in den Keller kam, und alle da beieinander saßen und weinten, und er die Ursache hörte, daß das Kind der Else schuld wäre, das sie vielleicht einmal zur Welt brächte und von der Kreuzhacke könnte totgeschlagen werden, wenn es gerade zur Zeit, wo sie herabfiele, darunter säße, Bier zu zapfen: da rief er »was für eine kluge Else!« setzte sich und weinte auch mit. Der Bräutigam blieb lange oben allein, da niemand wiederkommen wollte, dachte er »sie werden unten auf dich warten, du mußt auch hingehen und sehen, was sie vorhaben.« Als er hinabkam, saßen da fünfe und schrien und jammerten ganz erbärmlich, einer immer besser als der andere. »Was für ein Unglück ist denn geschehen?« fragte er. »Ach, lieber Hans,« sprach die Else, »wann wir einander heiraten und haben ein Kind, und es ist groß, und wir schickens vielleicht hierher, Trinken zu zapfen, da kann ihm ja die Kreuzhacke, die da oben ist stecken geblieben, wenn sie herabfallen sollte, den Kopf zerschlagen, daß es liegen bleibt; sollen wir da nicht weinen?« »Nun,« sprach Hans, »mehr Verstand ist für meinen Haushalt nicht nötig; weil du so eine kluge Else bist, so will ich dich haben,« packte sie bei der Hand und nahm sie mit hinauf und hielt Hochzeit mit ihr.

Als sie den Hans eine Weile hatte, sprach er »Frau, ich will ausgehen arbeiten und uns Geld verdienen, geh du ins Feld und schneid das Korn, daß wir Brot haben.« »Ja, mein lieber Hans, das will ich tun.« Nachdem der Hans fort war, kochte sie sich einen guten Brei und nahm ihn mit ins Feld. Als sie vor den Acker kam, sprach sie zu sich selbst »was tu ich? schneid ich ehr? oder eß ich ehr? hei, ich will erst essen.« Nun aß sie ihren Topf mit Brei aus, und als sie dick satt war, sprach sie wieder »was tu ich? schneid ich ehr, oder schlaf ich ehr? hei, ich will erst schlafen.« Da legte sie sich ins Korn und schlief ein. Der Hans war längst zu Haus, aber die Else wollte nicht kommen, da sprach er »was hab ich für eine kluge Else, die ist so fleißig, daß sie nicht einmal nach Haus kommt und ißt.« Als sie aber noch immer ausblieb und es Abend ward, ging der Hans hinaus und wollte sehen, was sie geschnitten hätte: aber es war nichts geschnitten, sondern sie lag im Korn und schlief. Da eilte Hans geschwind heim, und holte ein Vogelgarn mit kleinen Schellen und hängte es um sie herum; und sie schlief noch immer fort. Dann lief er heim, schloß die Haustüre zu und setzte sich auf seinen Stuhl und arbeitete. Endlich, als es schon ganz dunkel war, erwachte die kluge Else, und als sie aufstand, rappelte es um sie herum, und die Schellen klingelten bei jedem Schritte, den sie tat. Da erschrak sie, ward irre, ob sie auch wirklich die kluge Else wäre, und sprach »bin ichs, oder bin ichs nicht?« Sie wußte aber nicht, was sie darauf antworten sollte, und stand eine Zeitlang zweifelhaft: endlich dachte sie »ich will nach Haus gehen und fragen, ob ichs bin oder ob ichs nicht bin, die werdens ja wissen.« Sie lief vor ihre Haustüre, aber die war verschlossen: da klopfte sie an das Fenster und rief »Hans, ist die Else drinnen?« »Ja,« antwortete Hans, »sie ist drinnen.« Da erschrak sie und sprach »ach Gott, dann bin ichs nicht,« und ging vor eine andere Tür; als aber die Leute das Klingeln der Schellen hörten, wollten sie nicht aufmachen, und sie konnte nirgends unterkommen. Da lief sie fort zum Dorfe hinaus, und niemand hat sie wieder gesehen.

35. Der Schneider im Himmel.

Es trug sich zu, daß der liebe Gott an einem schönen Tag in dem himmlischen Garten sich ergehen wollte und alle Apostel und Heiligen mitnahm, also daß niemand mehr im Himmel blieb als der heilige Petrus. Der Herr hatte ihm befohlen, während seiner Abwesenheit niemand einzulassen, Petrus stand also an der Pforte und hielt Wache. Nicht lange, so klopfte jemand an. Petrus fragte, wer da wäre und was er wollte. »Ich bin ein armer ehrlicher Schneider,« antwortete eine feine Stimme, »der um Einlaß bittet.« »Ja, ehrlich,« sagte Petrus, »wie der Dieb am Galgen, du hast lange Finger gemacht und den Leuten das Tuch abgezwickt. Du kommst nicht in den Himmel, der Herr hat mir verboten, solange er draußen wäre, irgend jemand einzulassen.« »Seid doch barmherzig,« rief der Schneider, »kleine Flicklappen, die von selbst vom Tisch herabfallen, sind nicht gestohlen und nicht der Rede wert. Seht, ich hinke und habe von dem Weg daher Blasen an den Füßen, ich kann unmöglich wieder umkehren. Laßt mich nur hinein, ich will alle schlechte Arbeit tun. Ich will die Kinder tragen, die Windeln waschen, die Bänke, darauf sie gespielt haben, säubern und abwischen, und ihre zerrissenen Kleider flicken.« Der heilige Petrus ließ sich aus Mit leiden bewegen und öffnete dem lahmen Schneider die Himmelspforte so weit, daß er mit seinem dürren Leib hineinschlüpfen konnte. Er mußte sich in einen Winkel hinter die Türe setzen, und sollte sich da still und ruhig verhalten, damit ihn der Herr, wenn er zurückkäme, nicht bemerkte und zornig würde. Der Schneider gehorchte, als aber der heilige Petrus einmal zur Türe hinaustrat, stand er auf, ging voll Neugierde in allen Winkeln des Himmels herum und besah sich die Gelegenheit. Endlich kam er zu einem Platz, da standen viele schöne und köstliche Stühle und in der Mitte ein ganz goldener Sessel, der mit glänzenden Edelsteinen besetzt war; er war auch viel höher als die übrigen Stühle, und ein goldener Fußschemel stand davor. Es war aber der Sessel, auf welchem der Herr saß, wenn er daheim war, und von welchem er alles sehen konnte, was auf Erden geschah. Der Schneider stand still und sah den Sessel eine gute Weile an, denn er gefiel ihm besser als alles andere. Endlich konnte er den Vorwitz nicht bezähmen, stieg hinauf und setzte sich in den Sessel. Da sah er alles, was auf Erden geschah, und bemerkte eine alte häßliche Frau, die an einem Bach stand und wusch, und zwei Schleier heimlich beiseite tat. Der Schneider erzürnte sich bei diesem Anblicke so sehr, daß er den goldenen Fußschemel ergriff und durch den Himmel auf die Erde hinab nach der alten Diebin warf. Da er aber den Schemel nicht wieder heraufholen konnte, so schlich er sich sachte aus dem Sessel weg, setzte sich an seinen Platz hinter die Türe und tat, als ob er kein Wasser getrübt hätte.

Als der Herr und Meister mit dem himmlischen Gefolge wieder zurückkam, ward er zwar den Schneider hinter der Türe nicht gewahr, als er sich aber auf seinen Sessel setzte, mangelte der Schemel. Er fragte den heiligen Petrus, wo der Schemel hingekommen wäre, der wußte es nicht. Da fragte er weiter, ob er jemand hereingelassen hätte. »Ich weiß niemand,« antwortete Petrus, »der da gewesen wäre, als ein lahmer Schneider, der noch hinter der Türe sitzt.« Da ließ der Herr den Schneider vor sich treten und fragte ihn, ob er den Schemel weggenommen und wo er ihn hingetan hätte. »O Herr,« antwortete der Schneider freudig, »ich habe ihn im Zorne hinab auf die Erde nach einem alten Weibe geworfen, das ich bei der Wäsche zwei Schleier stehlen sah.« »O du Schalk,« sprach der Herr, »wollt ich richten, wie du richtest, wie meinst du, daß es dir schon längst ergangen wäre? ich hätte schon lange keine Stühle, Bänke, Sessel, ja keine Ofengabel mehr hier gehabt, sondern alles nach den Sündern hinabgeworfen. Fortan kannst du nicht mehr im Himmel bleiben, sondern mußt wieder hinaus vor das Tor: da sieh zu, wo du hinkommst. Hier soll niemand strafen, denn ich allein, der Herr.«

Petrus mußte den Schneider wieder hinaus vor den Himmel bringen, und weil er zerrissene Schuhe hatte und die Füße voll Blasen, nahm er einen Stock in die Hand, und zog nach Warteinweil, wo die frommen Soldaten sitzen und sich lustig machen.

36. Tischchen deck dich,

Goldesel und Knüppel aus dem Sack

Vor Zeiten war ein Schneider, der drei Söhne hatte und nur eine einzige Ziege. Aber die Ziege, weil sie alle zusammen mit ihrer Milch ernährte, mußte ihr gutes Futter haben und täglich hinaus auf die Weide geführt werden. Die Söhne taten das auch nach der Reihe. Einmal brachte sie der älteste auf den Kirchhof, wo die schönsten Kräuter standen, ließ sie da fressen und herumspringen. Abends, als es Zeit war heimzugehen, fragte er »Ziege, bist du satt?« Die Ziege antwortete

»ich bin so satt,
ich mag kein Blatt: meh! meh!«

»So komm nach Haus,« sprach der Junge, faßte sie am Strickchen, führte sie in den Stall und band sie fest. »Nun,« sagte der alte Schneider, »hat die Ziege ihr gehöriges Futter?« »O,« antwortete der Sohn, »die ist so satt, sie mag kein Blatt.« Der Vater aber wollte sich selbst überzeugen, ging hinab in den Stall, streichelte das liebe Tier und fragte »Ziege, bist du auch satt?« Die Ziege antwortete

»wovon sollt ich satt sein?
ich sprang nur über Gräbelein,
und fand kein einzig Blättelein: meh! meh!«

»Was muß ich hören!« rief der Schneider, lief hinauf und sprach zu dem Jungen »ei, du Lügner, sagst, die Ziege wäre satt, und hast sie hungern lassen?« und in seinem Zorne nahm er die Elle von der Wand und jagte ihn mit Schlägen hinaus.

Am andern Tag war die Reihe am zweiten Sohn, der suchte an der Gartenhecke einen Platz aus, wo lauter gute Kräuter standen, und die Ziege fraß sie rein ab. Abends, als er heim wollte, fragte er »Ziege, bist du satt?« Die Ziege antwortete

»ich bin so satt,
ich mag kein Blatt: meh! meh!«

»So komm nach Haus,« sprach der Junge, zog sie heim und band sie im Stall fest. »Nun,« sagte der alte Schneider, »hat die Ziege ihr gehöriges Futter?« »O,« antwortete der Sohn, »die ist so satt, sie mag kein Blatt.« Der Schneider wollte sich darauf nicht verlassen, ging hinab in den Stall und fragte »Ziege, bist du auch satt?« Die Ziege antwortete

»wovon sollt ich satt sein?
ich sprang nur über Gräbelein,

und fand kein einzig Blättelein: meh!«

»Der gottlose Bösewicht!« schrie der Schneider, »so ein frommes Tier hungern zu lassen!« lief hinauf und schlug mit der Elle den Jungen zur Haustüre hinaus.

Die Reihe kam jetzt an den dritten Sohn, der wollte seine Sache gut machen, suchte Buschwerk mit dem schönsten Laube aus, und ließ die Ziege daran fressen. Abends, als er heim wollte, fragte er »Ziege, bist du auch satt?« Die Ziege antwortete

»ich bin so satt,
ich mag kein Blatt: meh! meh!«

»So komm nach Haus,« sagte der Junge, führte sie in den Stall und band sie fest. »Nun,« sagte der alte Schneider, »hat die Ziege ihr gehöriges Futter?« »O,« antwortete der Sohn, »die ist so satt, sie mag kein Blatt.« Der Schneider traute nicht, ging hinab und fragte »Ziege, bist du auch satt?« Das boshafte Tier antwortete

»wovon sollt ich satt sein?
ich sprang nur über Gräbelein,
und fand kein einzig Blättelein: meh! meh!«

»O die Lügenbrut!« rief der Schneider, »einer so gottlos und pflichtvergessen wie der andere! ihr sollt mich nicht länger zum Narren haben!« und vor Zorn ganz außer sich sprang er hinauf und gerbte dem armen Jungen mit der Elle den Rücken so gewaltig, daß er zum Haus hinaussprang.

Der alte Schneider war nun mit seiner Ziege allein. Am andern Morgen ging er hinab in den Stall, liebkoste die Ziege und sprach »komm, mein liebes Tierlein, ich will dich selbst zur Weide führen.« Er nahm sie am Strick und brachte sie zu grünen Hecken und unter Schafrippe, und was sonst die Ziegen gerne fressen. »Da kannst du dich einmal nach Herzenslust sättigen,« sprach er zu ihr, und ließ sie weiden bis zum Abend. Da fragte er »Ziege, bist du satt?« Sie antwortete

»ich bin so satt,
ich mag kein Blatt: meh! meh!«

»So komm nach Haus,« sagte der Schneider, führte sie in den Stall und band sie fest. Als er wegging, kehrte er sich noch einmal um und sagte »nun bist du doch einmal satt!« Aber die Ziege machte es ihm nicht besser und rief

»wie sollt ich satt sein?
ich sprang nur über Gräbelein,

und fand kein einzig Blättelein: meh! meh!«

Als der Schneider das hörte, stutzte er und sah wohl, daß er seine drei Söhne ohne Ursache verstoßen hatte. »Wart,« rief er, »du undankbares Geschöpf, dich fortzujagen ist noch zu wenig, ich will dich zeichnen, daß du dich unter ehrbaren Schneidern nicht mehr darfst sehen lassen.« In einer Hast sprang er hinauf, holte sein Bartmesser, seifte der Ziege den Kopf ein, und schor sie so glatt wie seine flache Hand. Und weil die Elle zu ehrenvoll gewesen wäre, holte er die Peitsche und versetzte ihr solche Hiebe, daß sie in gewaltigen Sprüngen davonlief.

Der Schneider, als er so ganz einsam in seinem Hause saß, verfiel in große Traurigkeit und hätte seine Söhne gerne wiedergehabt, aber niemand wußte, wo sie hingeraten waren. Der älteste war zu einem Schreiner in die Lehre gegangen, da lernte er fleißig und unverdrossen, und als seine Zeit herum war, daß er wandern sollte, schenkte ihm der Meister ein Tischchen, das gar kein besonderes Ansehen hatte und von gewöhnlichem Holz war: aber es hatte eine gute Eigenschaft. Wenn man es hinstellte und sprach »Tischchen, deck dich,« so war das gute Tischchen auf einmal mit einem saubern Tüchlein bedeckt, und stand da ein Teller, und Messer und Gabel daneben, und Schüsseln mit Gesottenem und Gebratenem, so viel Platz hatten, und ein großes Glas mit rotem Wein leuchtete, daß einem das Herz lachte. Der junge Gesell dachte »damit hast du genug für dein Lebtag,« zog guter Dinge in der Welt umher und bekümmerte sich gar nicht darum, ob ein Wirtshaus gut oder schlecht und ob etwas darin zu finden war oder nicht. Wenn es ihm gefiel, so kehrte er gar nicht ein, sondern im Felde, im Wald, auf einer Wiese, wo er Lust hatte, nahm er sein Tischchen vom Rücken, stellte es vor sich und sprach »deck dich,« so war alles da, was sein Herz begehrte. Endlich kam es ihm in den Sinn, er wollte zu seinem Vater zurückkehren, sein Zorn würde sich gelegt haben, und mit dem Tischchen deck dich würde er ihn gerne wieder aufnehmen. Es trug sich zu, daß er auf dem Heimweg abends in ein Wirtshaus kam, das mit Gästen angefüllt war: sie hießen ihn willkommen und luden ihn ein, sich zu ihnen zu setzen und mit ihnen zu essen, sonst würde er schwerlich noch etwas bekommen. »Nein,« antwortete der Schreiner, »die paar Bissen will ich euch nicht vor dem Munde nehmen, lieber sollt ihr meine Gäste sein.« Sie lachten und meinten, er triebe seinen Spaß mit ihnen. Er aber stellte sein hölzernes Tischchen mitten in die Stube und sprach »Tischchen, deck dich.« Augenblicklich war es mit Speisen besetzt, so gut, wie sie der Wirt nicht hätte herbeischaffen können, und wovon der Geruch den Gästen lieblich in die Nase stieg. »Zugegriffen, liebe Freunde,« sprach der Schreiner, und die Gäste, als sie sahen, wie es gemeint war, ließen sich nicht zweimal bitten, rückten heran, zogen ihre Messer und griffen tapfer zu. Und was sie am meisten verwunderte, wenn eine Schüssel leer geworden war, so stellte sich gleich von selbst eine volle an ihren Platz. Der Wirt stand in einer Ecke und sah dem Dinge zu; er wußte gar nicht, was er sagen sollte, dachte aber »einen solchen Koch könntest du in deiner Wirtschaft wohl brauchen.« Der Schreiner und seine Gesellschaft waren lustig bis in die späte Nacht, endlich legten sie sich schlafen, und der junge Geselle ging auch zu Bett und stellte sein Wünschtischchen an die Wand. Dem Wirte aber ließen seine Gedanken keine Ruhe, es fiel ihm ein, daß in seiner Rumpelkammer ein altes Tischchen stände, das gerade so aussähe: das holte er ganz sachte herbei und vertauschte es mit dem Wünschtischchen. Am andern Morgen zahlte der Schreiner sein Schlafgeld, packte sein Tischchen auf, dachte gar nicht daran, daß er ein falsches hätte, und ging seiner Wege. Zu Mittag kam er bei seinem Vater an, der ihn mit großer Freude empfing. »Nun, mein lieber Sohn, was hast du gelernt?« sagte er zu ihm. »Vater, ich bin ein Schreiner geworden.« »Ein gutes Handwerk,« erwiderte der Alte, »aber was hast du von deiner Wanderschaft mit gebracht?« »Vater, das Beste, was ich mitgebracht habe, ist das Tischchen.« Der Schneider betrachtete es von allen Seiten und sagte »daran hast du kein Meisterstück gemacht, das ist ein altes und schlechtes Tischchen.« »Aber es ist ein Tischchen deck dich,« antwortete der Sohn, »wenn ich es hinstelle, und sage ihm, es solle sich decken, so stehen gleich die schönsten Gerichte darauf und ein Wein dabei, der das Herz erfreut. Ladet nur alle Verwandte und Freunde ein, die sollen sich einmal laben und erquicken, denn das Tischchen macht sie alle satt.« Als die Gesellschaft beisammen war, stellte er sein Tischchen mitten in die Stube und sprach »Tischchen, deck dich.« Aber das Tischchen regte sich nicht und blieb so leer wie ein anderer Tisch, der die Sprache nicht versteht. Da merkte der arme Geselle, daß ihm das Tischchen vertauscht war, und schämte sich, daß er wie ein Lügner dastand. Die Verwandten aber lachten ihn aus und mußten ungetrunken und ungegessen wieder heim wandern. Der Vater holte seine Lappen wieder herbei und schneiderte fort, der Sohn aber ging bei einem Meister in die Arbeit.

Der zweite Sohn war zu einem Müller gekommen und bei ihm in die Lehre gegangen. Als er seine Jahre herum hatte, sprach der Meister »weil du dich so wohl gehalten hast, so schenke ich dir einen Esel von einer besondern Art, er zieht nicht am Wagen und trägt auch keine Säcke.« »Wozu ist er denn nütze?« fragte der junge Geselle. »Er speit Gold,« antwortete der Müller, »wenn du ihn auf ein Tuch stellst und sprichst »Bricklebrit,« so speit dir das gute Tier Goldstücke aus, hinten und vorn.« »Das ist eine schöne Sache,« sprach der Geselle, dankte dem Meister und zog in die Welt. Wenn er Gold nötig hatte, brauchte er nur zu seinem Esel »Bricklebrit« zu sagen, so regnete es Goldstücke, und er hatte weiter keine Mühe, als sie von der Erde aufzuheben. Wo er hinkam, war ihm das Beste gut genug, und je teurer je lieber, denn er hatte immer einen vollen Beutel. Als er sich eine Zeitlang in der Welt umgesehen hatte, dachte er »du mußt deinen Vater aufsuchen, wenn du mit dem Goldesel kommst, so wird er seinen Zorn vergessen und dich gut aufnehmen.« Es trug sich zu, daß er in dasselbe Wirtshaus geriet, in welchem seinem Bruder das Tischchen vertauscht war. Er führte seinen Esel an der Hand, und der Wirt wollte ihm das Tier abnehmen und anbinden, der junge Geselle aber sprach »gebt Euch keine Mühe, meinen Grauschimmel führe ich selbst in den Stall und binde ihn auch selbst an, denn ich muß wissen, wo er steht.« Dem Wirt kam es wunderlich vor und er meinte, einer, der seinen Esel selbst besorgen müßte, hätte nicht viel zu verzehren: als aber der Fremde in die Tasche griff, zwei Goldstücke herausholte und sagte, er sollte nur etwas Gutes für ihn einkaufen, so machte er große Augen, lief und suchte das Beste, das er auftreiben konnte. Nach der Mahlzeit fragte der Gast, was er schuldig wäre, der Wirt wollte die doppelte Kreide nicht sparen und sagte, noch ein paar Goldstücke müßte er zulegen. Der Geselle griff in die Tasche, aber sein Gold war eben zu Ende. »Wartet einen Augenblick, Herr Wirt,« sprach er, »ich will nur gehen und Gold holen;« nahm aber das Tischtuch mit. Der Wirt wußte nicht, was das heißen sollte, war neugierig, schlich ihm nach, und da der Gast die Stalltüre zuriegelte, so guckte er durch ein Astloch. Der Fremde breitete unter dem Esel das Tuch aus, rief »Bricklebrit,« und augenblicklich fing das Tier an, Gold zu speien von hinten und vorn, daß es ordentlich auf die Erde herabregnete. »Ei der tausend,« sagte der Wirt, »da sind die Dukaten bald geprägt! so ein Geldbeutel ist nicht übel!« Der Gast bezahlte seine Zeche und legte sich schlafen, der Wirt aber schlich in der Nacht herab in den Stall, führte den Münzmeister weg und band einen andern Esel an seine Stelle. Den folgenden Morgen in der Frühe zog der Geselle mit seinem Esel ab und meinte, er hätte seinen Goldesel. Mittags kam er bei seinem Vater an, der sich freute, als er ihn wiedersah, und ihn gerne aufnahm. »Was ist aus dir geworden, mein Sohn?« fragte der Alte. »Ein Müller, lieber Vater,« antwortete er. »Was hast du von deiner Wanderschaft mitgebracht?« »Weiter nichts als einen Esel.« »Esel gibts hier genug,« sagte der Vater, »da wäre mir doch eine gute Ziege lieber gewesen.« »Ja,« antwortete der Sohn, »aber es ist kein gemeiner Esel, sondern ein Goldesel: wenn ich sage »Bricklebrit,« so speit Euch das gute Tier ein ganzes Tuch voll Goldstücke. Laßt nur alle Verwandte herbeirufen, ich mache sie alle zu reichen Leuten.« »Das laß ich mir gefallen,« sagte der Schneider, »dann brauch ich mich mit der Nadel nicht weiter zu quälen,« sprang selbst fort und rief die Verwandten herbei. Sobald sie beisammen waren, hieß sie der Müller Platz machen, breitete sein Tuch aus, und brachte den Esel in die Stube. »Jetzt gebt acht,« sagte er und rief »Bricklebrit,« aber es waren keine Goldstücke, was herabfiel, und es zeigte sich, daß das Tier nichts von der Kunst verstand, denn es bringts nicht jeder Esel so weit. Da machte der arme Müller ein langes Gesicht, sah, daß er betrogen war, und bat die Verwandten um Verzeihung, die so arm heimgingen, als sie gekommen waren. Es blieb nichts übrig, der Alte mußte wieder nach der Nadel greifen, und der Junge sich bei einem Müller verdingen.

Der dritte Bruder war zu einem Drechsler in die Lehre gegangen, und weil es ein kunstreiches Handwerk ist, mußte er am längsten lernen. Seine Brüder aber meldeten ihm in einem Briefe, wie schlimm es ihnen ergangen wäre, und wie sie der Wirt noch am letzten Abende um ihre schönen Wünschdinge gebracht hätte. Als der Drechsler nun ausgelernt hatte und wandern sollte, so schenkte ihm sein Meister, weil er sich so wohl gehalten, einen Sack und sagte »es liegt ein Knüppel darin.« »Den Sack kann ich umhängen, und er kann mir gute Dienste leisten, aber was soll der Knüppel darin? der macht ihn nur schwer.« »Das will ich dir sagen,« antwortete der Meister, »hat dir jemand etwas zuleid getan, so sprich nur »Knüppel, aus dem Sack,« so springt dir der Knüppel heraus unter die Leute und tanzt ihnen so lustig auf dem Rücken herum, daß sie sich acht Tage lang nicht regen und bewegen können; und eher läßt er nicht ab, als bis du sagst »Knüppel, in den Sack.« Der Gesell dankte ihm, hing den Sack um, und wenn ihm jemand zu nahe kam und auf den Leib wollte, so sprach er »Knüppel, aus dem Sack,« alsbald sprang der Knüppel heraus und klopfte einem nach dem andern den Rock oder Wams gleich auf dem Rücken aus, und wartete nicht erst, bis er ihn ausgezogen hatte; und das ging so geschwind, daß, eh sichs einer versah, die Reihe schon an ihm war. Der junge Drechsler langte zur Abendzeit in dem Wirtshaus an, wo seine Brüder waren betrogen worden. Er legte seinen Ranzen vor sich auf den Tisch und fing an zu erzählen, was er alles Merkwürdiges in der Welt gesehen habe. »Ja,« sagte er, »man findet wohl ein Tischchen deck dich, einen Goldesel und dergleichen: lauter gute Dinge, die ich nicht verachte, aber das ist alles nichts gegen den Schatz, den ich mir erworben habe und mit mir da in meinem Sack führe.« Der Wirt spitzte die Ohren: »was in aller Welt mag das sein?« dachte er, »der Sack ist wohl mit lauter Edelsteinen angefüllt; den sollte ich billig auch noch haben, denn aller guten Dinge sind drei.« Als Schlafenszeit war, streckte sich der Gast auf die Bank und legte seinen Sack als Kopfkissen unter. Der Wirt, als er meinte, der Gast läge in tiefem Schlaf, ging herbei, rückte und zog ganz sachte und vorsichtig an dem Sack, ob er ihn vielleicht wegziehen und einen andern unterlegen könnte. Der Drechsler aber hatte schon lange darauf gewartet, wie nun der Wirt eben einen herzhaften Ruck tun wollte, rief er »Knüppel, aus dem Sack.« Alsbald fuhr das Knüppelchen heraus, dem Wirt auf den Leib, und rieb ihm die Nähte, daß es eine Art hatte. Der Wirt schrie zum Erbarmen, aber je lauter er schrie, desto kräftiger schlug der Knüppel ihm den Takt dazu auf dem Rücken, bis er endlich erschöpft zur Erde fiel. Da sprach der Drechsler »wo du das Tischchen deck dich und den Goldesel nicht wieder herausgibst, so soll der Tanz von neuem angehen.« »Ach nein,« rief der Wirt ganz kleinlaut, »ich gebe alles gerne wieder heraus, laßt nur den verwünschten Kobold wieder in den Sack kriechen.« Da sprach der Geselle »ich will Gnade für Recht ergehen lassen, aber hüte dich vor Schaden!« dann rief er »Knüppel, in den Sack!« und ließ ihn ruhen.

Der Drechsler zog am andern Morgen mit dem Tischchen deck dich und dem Goldesel heim zu seinem Vater. Der Schneider freute sich, als er ihn wiedersah, und fragte auch ihn, was er in der Fremde gelernt hätte. »Lieber Vater,« antwortete er, »ich bin ein Drechsler geworden.« »Ein kunstreiches Handwerk,« sagte der Vater, »was hast du von der Wanderschaft mitgebracht?« »Ein kostbares Stück, lieber Vater,« antwortete der Sohn, »einen Knüppel in dem Sack.« »Was!« rief der Vater, »einen Knüppel! das ist der Mühe wert! den kannst du dir von jedem Baume abhauen.« »Aber einen solchen nicht, lieber Vater: sage ich »Knüppel, aus dem Sack,« so springt der Knüppel heraus und macht mit dem, der es nicht gut mit mir meint, einen schlimmen Tanz, und läßt nicht eher nach, als bis er auf der Erde liegt und um gut Wetter bittet. Seht Ihr, mit diesem Knüppel habe ich das Tischchen deck dich und den Goldesel wieder herbeigeschafft, die der diebische Wirt meinen Brüdern abgenommen hatte. Jetzt laßt sie beide rufen und ladet alle Verwandten ein, ich will sie speisen und tränken und will ihnen die Taschen noch mit Gold füllen.« Der alte Schneider wollte nicht recht trauen, brachte aber doch die Verwandten zusammen. Da deckte der Drechsler ein Tuch in die Stube, führte den Goldesel herein und sagte zu seinem Bruder »nun, lieber Bruder, sprich mit ihm.« Der Müller sagte »Bricklebrit,« und augenblicklich sprangen die Goldstücke auf das Tuch herab, als käme ein Platzregen, und der Esel hörte nicht eher auf, als bis alle so viel hatten, daß sie nicht mehr tragen konnten. (Ich sehe dirs an, du wärst auch gerne dabei gewesen.) Dann holte der Drechsler das Tischchen und sagte »lieber Bruder, nun sprich mit ihm.« Und kaum hatte der Schreiner »Tischchen, deck dich« gesagt, so war es gedeckt und mit den schönsten Schüsseln reichlich besetzt. Da ward eine Mahlzeit gehalten, wie der gute Schneider noch keine in seinem Hause erlebt hatte, und die ganze Verwandtschaft blieb beisammen bis in die Nacht, und waren alle lustig und vergnügt. Der Schneider verschloß Nadel und Zwirn, Elle und Bügeleisen in einen Schrank, und lebte mit seinen drei Söhnen in Freude und Herrlichkeit.

Wo ist aber die Ziege hingekommen, die schuld war, daß der Schneider seine drei Söhne fortjagte? Das will ich dir sagen. Sie schämte sich, daß sie einen kahlen Kopf hatte, lief in eine Fuchshöhle und verkroch sich hinein. Als der Fuchs nach Haus kam, funkelten ihm ein paar große Augen aus der Dunkelheit entgegen, daß er erschrak und wieder zurücklief. Der Bär begegnete ihm, und da der Fuchs ganz verstört aussah, so sprach er »was ist dir, Bruder Fuchs, was machst du für ein Gesicht?« »Ach,« antwortete der Rote, »ein grimmig Tier sitzt in meiner Höhle und hat mich mit feurigen Augen angeglotzt.« »Das wollen wir bald austreiben,« sprach der Bär, ging mit zu der Höhle und schaute hinein; als er aber die feurigen Augen erblickte, wandelte ihn ebenfalls Furcht an: er wollte mit dem grimmigen Tiere nichts zu tun haben und nahm Reißaus. Die Biene begegnete ihm, und da sie merkte, daß es ihm in seiner Haut nicht wohl zumute war, sprach sie »Bär, du machst ja ein gewaltig verdrießlich Gesicht, wo ist deine Lustigkeit geblieben?« »Du hast gut reden,« antwortete der Bär, »es sitzt ein grimmiges Tier mit Glotzaugen in dem Hause des Roten, und wir können es nicht herausjagen.« Die Biene sprach »du dauerst mich, Bär, ich bin ein armes schwaches Geschöpf, das ihr im Wege nicht anguckt, aber ich glaube doch, daß ich euch helfen kann.« Sie flog in die Fuchshöhle, setzte sich der Ziege auf den glatten geschorenen Kopf und stach sie so gewaltig, daß sie aufsprang, »meh! meh!« schrie, und wie toll in die Welt hineinlief; und weiß niemand auf diese Stunde, wo sie hingelaufen ist.

37. Daumesdick.

Es war ein armer Bauersmann, der saß abends beim Herd und schürte das Feuer, und die Frau saß und spann. Da sprach er »wie ists so traurig, daß wir keine Kinder haben! es ist so still bei uns, und in den andern Häusern ists so laut und lustig.« »Ja,« antwortete die Frau und seufzte, »wenns nur ein einziges wäre, und wenns auch ganz klein wäre, nur Daumens groß, so wollte ich schon zufrieden sein; wir hättens doch von Herzen lieb.« Nun geschah es, daß die Frau kränklich ward und nach sieben Monaten ein Kind gebar, das zwar an allen Gliedern vollkommen, aber nicht länger als ein Daumen war. Da sprachen sie »es ist, wie wir es gewünscht haben, und es soll unser liebes Kind sein,« und nannten es nach seiner Gestalt Daumesdick. Sie ließens nicht an Nahrung fehlen, aber das Kind ward nicht größer, sondern blieb, wie es in der ersten Stunde gewesen war; doch schaute es verständig aus den Augen und zeigte sich bald als ein kluges und behendes Ding, dem alles glückte, was es anfing.

Der Bauer machte sich eines Tages fertig, in den Wald zu gehen und Holz zu fällen, da sprach er so vor sich hin »nun wollt ich, daß einer da wäre, der mir den Wagen nachbrächte.« »O Vater,« rief Daumesdick, »den Wagen will ich schon bringen, verlaßt Euch drauf, er soll zur bestimmten Zeit im Walde sein.« Da lachte der Mann und sprach »wie sollte das zugehen, du bist viel zu klein, um das Pferd mit dem Zügel zu leiten.« »Das tut nichts, Vater, wenn nur die Mutter anspannen will, ich setze mich dem Pferd ins Ohr und rufe ihm zu, wie es gehen soll.« »Nun,« antwortete der Vater, »einmal wollen wirs versuchen.« Als die Stunde kam, spannte die Mutter an und setzte Daumesdick ins Ohr des Pferdes, und dann rief der Kleine, wie das Pferd gehen sollte, »jüh und joh! hott und har!« Da ging es ganz ordentlich als wie bei einem Meister, und der Wagen fuhr den rechten Weg nach dem Walde. Es trug sich zu, als er eben um eine Ecke bog und der Kleine »har, har!« rief, daß zwei fremde Männer daherkamen. »Mein,« sprach der eine, »was ist das? da fährt ein Wagen, und ein Fuhrmann ruft dem Pferde zu, und ist doch nicht zu sehen.« »Das geht nicht mit rechten Dingen zu,« sagte der andere, »wir wollen dem Karren folgen und sehen, wo er anhält.« Der Wagen aber fuhr vollends in den Wald hinein und richtig zu dem Platze, wo das Holz gehauen ward. Als Daumesdick seinen Vater erblickte, rief er ihm zu »siehst du, Vater, da bin ich mit dem Wagen, nun hol mich runter.« Der Vater faßte das Pferd mit der Linken und holte mit der Rechten sein Söhnlein aus dem Ohr, das sich ganz lustig auf einen Strohhalm niedersetzte. Als die beiden fremden Männer den Daumesdick erblickten, wußten sie nicht, was sie vor Verwunderung sagen sollten. Da nahm der eine den andern beiseit und sprach »hör, der kleine Kerl könnte unser Glück machen, wenn wir ihn in einer großen Stadt für Geld sehen ließen: wir wollen ihn kaufen.« Sie gingen zu dem Bauer und sprachen »verkauft uns den kleinen Mann, er solls gut bei uns haben.« »Nein,« antwortete der Vater, »es ist mein Herzblatt, und ist mir für alles Gold in der Welt nicht feil!«

Daumesdick aber, als er von dem Handel gehört, war an den Rockfalten seines Vaters hinaufgekrochen, stellte sich ihm auf die Schulter und wisperte ihm ins Ohr »Vater, gib mich nur hin, ich will schon wieder zurückkommen.« Da gab ihn der Vater für ein schönes Stück Geld den beiden Männern hin. »Wo willst du sitzen?« sprachen sie zu ihm. »Ach, setzt mich nur auf den Rand von eurem Hut, da kann ich auf und ab spazieren und die Gegend betrachten, und falle doch nicht herunter.« Sie taten ihm den Willen, und als Daumesdick Abschied von seinem Vater genommen hatte, machten sie sich mit ihm fort. So gingen sie, bis es dämmrig ward, da sprach der Kleine »hebt mich einmal herunter, es ist nötig.« »Bleib nur droben,« sprach der Mann, auf dessen Kopf er saß, »ich will mir nichts draus machen, die Vögel lassen mir auch manchmal was drauf fallen.« »Nein,« sprach Daumesdick, »ich weiß auch, was sich schickt: hebt mich nur geschwind herab.« Der Mann nahm den Hut ab und setzte den Kleinen auf einen Acker am Weg, da sprang und kroch er ein wenig zwischen den Schollen hin und her, dann schlüpfte er plötzlich in ein Mausloch, das er sich ausgesucht hatte. »Guten Abend, ihr Herren, geht nur ohne mich heim,« rief er ihnen zu, und lachte sie aus. Sie liefen herbei und stachen mit Stöcken in das Mausloch, aber das war vergebliche Mühe: Daumesdick kroch immer weiter zurück, und da es bald ganz dunkel ward, so mußten sie mit Ärger und mit leerem Beutel wieder heim wandern.

Als Daumesdick merkte, daß sie fort waren, kroch er aus dem unterirdischen Gang wieder hervor. »Es ist auf dem Acker in der Finsternis so gefährlich gehen,« sprach er, »wie leicht bricht einer Hals und Bein.« Zum Glück stieß er an ein leeres Schneckenhaus. »Gottlob,« sagte er, »da kann ich die Nacht sicher zubringen,« und setzte sich hinein. Nicht lang, als er eben einschlafen wollte, so hörte er zwei Männer vorübergehen, davon sprach der eine »wie wirs nur anfangen, um dem reichen Pfarrer sein Geld und sein Silber zu holen?« »Das könnt ich dir sagen,« rief Daumesdick dazwischen. »Was war das?« sprach der eine Dieb erschrocken, »ich hörte jemand sprechen.« Sie blieben stehen und horchten, da sprach Daumesdick wieder »nehmt mich mit, so will ich euch helfen.« »Wo bist du denn?« »Sucht nur auf der Erde und merkt, wo die Stimme herkommt,« antwortete er. Da fanden ihn endlich die Diebe und hoben ihn in die Höhe. »Du kleiner Wicht, was willst du uns helfen!« sprachen sie. »Seht,« antwortete er, »ich krieche zwischen den Eisenstäben in die Kammer des Pfarrers und reiche euch heraus, was ihr haben wollt.« »Wohlan,« sagten sie, »wir wollen sehen, was du kannst.« Als sie bei dem Pfarrhaus kamen, kroch Daumesdick in die Kammer, schrie aber gleich aus Leibeskräften »wollt ihr alles haben, was hier ist?« Die Diebe erschraken und sagten »so sprich doch leise, damit niemand aufwacht.« Aber Daumesdick tat, als hätte er sie nicht verstanden, und schrie von neuem »was wollt ihr? wollt ihr alles haben, was hier ist?« Das hörte die Köchin, die in der Stube daran schlief, richtete sich im Bett auf und horchte. Die Diebe aber waren vor Schrecken ein Stück Wegs zurückgelaufen, endlich faßten sie wieder Mut und dachten »der kleine Kerl will uns necken.« Sie kamen zurück und flüsterten ihm zu »nun mach Ernst und reich uns etwas heraus.« Da schrie Daumesdick noch einmal, so laut er konnte »ich will euch ja alles geben, reicht nur die Hände herein.« Das hörte die horchende Magd ganz deutlich, sprang aus dem Bett und stolperte zur Tür herein. Die Diebe liefen fort und rannten, als wäre der wilde Jäger hinter ihnen; die Magd aber, als sie nichts bemerken konnte, ging ein Licht anzünden. Wie sie damit herbeikam, machte sich Daumesdick, ohne daß er gesehen wurde, hinaus in die Scheune: die Magd aber, nachdem sie alle Winkel durchgesucht und nichts gefunden hatte, legte sich endlich wieder zu Bett und glaubte, sie hätte mit offenen Augen und Ohren doch nur geträumt.

Daumesdick war in den Heuhälmchen herumgeklettert und hatte einen schönen Platz zum Schlafen gefunden: da wollte er sich ausruhen, bis es Tag wäre, und dann zu seinen Eltern wieder heimgehen. Aber er mußte andere Dinge erfahren! ja, es gibt viel Trübsal und Not auf der Welt! Die Magd stieg, als der Tag graute, schon aus dem Bett, um das Vieh zu füttern. Ihr erster Gang war in die Scheune, wo sie einen Arm voll Heu packte, und gerade dasjenige, worin der arme Daumesdick lag und schlief. Er schlief aber so fest, daß er nichts gewahr ward, und nicht eher aufwachte, als bis er in dem Maul der Kuh war, die ihn mit dem Heu aufgerafft hatte. »Ach Gott,« rief er, »wie bin ich in die Walkmühle geraten!« merkte aber bald, wo er war. Da hieß es aufpassen, daß er nicht zwischen die Zähne kam und zermalmt ward, und hernach mußte er doch mit in den Magen hinabrutschen. »In dem Stübchen sind die Fenster vergessen,« sprach er, »und scheint keine Sonne hinein: ein Licht wird auch nicht gebracht.« Überhaupt gefiel ihm das Quartier schlecht, und was das Schlimmste war, es kam immer mehr neues Heu zur Türe hinein, und der Platz ward immer enger. Da rief er endlich in der Angst, so laut er konnte, »bringt mir kein frisch Futter mehr, bringt mir kein frisch Futter mehr.« Die Magd melkte gerade die Kuh, und als sie sprechen hörte, ohne jemand zu sehen, und es dieselbe Stimme war, die sie auch in der Nacht gehört hatte, erschrak sie so, daß sie von ihrem Stühlchen herabglitschte und die Milch verschüttete. Sie lief in der größten Hast zu ihrem Herrn und rief »ach Gott, Herr Pfarrer, die Kuh hat geredet.« »Du bist verrückt,« antwortete der Pfarrer, ging aber doch selbst in den Stall und wollte nachsehen, was es da gäbe. Kaum aber hatte er den Fuß hineingesetzt, so rief Daumesdick aufs neue »bringt mir kein frisch Futter mehr, bringt mir kein frisch Futter mehr.« Da erschrak der Pfarrer selbst, meinte, es wäre ein böser Geist in die Kuh gefahren, und hieß sie töten. Sie ward geschlachtet, der Magen aber, worin Daumesdick steckte, auf den Mist geworfen. Daumesdick hatte große Mühe, sich hindurchzuarbeiten, und hatte große Mühe damit, doch brachte ers so weit, daß er Platz bekam, aber als er eben sein Haupt herausstrecken wollte, kam ein neues Unglück. Ein hungriger Wolf lief heran und verschlang den ganzen Magen mit einem Schluck. Daumesdick verlor den Mut nicht, »vielleicht,« dachte er, »läßt der Wolf mit sich reden,« und rief ihm aus dem Wanste zu »lieber Wolf, ich weiß dir einen herrlichen Fraß.« »Wo ist der zu holen?« sprach der Wolf. »In dem und dem Haus, da mußt du durch die Gosse hineinkriechen, und wirst Kuchen, Speck und Wurst finden, so viel du essen willst,« und beschrieb ihm genau seines Vaters Haus. Der Wolf ließ sich das nicht zweimal sagen, drängte sich in der Nacht zur Gosse hinein und fraß in der Vorratskammer nach Herzenslust. Als er sich gesättigt hatte, wollte er wieder fort, aber er war so dick geworden, daß er denselben Weg nicht wieder hinaus konnte. Darauf hatte Daumesdick gerechnet und fing nun an, in dem Leib des Wolfes einen gewaltigen Lärmen zu machen, tobte und schrie, was er konnte. »Willst du stille sein,« sprach der Wolf, »du weckst die Leute auf.« »Ei was,« antwortete der Kleine, »du hast dich satt gefressen, ich will mich auch lustig machen,« und fing von neuem an, aus allen Kräften zu schreien. Davon erwachte endlich sein Vater und seine Mutter, liefen an die Kammer und schauten durch die Spalte hinein. Wie sie sahen, daß ein Wolf darin hauste, liefen sie davon, und der Mann holte eine Axt, und die Frau die Sense. »Bleib dahinten,« sprach der Mann, als sie in die Kammer traten, »wenn ich ihm einen Schlag gegeben habe, und er davon noch nicht tot ist, so mußt du auf ihn einhauen, und ihm den Leib zerschneiden.« Da hörte Daumesdick die Stimme seines Vaters und rief »lieber Vater, ich bin hier, ich stecke im Leibe des Wolfs.« Sprach der Vater voll Freuden »gottlob, unser liebes Kind hat sich wiedergefunden,« und hieß die Frau die Sense wegtun, damit Daumesdick nicht beschädigt würde. Danach holte er aus, und schlug dem Wolf einen Schlag auf den Kopf, daß er tot niederstürzte, dann suchten sie Messer und Schere, schnitten ihm den Leib auf und zogen den Kleinen wieder hervor. »Ach,« sprach der Vater, »was haben wir für Sorge um dich ausgestanden!« »Ja, Vater, ich bin viel in der Welt herumgekommen; gottlob, daß ich wieder frische Luft schöpfe!« »Wo bist du denn all gewesen?« »Ach, Vater, ich war in einem Mauseloch, in einer Kuh Bauch und in eines Wolfes Wanst: nun bleib ich bei euch.« »Und wir verkaufen dich um alle Reichtümer der Welt nicht wieder,« sprachen die Eltern, herzten und küßten ihren lieben Daumesdick. Sie gaben ihm zu essen und trinken, und ließen ihm neue Kleider machen, denn die seinigen waren ihm auf der Reise verdorben.

38. Die Hochzeit der Frau Füchsin.

Erstes Märchen

Es war einmal ein alter Fuchs mit neun Schwänzen, der glaubte, seine Frau wäre ihm nicht treu, und wollte er sie in Versuchung führen. Er streckte sich unter die Bank, regte kein Glied und stellte sich, als wenn er mausetot wäre. Die Frau Füchsin ging auf ihre Kammer, schloß sich ein, und ihre Magd, die Jungfer Katze, saß auf dem Herd und kochte. Als es nun bekannt ward, daß der alte Fuchs gestorben war, so meldeten sich die Freier. Da hörte die Magd, daß jemand vor der Haustüre stand und anklopfte; sie ging und machte auf, und da wars ein junger Fuchs, der sprach

»was macht sie, Jungfer Katze?
schläft se oder wacht se?«
Sie antwortete

»ich schlafe nicht, ich wache.
Will er wissen, was ich mache?
Ich koche warm Bier, tue Butter hinein:
will der Herr mein Gast sein?«

»Ich bedanke mich, Jungfer,« sagte der Fuchs, »was macht die Frau Füchsin?« Die Magd antwortete

»sie sitzt auf ihrer Kammer,
sie beklagt ihren Jammer,
weint ihre Äuglein seidenrot,
weil der alte Herr Fuchs ist tot.«

»Sag sie ihr doch, Jungfer, es wäre ein junger Fuchs da, der wollte sie gerne freien.« »Schon gut, junger Herr.«

Da ging die Katz die Tripp die Trapp,
Da schlug die Tür die Klipp die Klapp.
»Frau Füchsin, sind Sie da?«
»Ach ja, mein Kätzchen, ja.«
»Es ist ein Freier draus.«
»Mein Kind, wie sieht er aus?

Hat er denn auch neun so schöne Zeiselschwänze wie der selige Herr Fuchs?« »Ach nein,« antwortete die Katze, »er hat nur einen.« »So will ich ihn nicht haben.«

Die Jungfer Katze ging hinab und schickte den Freier fort. Bald darauf klopfte es wieder an, und war ein anderer Fuchs vor der Türe, der wollte die Frau Füchsin freien; er hatte zwei Schwänze; aber es ging ihm nicht besser als dem ersten. Danach kamen noch andere, immer mit einem Schwanz mehr, die alle abgewiesen wurden, bis zuletzt einer kam, der neun Schwänze hatte wie der alte Herr Fuchs. Als die Witwe das hörte, sprach sie voll Freude zu der Katze

»nun macht mir Tor und Türe auf,
und kehrt den alten Herrn Fuchs hinaus.«

Als aber eben die Hochzeit sollte gefeiert werden, da regte sich der alte Herr Fuchs unter der Bank, prügelte das ganze Gesindel durch und jagte es mit der Frau Füchsin zum Haus hinaus.

Zweites Märchen

Als der alte Herr Fuchs gestorben war, kam der Wolf als Freier, klopfte an die Türe, und die Katze, die als Magd bei der Frau Füchsin diente, machte auf. Der Wolf grüßte sie und sprach

»guten Tag, Frau Katz von Kehrewitz,
wie kommts, daß sie alleine sitzt?
was macht sie Gutes da?«

Die Katze antwortete

»brock mir Wecke und Milch ein:
will der Herr mein Gast sein?«

»Dank schön, Frau Katze,« antwortete der Wolf, »die Frau Füchsin nicht zu Haus?«

Die Katze sprach

»sie sitzt droben in der Kammer,
beweint ihren Jammer,
beweint ihre große Not,
daß der alte Herr Fuchs ist tot.«

Der Wolf antwortete

»will sie haben einen andern Mann,
so soll sie nur herunter gan.«
Die Katz, die lief die Trepp hinan,
und ließ ihr Zeilchen rummer gan,
bis sie kam vor den langen Saal:
klopft an mit ihren fünf goldenen Ringen.
»Frau Füchsin, ist sie drinnen?
Will sie haben einen andern Mann,
so soll sie nur herunter gan.«

Die Frau Füchsin fragte »hat der Herr rote Höslein an, und hat er ein spitz Mäulchen?« »Nein,« antwortete die Katze. »So kann er mir nicht dienen.«

Als der Wolf abgewiesen war, kam ein Hund, ein Hirsch, ein Hase, ein Bär, ein Löwe, und nacheinander alle Waldtiere. Aber es fehlte immer eine von den guten Eigenschaften, die der alte Herr Fuchs gehabt hatte, und die Katze mußte den Freier jedesmal wegschicken. Endlich kam ein junger Fuchs. Da sprach die Frau Füchsin »hat der Herr rote Höslein an, und hat er ein spitz Mäulchen?« »Ja,« sagte die Katze, »das hat er.« »So soll er heraufkommen,« sprach die Frau Füchsin, und hieß die Magd das Hochzeitsfest bereiten.

»Katze, kehr die Stube aus,
und schmeiß den alten Fuchs zum Fenster hinaus.
Bracht so manche dicke fette Maus,
fraß sie immer alleine,
gab mir aber keine.«

Da ward die Hochzeit gehalten mit dem jungen Herrn Fuchs, und ward gejubelt und getanzt, und wenn sie nicht aufgehört haben, so tanzen sie noch.

39. Die Wichtelmänner.

Erstes Märchen

Es war ein Schuster ohne seine Schuld so arm geworden, daß ihm endlich nichts mehr übrig blieb als Leder zu einem einzigen Paar Schuhe. Nun schnitt er am Abend die Schuhe zu, die wollte er den nächsten Morgen in Arbeit nehmen; und weil er ein gutes Gewissen hatte, so legte er sich ruhig zu Bett, befahl sich dem lieben Gott und schlief ein. Morgens, nachdem er sein Gebet verrichtet hatte und sich zur Arbeit niedersetzen wollte, so standen die beiden Schuhe ganz fertig auf seinem Tisch. Er verwunderte sich und wußte nicht, was er dazu sagen sollte. Er nahm die Schuhe in die Hand, um sie näher zu betrachten: sie waren so sauber gearbeitet, daß kein Stich daran falsch war, gerade als wenn es ein Meisterstück sein sollte. Bald darauf trat auch schon ein Käufer ein, und weil ihm die Schuhe so gut gefielen, so bezahlte er mehr als gewöhnlich dafür, und der Schuster konnte von dem Geld Leder zu zwei Paar Schuhen erhandeln. Er schnitt sie abends zu und wollte den nächsten Morgen mit frischem Mut an die Arbeit gehen, aber er brauchte es nicht, denn als er aufstand, waren sie schon fertig, und es blieben auch nicht die Käufer aus, die ihm so viel Geld gaben, daß er Leder zu vier Paar Schuhen einkaufen konnte. Er fand frühmorgens auch die vier Paar fertig; und so gings immer fort, was er abends zuschnitt, das war am Morgen verarbeitet, also daß er bald wieder sein ehrliches Auskommen hatte und endlich ein wohlhabender Mann ward. Nun geschah es eines Abends nicht lange vor Weihnachten, als der Mann wieder zugeschnitten hatte, daß er vor Schlafengehen zu seiner Frau sprach »wie wärs, wenn wir diese Nacht aufblieben, um zu sehen, wer uns solche hilfreiche Hand leistet?« Die Frau wars zufrieden und steckte ein Licht an; darauf verbargen sie sich in den Stubenecken, hinter den Kleidern, die da aufgehängt waren, und gaben acht. Als es Mitternacht war, da kamen zwei kleine niedliche nackte Männlein, setzten sich vor des Schusters Tisch, nahmen alle zugeschnittene Arbeit zu sich und fingen an, mit ihren Fingerlein so behend und schnell zu stechen, zu nähen, zu klopfen, daß der Schuster vor Verwunderung die Augen nicht abwenden konnte. Sie ließen nicht nach, bis alles zu Ende gebracht war und fertig auf dem Tische stand, dann sprangen sie schnell fort.

Am andern Morgen sprach die Frau »die kleinen Männer haben uns reich gemacht, wir müßten uns doch dankbar dafür bezeigen. Sie laufen so herum, haben nichts am Leib und müssen frieren. Weißt du was? Ich will Hemdlein, Rock, Wams und Höslein für sie nähen, auch jedem ein Paar Strümpfe stricken; mach du jedem ein Paar Schühlein dazu.« Der Mann sprach »das bin ich wohl zufrieden,« und abends, wie sie alles fertig hatten, legten sie die Geschenke statt der zugeschnittenen Arbeit zusammen auf den Tisch und versteckten sich dann, um mit anzusehen, wie sich die Männlein dazu anstellen würden. Um Mitternacht kamen sie herangesprungen und wollten sich gleich an die Arbeit machen, als sie aber kein zugeschnittenes Leder, sondern die niedlichen Kleidungsstücke fanden, verwunderten sie sich erst, dann aber bezeigten sie eine gewaltige Freude. Mit der größten Geschwindigkeit zogen sie sich an, strichen die schönen Kleider am Leib und sangen

»sind wir nicht Knaben glatt und fein?
was sollen wir länger Schuster sein!«

Dann hüpften und tanzten sie, und sprangen über Stühle und Bänke. Endlich tanzten sie zur Tür hinaus. Von nun an kamen sie nicht wieder, dem Schuster aber ging es wohl, solang er lebte, und es glückte ihm alles, was er unternahm.

Zweites Märchen

Es war einmal ein armes Dienstmädchen, das war fleißig und reinlich, kehrte alle Tage das Haus und schüttete das Kehricht auf einen großen Haufen vor die Türe. Eines Morgens, als es eben wieder an die Arbeit gehen wollte, fand es einen Brief darauf, und weil es nicht lesen konnte, so stellte es den Besen in die Ecke und brachte den Brief seiner Herrschaft, und da war es eine Einladung von den Wichtelmännern, die baten das Mädchen, ihnen ein Kind aus der Taufe zu heben. Das Mädchen wußte nicht, was es tun sollte, endlich auf vieles Zureden, und weil sie ihm sagten, so etwas dürfte man nicht abschlagen, so willigte es ein. Da kamen drei Wichtelmänner und führten es in einen hohlen Berg, wo die Kleinen lebten. Es war da alles klein, aber so zierlich und prächtig, daß es nicht zu sagen ist. Die Kindbetterin lag in einem Bett von schwarzem Ebenholz mit Knöpfen von Perlen, die Decken waren mit Gold gestickt, die Wiege war von Elfenbein, die Badwanne von Gold. Das Mädchen stand nun Gevatter und wollte dann wieder nach Haus gehen, die Wichtelmännlein baten es aber inständig, drei Tage bei ihnen zu bleiben. Es blieb also und verlebte die Zeit in Lust und Freude, und die Kleinen taten ihm alles zuliebe. Endlich wollte es sich auf den Rückweg machen, da steckten sie ihm die Taschen erst ganz voll Gold und führten es hernach wieder zum Berge heraus. Als es nach Haus kam, wollte es seine Arbeit beginnen, nahm den Besen in die Hand, der noch in der Ecke stand, und fing an zu kehren. Da kamen fremde Leute aus dem Haus, die fragten, wer es wäre und was es da zu tun hätte. Da war es nicht drei Tage, wie es gemeint hatte, sondern sieben Jahre bei den kleinen Männern im Berge gewesen, und seine vorige Herrschaft war in der Zeit gestorben.

Drittes Märchen

Einer Mutter war ihr Kind von den Wichtelmännern aus der Wiege geholt, und ein Wechselbalg mit dickem Kopf und starren Augen hineingelegt, der nichts als essen und trinken wollte. In ihrer Not ging sie zu ihrer Nachbarin und fragte sie um Rat. Die Nachbarin sagte, sie sollte den Wechselbalg in die Küche tragen, auf den Herd setzen, Feuer anmachen und in zwei Eierschalen Wasser kochen: das bringe den Wechselbalg zum Lachen, und wenn er lache, dann sei es aus mit ihm. Die Frau tat alles, wie die Nachbarin gesagt hatte. Wie sie die Eierschalen mit Wasser über das Feuer setzte, sprach der Klotzkopf

»nun bin ich so alt
wie der Westerwald,
und hab nicht gesehen, daß jemand in Schalen kocht.«

Und fing an darüber zu lachen. Indem er lachte, kam auf einmal eine Menge von Wichtelmännerchen, die brachten das rechte Kind, setzten es auf den Herd und nahmen den Wechselbalg wieder mit fort.

40. Der Räuberbräutigam.

Es war einmal ein Müller, der hatte eine schöne Tochter, und als sie herangewachsen war, so wünschte er, sie wäre versorgt und gut verheiratet: er dachte »kommt ein ordentlicher Freier und hält um sie an, so will ich sie ihm geben.« Nicht lange, so kam ein Freier, der schien sehr reich zu sein, und da der Müller nichts an ihm auszusetzen wußte, so versprach er ihm seine Tochter. Das Mädchen aber hatte ihn nicht so recht lieb, wie eine Braut ihren Bräutigam lieb haben soll, und hatte kein Vertrauen zu ihm: sooft sie ihn ansah oder an ihn dachte, fühlte sie ein Grauen in ihrem Herzen. Einmal sprach er zu ihr »du bist meine Braut und besuchst mich nicht einmal.« Das Mädchen antwortete »ich weiß nicht, wo Euer Haus ist.« Da sprach der Bräutigam »mein Haus ist draußen im dunkeln Wald.« Es suchte Ausreden und meinte, es könnte den Weg dahin nicht finden.

Der Bräutigam sagte »künftigen Sonntag mußt du hinaus zu mir kommen, ich habe die Gäste schon eingeladen, und damit du den Weg durch den Wald findest, so will ich dir Asche streuen.« Als der Sonntag kam und das Mädchen sich auf den Weg machen sollte, ward ihm so angst, es wußte selbst nicht recht, warum, und damit es den Weg bezeichnen könnte, steckte es sich beide Taschen voll Erbsen und Linsen. An dem Eingang des Waldes war Asche gestreut, der ging es nach, warf aber bei jedem Schritt rechts und links ein paar Erbsen auf die Erde. Es ging fast den ganzen Tag, bis es mitten in den Wald kam, wo er am dunkelsten war, da stand ein einsames Haus, das gefiel ihm nicht, denn es sah so finster und unheimlich aus. Es trat hinein, aber es war niemand darin und herrschte die größte Stille. Plötzlich rief eine Stimme

»kehr um, kehr um, du junge Braut,
du bist in einem Mörderhaus.«

Das Mädchen blickte auf und sah, daß die Stimme von einem Vogel kam, der da in einem Bauer an der Wand hing. Nochmals rief er

»kehr um, kehr um, du junge Braut,
du bist in einem Mörderhaus.«

Da ging die schöne Braut weiter aus einer Stube in die andere und ging durch das ganze Haus, aber es war alles leer und keine Menschenseele zu finden. Endlich kam sie auch in den Keller, da saß eine steinalte Frau, die wackelte mit dem Kopfe. »Könnt Ihr mir nicht sagen,« sprach das Mädchen, »ob mein Bräutigam hier wohnt?« »Ach, du armes Kind,« antwortete die Alte, »wo bist du hingeraten! du bist in einer Mördergrube. Du meinst, du wärst eine Braut, die bald Hochzeit macht, aber du wirst die Hochzeit mit dem Tode halten. Siehst du, da hab ich einen großen Kessel mit Wasser aufsetzen müssen, wenn sie dich in ihrer Gewalt haben, so zerhacken sie dich ohne Barmherzigkeit, kochen dich und essen dich, denn es sind Menschenfresser. Wenn ich nicht Mitleid mit dir habe und dich rette, so bist du verloren.«

Darauf führte es die Alte hinter ein großes Faß, wo man es nicht sehen konnte. »Sei wie ein Mäuschen still,« sagte sie, »rege dich nicht und bewege dich nicht, sonst ists um dich geschehen. Nachts, wenn die Räuber schlafen, wollen wir entfliehen, ich habe schon lange auf eine Gelegenheit gewartet.« Kaum war das geschehen, so kam die gottlose Rotte nach Haus. Sie brachten eine andere Jungfrau mitgeschleppt, waren trunken und hörten nicht auf ihr Schreien und Jammern. Sie gaben ihr Wein zu trinken, drei Gläser voll, ein Glas weißen, ein Glas roten und ein Glas gelben, davon zersprang ihr das Herz. Darauf rissen sie ihr die feinen Kleider ab, legten sie auf einen Tisch, zerhackten ihren schönen Leib in Stücke und streuten Salz darüber. Die arme Braut hinter dem Faß zitterte und bebte, denn sie sah wohl, was für ein Schicksal ihr die Räuber zugedacht hatten. Einer von ihnen bemerkte an dem kleinen Finger der Gemordeten einen goldenen Ring, und als er sich nicht gleich abziehen ließ, so nahm er ein Beil und hackte den Finger ab: aber der Finger sprang in die Höhe über das Faß hinweg und fiel der Braut gerade in den Schoß. Der Räuber nahm ein Licht und wollte ihn suchen, konnte ihn aber nicht finden. Da sprach ein anderer »hast du auch schon hinter dem großen Fasse gesucht?« Aber die Alte rief »kommt und eßt, und laßt das Suchen bis morgen: der Finger läuft euch nicht fort.«

Da sprachen die Räuber »die Alte hat recht,« ließen vom Suchen ab, setzten sich zum Essen, und die Alte tröpfelte ihnen einen Schlaftrunk in den Wein, daß sie sich bald in den Keller hinlegten, schliefen und schnarchten. Als die Braut das hörte, kam sie hinter dem Faß hervor, und mußte über die Schlafenden wegschreiten, die da reihenweise auf der Erde lagen, und hatte große Angst, sie möchte einen aufwecken. Aber Gott half ihr, daß sie glücklich durchkam, die Alte stieg mit ihr hinauf, öffnete die Türe, und sie eilten, so schnell sie konnten, aus der Mördergrube fort. Die gestreute Asche hatte der Wind weggeweht, aber die Erbsen und Linsen hatten gekeimt und waren aufgegangen, und zeigten im Mondschein den Weg. Sie gingen die ganze Nacht, bis sie morgens in der Mühle ankamen. Da erzählte das Mädchen seinem Vater alles, wie es sich zugetragen hatte.

Als der Tag kam, wo die Hochzeit sollte gehalten werden, erschien der Bräutigam, der Müller aber hatte alle seine Verwandte und Bekannte einladen lassen. Wie sie bei Tische saßen, ward einem jeden aufgegeben, etwas zu erzählen. Die Braut saß still und redete nichts. Da sprach der Bräutigam zur Braut »nun, mein Herz, weißt du nichts? erzähl uns auch etwas.« Sie antwortete »so will ich einen Traum erzählen. Ich ging allein durch einen Wald und kam endlich zu einem Haus, da war keine Menschenseele darin, aber an der Wand war ein Vogel in einem Bauer, der rief

»kehr um, kehr um, du junge Braut,
du bist in einem Mörderhaus.«

Und rief es noch einmal. Mein Schatz, das träumte mir nur. Da ging ich durch alle Stuben, und alle waren leer, und es war so unheimlich darin; ich stieg endlich hinab in den Keller, da saß eine steinalte Frau darin, die wackelte mit dem Kopfe. Ich fragte sie »wohnt mein Bräutigam in diesem Haus?« Sie antwortete »ach, du armes Kind, du bist in eine Mördergrube geraten, dein Bräutigam wohnt hier, aber er will dich zerhacken und töten, und will dich dann kochen und essen.« Mein Schatz, das träumte mir nur. Aber die alte Frau versteckte mich hinter ein großes Faß, und kaum war ich da verborgen, so kamen die Räuber heim und schleppten eine Jungfrau mit sich, der gaben sie dreierlei Wein zu trinken, weißen, roten und gelben, davon zersprang ihr das Herz. Mein Schatz, das träumte mir nur. Darauf zogen sie ihr die feinen Kleider ab, zerhackten ihren schönen Leib auf einem Tisch in Stücke und bestreuten ihn mit Salz. Mein Schatz, das träumte mir nur. Und einer von den Räubern sah, daß an dem Goldfinger noch ein Ring steckte, und weil er schwer abzuziehen war, so nahm er ein Beil und hieb ihn ab, aber der Finger sprang in die Höhe und sprang hinter das große Faß und fiel mir in den Schoß. Und da ist der Finger mit dem Ring.« Bei diesen Worten zog sie ihn hervor und zeigte ihn den Anwesenden.

Der Räuber, der bei der Erzählung ganz kreideweiß geworden war, sprang auf und wollte entfliehen, aber die Gäste hielten ihn fest und überlieferten ihn den Gerichten. Da ward er und seine ganze Bande für ihre Schandtaten gerichtet.

41. Herr Korbes.

Es war einmal ein Hühnchen und ein Hähnchen, die wollten zusammen eine Reise machen. Da baute das Hähnchen einen schönen Wagen, der vier rote Räder hatte, und spannte vier Mäuschen davor. Das Hühnchen setzte sich mit dem Hähnchen auf, und sie fuhren miteinander fort. Nicht lange, so begegnete ihnen eine Katze, die sprach »wo wollt ihr hin?« Hähnchen antwortete

»als hinaus
nach des Herrn Korbes seinem Haus.«

»Nehmt mich mit,« sprach die Katze. Hähnchen antwortete »recht gerne, setz dich hinten auf, daß du vornen nicht herabfällst.

Nehmt euch wohl in acht,
daß ihr meine roten Räderchen nicht schmutzig macht.
Ihr Räderchen, schweift,
ihr Mäuschen, pfeift,
als hinaus
nach des Herrn Korbes seinem Haus.«

Danach kam ein Mühlstein, dann ein Ei, dann eine Ente, dann eine Stecknadel, und zuletzt eine Nähnadel, die setzten sich auch alle auf den Wagen und fuhren mit. Wie sie aber zu des Herrn Korbes Haus kamen, so war der Herr Korbes nicht da. Die Mäuschen fuhren den Wagen in die Scheune, das Hühnchen flog mit dem Hähnchen auf eine Stange, die Katze setzte sich ins Kamin, die Ente in die Bornstange, das Ei wickelte sich ins Handtuch, die Stecknadel steckte sich ins Stuhlkissen, die Nähnadel sprang aufs Bett mitten ins Kopfkissen, und der Mühlstein legte sich über die Türe. Da kam der Herr Korbes nach Haus, ging ans Kamin und wollte Feuer anmachen, da warf ihm die Katze das Gesicht voll Asche. Er lief geschwind in die Küche und wollte sich abwaschen, da spritzte ihm die Ente Wasser ins Gesicht. Er wollte sich an dem Handtuch abtrocknen, aber das Ei rollte ihm entgegen, zerbrach und klebte ihm die Augen zu. Er wollte sich ruhen und setzte sich auf den Stuhl, da stach ihn die Stecknadel. Er geriet in Zorn, und warf sich aufs Bett, wie er aber den Kopf aufs Kissen niederlegte, stach ihn die Nähnadel, so daß er aufschrie und ganz wütend in die weite Welt laufen wollte. Wie er aber an die Haustür kam, sprang der Mühlstein herunter und schlug ihn tot. Der Herr Korbes muß ein recht böser Mann gewesen sein.

42. Der Herr Gevatter.

Ein armer Mann hatte so viel Kinder, daß er schon alle Welt zu Gevatter gebeten hatte, und als er noch eins bekam, so war niemand mehr übrig, den er bitten konnte. Er wußte nicht, was er anfangen sollte, legte sich in seiner Betrübnis nieder und schlief ein. Da träumte ihm, er sollte vor das Tor gehen und den ersten, der ihm begegnete, zu Gevatter bitten. Als er aufgewacht war, beschloß er dem Traume zu folgen, ging hinaus vor das Tor, und den ersten, der ihm begegnete, bat er zu Gevatter. Der Fremde schenkte ihm ein Gläschen mit Wasser und sagte »das ist ein wunderbares Wasser, damit kannst du die Kranken gesund machen, du mußt nur sehen, wo der Tod steht. Steht er beim Kopf, so gib dem Kranken von dem Wasser, und er wird gesund werden, steht er aber bei den Füßen, so ist alle Mühe vergebens, er muß sterben.« Der Mann konnte von nun an immer sagen, ob ein Kranker zu retten war oder nicht, ward berühmt durch seine Kunst und verdiente viel Geld. Einmal ward er zu dem Kind des Königs gerufen, und als er eintrat, sah er den Tod bei dem Kopfe stehen und heilte es mit dem Wasser, und so war es auch bei dem zweitenmal, aber das drittemal stand der Tod bei den Füßen, da mußte das Kind sterben.

Der Mann wollte doch einmal seinen Gevatter besuchen und ihm erzählen, wie es mit dem Wasser gegangen war. Als er aber ins Haus kam, war eine so wunderliche Wirtschaft darin. Auf der ersten Treppe zankten sich Schippe und Besen, und schmissen gewaltig aufeinander los. Er fragte sie »wo wohnt der Herr Gevatter?« Der Besen antwortete »eine Treppe höher.« Als er auf die zweite Treppe kam, sah er eine Menge toter Finger liegen. Er fragte »wo wohnt der Herr Gevatter?« Einer aus den Fingern antwortete »eine Treppe höher.« Auf der dritten Treppe lag ein Haufen toter Köpfe, die wiesen ihn wieder eine Treppe höher. Auf der vierten Treppe sah er Fische über dem Feuer stehen, die britzelten in der Pfanne, und backten sich selber. Sie sprachen auch »eine Treppe höher.« Und als er die fünfte hinaufgestiegen war, so kam er vor eine Stube und guckte durch das Schlüsselloch, da sah er den Gevatter, der ein paar lange Hörner hatte. Als er die Türe aufmachte und hineinging, legte sich der Gevatter geschwind aufs Bett und deckte sich zu. Da sprach der Mann »Herr Gevatter, was ist für eine wunderliche Wirtschaft in Eurem Hause? als ich auf Eure erste Treppe kam, so zankten sich Schippe und Besen miteinander und schlugen gewaltig aufeinander los.« »Wie seid Ihr so einfältig,« sagte der Gevatter, »das war der Knecht und die Magd, die sprachen miteinander.« »Aber auf der zweiten Treppe sah ich tote Finger liegen.« »Ei, wie seid Ihr albern! das waren Skorzenerwurzeln.« »Auf der dritten Treppe lag ein Haufen Totenköpfe.« »Dummer Mann, das waren Krautköpfe.« »Auf der vierten sah ich Fische in der Pfanne, die britzelten, und backten sich selber.« Wie er das gesagt hatte, kamen die Fische und trugen sich selber auf. »Und als ich die fünfte Treppe heraufgekommen war, guckte ich durch das Schlüsselloch einer Tür, und da sah ich Euch, Gevatter, und Ihr hattet lange Hörner.« »Ei, das ist nicht wahr.« Dem Mann wurde angst, und er lief fort, und wer weiß, was ihm der Herr Gevatter sonst angetan hätte.

43. Frau Trude.

Es war einmal ein kleines Mädchen, das war eigensinnig und vorwitzig, und wenn ihm seine Eltern etwas sagten, so gehorchte es nicht: wie konnte es dem gut gehen? Eines Tages sagte es zu seinen Eltern »ich habe so viel von der Frau Trude gehört, ich will einmal zu ihr hingehen: die Leute sagen, es sehe so wunderlich bei ihr aus, und erzählen, es seien so seltsame Dinge in ihrem Hause, da bin ich ganz neugierig geworden.« Die Eltern verboten es ihr streng und sagten »die Frau Trude ist eine böse Frau, die gottlose Dinge treibt, und wenn du zu ihr hingehst, so bist du unser Kind nicht mehr.« Aber das Mädchen kehrte sich nicht an das Verbot seiner Eltern und ging doch zu der Frau Trude. Und als es zu ihr kam, fragte die Frau Trude »warum bist du so bleich?« »Ach,« antwortete es und zitterte am Leibe, »ich habe mich so erschrocken über das, was ich gesehen habe.« »Was hast du gesehen?« »Ich sah auf Eurer Stiege einen schwarzen Mann.« »Das war ein Köhler.« »Dann sah ich einen grünen Mann.« »Das war ein Jäger.« »Danach sah ich einen blutroten Mann.« »Das war ein Metzger.« »Ach, Frau Trude, mir grauste, ich sah durchs Fenster und sah Euch nicht, wohl aber den Teufel mit feurigem Kopf.« »Oho,« sagte sie, »so hast du die Hexe in ihrem rechten Schmuck gesehen: ich habe schon lange auf dich gewartet und nach dir verlangt, du sollst mir leuchten.« Da verwandelte sie das Mädchen in einen Holzblock und warf ihn ins Feuer. Und als er in voller Glut war, setzte sie sich daneben, wärmte sich daran und sprach »das leuchtet einmal hell!«

44. Der Gevatter Tod.

Es hatte ein armer Mann zwölf Kinder und mußte Tag und Nacht arbeiten, damit er ihnen nur Brot geben konnte. Als nun das dreizehnte zur Welt kam, wußte er sich seiner Not nicht zu helfen, lief hinaus auf die große Landstraße und wollte den ersten, der ihm begegnete, zu Gevatter bitten. Der erste, der ihm begegnete, das war der liebe Gott, der wußte schon, was er auf dem Herzen hatte, und sprach zu ihm »armer Mann, du dauerst mich, ich will dein Kind aus der Taufe heben, will für es sorgen und es glücklich machen auf Erden.« Der Mann sprach »wer bist du?« »Ich bin der liebe Gott.« »So begehr ich dich nicht zu Gevatter,« sagte der Mann, »du gibst dem Reichen und lässest den Armen hungern.« Das sprach der Mann, weil er nicht wußte, wie weislich Gott Reichtum und Armut verteilt. Also wendete er sich von dem Herrn und ging weiter. Da trat der Teufel zu ihm und sprach »was suchst du? willst du mich zum Paten deines Kindes nehmen, so will ich ihm Gold die Hülle und Fülle und alle Lust der Welt dazu geben.« Der Mann fragte »wer bist du?« »Ich bin der Teufel.« »So begehr ich dich nicht zum Gevatter,« sprach der Mann, »du betrügst und verführst die Menschen.« Er ging weiter, da kam der dürrbeinige Tod auf ihn zugeschritten und sprach »nimm mich zu Gevatter.« Der Mann fragte »wer bist du?« »Ich bin der Tod, der alle gleich macht.« Da sprach der Mann »du bist der rechte, du holst den Reichen wie den Armen ohne Unterschied, du sollst mein Gevattersmann sein.« Der Tod antwortete »ich will dein Kind reich und berühmt machen, denn wer mich zum Freunde hat, dem kanns nicht fehlen.« Der Mann sprach »künftigen Sonntag ist die Taufe, da stelle dich zu rechter Zeit ein.« Der Tod erschien, wie er versprochen hatte, und stand ganz ordentlich Gevatter.

Als der Knabe zu Jahren gekommen war, trat zu einer Zeit der Pate ein und hieß ihn mitgehen. Er führte ihn hinaus in den Wald, zeigte ihm ein Kraut, das da wuchs, und sprach »jetzt sollst du dein Patengeschenk empfangen. Ich mache dich zu einem berühmten Arzt. Wenn du zu einem Kranken gerufen wirst, so will ich dir jedesmal erscheinen: steh ich zu Häupten des Kranken, so kannst du keck sprechen, du wolltest ihn wieder gesund machen, und gibst du ihm dann von jenem Kraut ein, so wird er genesen; steh ich aber zu Füßen des Kranken, so ist er mein, und du mußt sagen, alle Hilfe sei umsonst, und kein Arzt in der Welt könne ihn retten. Aber hüte dich, daß du das Kraut nicht gegen meinen Willen gebrauchst, es könnte dir schlimm ergehen.«

Es dauerte nicht lange, so war der Jüngling der berühmteste Arzt auf der ganzen Welt. »Er braucht nur den Kranken anzusehen, so weiß er schon, wie es steht, ob er wieder gesund wird, oder ob er sterben muß,« so hieß es von ihm, und weit und breit kamen die Leute herbei, holten ihn zu den Kranken und gaben ihm so viel Gold, daß er bald ein reicher Mann war. Nun trug es sich zu, daß der König erkrankte: der Arzt ward berufen und sollte sagen, ob Genesung möglich wäre. Wie er aber zu dem Bette trat, so stand der Tod zu den Füßen des Kranken, und da war für ihn kein Kraut mehr gewachsen. »Wenn ich doch einmal den Tod überlisten könnte,« dachte der Arzt, »er wirds freilich übelnehmen, aber da ich sein Pate bin, so drückt er wohl ein Auge zu: ich wills wagen.« Er faßte also den Kranken und legte ihn verkehrt, so daß der Tod zu Häupten desselben zu stehen kam. Dann gab er ihm von dem Kraute ein, und der König erholte sich und ward wieder gesund. Der Tod aber kam zu dem Arzte, machte ein böses und finsteres Gesicht, drohte mit dem Finger und sagte »du hast mich hinter das Licht geführt: diesmal will ich dirs nachsehen, weil du mein Pate bist, aber wagst du das noch einmal, so geht dirs an den Kragen, und ich nehme dich selbst mit fort.«

Bald hernach verfiel die Tochter des Königs in eine schwere Krankheit. Sie war sein einziges Kind, er weinte Tag und Nacht, daß ihm die Augen erblindeten, und ließ bekanntmachen, wer sie vom Tode errettete, der sollte ihr Gemahl werden und die Krone erben. Der Arzt, als er zu dem Bette der Kranken kam, erblickte den Tod zu ihren Füßen. Er hätte sich der Warnung seines Paten erinnern sollen, aber die große Schönheit der Königstochter und das Glück, ihr Gemahl zu werden, betörten ihn so, daß er alle Gedanken in den Wind schlug. Er sah nicht, daß der Tod ihm zornige Blicke zuwarf, die Hand in die Höhe hob und mit der dürren Faust drohte; er hob die Kranke auf, und legte ihr Haupt dahin, wo die Füße gelegen hatten. Dann gab er ihr das Kraut ein, und alsbald röteten sich ihre Wangen, und das Leben regte sich von neuem.

Der Tod, als er sich zum zweitenmal um sein Eigentum betrogen sah, ging mit langen Schritten auf den Arzt zu und sprach »es ist aus mit dir und die Reihe kommt nun an dich,« packte ihn mit seiner eiskalten Hand so hart, daß er nicht widerstehen konnte, und führte ihn in eine unterirdische Höhle. Da sah er, wie tausend und tausend Lichter in unübersehbaren Reihen brannten, einige groß, andere halbgroß, andere klein. Jeden Augenblick verloschen einige, und andere brannten wieder auf, also daß die Flämmchen in beständigem Wechsel hinund herzuhüpfen schienen. »Siehst du,« sprach der Tod, »das sind die Lebenslichter der Menschen. Die großen gehören Kindern, die halbgroßen Eheleuten in ihren besten Jahren, die kleinen gehören Greisen. Doch auch Kinder und junge Leute haben oft nur ein kleines Lichtchen.« »Zeige mir mein Lebenslicht,« sagte der Arzt und meinte, es wäre noch recht groß. Der Tod deutete auf ein kleines Endchen, das eben auszugehen drohte, und sagte »siehst du, da ist es.« »Ach, lieber Pate,« sagte der erschrockene Arzt, »zündet mir ein neues an, tut mirs zuliebe, damit ich meines Lebens genießen kann, König werde und Gemahl der schönen Königstochter.« »Ich kann nicht,« antwortete der Tod, »erst muß eins verlöschen, eh ein neues anbrennt.« »So setzt das alte auf ein neues, das gleich fortbrennt, wenn jenes zu Ende ist,« bat der Arzt. Der Tod stellte sich, als ob er seinen Wunsch erfüllen wollte, langte ein frisches großes Licht herbei: aber weil er sich rächen wollte, versah ers beim Umstecken absichtlich, und das Stückchen fiel um und verlosch. Alsbald sank der Arzt zu Boden, und war nun selbst in die Hand des Todes geraten.

45. Daumerlings Wanderschaft.

Ein Schneider hatte einen Sohn, der war klein geraten und nicht größer als ein Daumen, darum hieß er auch der Daumerling. Er hatte aber Courage im Leibe und sagte zu seinem Vater »Vater, ich soll und muß in die Welt hinaus.« »Recht, mein Sohn,« sprach der Alte, nahm eine lange Stopfnadel und machte am Licht einen Knoten von Siegellack daran, »da hast du auch einen Degen mit auf den Weg.« Nun wollte das Schneiderlein noch einmal mitessen und hüpfte in die Küche, um zu sehen, was die Frau Mutter zu guter Letzt gekocht hätte. Es war aber eben angerichtet, und die Schüssel stand auf dem Herd. Da sprach es »Frau Mutter, was gibts heute zu essen?« »Sieh du selbst zu,« sagte die Mutter. Da sprang Daumerling auf den Herd und guckte in die Schüssel: weil er aber den Hals zu weit hineinstreckte, faßte ihn der Dampf von der Speise und trieb ihn zum Schornstein hinaus. Eine Weile ritt er auf dem Dampf in der Luft herum, bis er endlich wieder auf die Erde herabsank. Nun war das Schneiderlein draußen in der weiten Welt, zog umher, ging auch bei einem Meister in die Arbeit, aber das Essen war ihm nicht gut genug. »Frau Meisterin, wenn sie uns kein besser Essen gibt,« sagte Daumerling, »so gehe ich fort und schreibe morgen früh mit Kreide an ihre Haustüre: Kartoffel zu viel, Fleisch zu wenig, adies, Herr Kartoffelkönig.« »Was willst du wohl, Grashüpfer?« sagte die Meisterin, ward bös, ergriff einen Lappen und wollte nach ihm schlagen: mein Schneiderlein kroch behende unter den Fingerhut, guckte unten hervor und streckte der Frau Meisterin die Zunge heraus. Sie hob den Fingerhut auf und wollte ihn packen, aber der kleine Daumerling hüpfte in die Lappen, und wie die Meisterin die Lappen auseinanderwarf und ihn suchte, machte er sich in den Tischritz. »He, he, Frau Meisterin,« rief er und steckte den Kopf in die Höhe, und wenn sie zuschlagen wollte, sprang er in die Schublade hinunter. Endlich aber erwischte sie ihn doch und jagte ihn zum Haus hinaus.

Das Schneiderlein wanderte und kam in einen großen Wald: da begegnete ihm ein Haufen Räuber, die hatten vor, des Königs Schatz zu bestehlen. Als sie das Schneiderlein sahen, dachten sie »so ein kleiner Kerl kann durch ein Schlüsselloch kriechen und uns als Dietrich dienen.« »Heda,« rief einer, »du Riese Goliath, willst du mit zur Schatzkammer gehen? du kannst dich hineinschleichen und das Geld herauswerfen.« Der Daumerling besann sich, endlich sagte er »ja« und ging mit zu der Schatzkammer. Da besah er die Türe oben und unten, ob kein Ritz darin wäre. Nicht lange, so entdeckte er einen, der breit genug war, um ihn einzulassen. Er wollte auch gleich hindurch, aber eine von den beiden Schildwachen, die vor der Tür standen, bemerkte ihn und sprach zu der andern »was kriecht da für eine häßliche Spinne? ich will sie tottreten.« »Laß das arme Tier gehen,« sagte die andere, »es hat dir ja nichts getan.« Nun kam der Daumerling durch den Ritz glücklich in die Schatzkammer, öffnete das Fenster, unter welchem die Räuber standen, und warf ihnen einen Taler nach dem andern hinaus. Als das

Schneiderlein in der besten Arbeit war, hörte es den König kommen, der seine Schatzkammer besehen wollte, und verkroch sich eilig. Der König merkte, daß viele harte Taler fehlten, konnte aber nicht begreifen, wer sie sollte gestohlen haben, da Schlösser und Riegel in gutem Zustand waren, und alles wohl verwahrt schien. Da ging er wieder fort und sprach zu den zwei Wachen »habt acht, es ist einer hinter dem Geld.« Als der Daumerling nun seine Arbeit von neuem anfing, hörten sie das Geld drinnen sich regen und klingen klipp, klapp, klipp, klapp. Sie sprangen geschwind hinein und wollten den Dieb greifen. Aber das Schneiderlein, das sie kommen hörte, war noch geschwinder, sprang in eine Ecke und deckte einen Taler über sich, so daß nichts von ihm zu sehen war, dabei neckte es noch die Wachen und rief »hier bin ich.« Die Wachen liefen dahin, wie sie aber ankamen, war es schon in eine an dere Ecke unter einen Taler gehüpft und rief »he, hier bin ich.« Die Wachen sprangen eilends herbei, Daumerling war aber längst in einer dritten Ecke und rief »he, hier bin ich.« Und so hatte es sie zu Narren und trieb sie so lange in der Schatzkammer herum, bis sie müde waren und davongingen. Nun warf es die Taler nach und nach alle hinaus: den letzten schnellte es mit aller Macht, hüpfte dann selber noch behendiglich darauf und flog mit ihm durchs Fenster hinab. Die Räuber machten ihm große Lobsprüche, »du bist ein gewaltiger Held,« sagten sie, »willst du unser Hauptmann werden?« Daumerling bedankte sich aber und sagte, er wollte erst die Welt sehen. Sie teilten nun die Beute, das Schneiderlein aber verlangte nur einen Kreuzer, weil es nicht mehr tragen konnte.

Darauf schnallte es seinen Degen wieder um den Leib, sagte den Räubern guten Tag und nahm den Weg zwischen die Beine. Es ging bei einigen Meistern in Arbeit, aber sie wollte ihm nicht schmecken: endlich verdingte es sich als Hausknecht in einem Gasthof. Die Mägde aber konnten es nicht leiden, denn ohne daß sie ihn sehen konnten, sah er alles, was sie heimlich taten, und gab bei der Herrschaft an, was sie sich von den Tellern genommen und aus dem Keller für sich weggeholt hatten. Da sprachen sie »wart, wir wollen dirs eintränken,« und verabredeten untereinander, ihm einen Schabernack anzutun. Als die eine Magd bald hernach im Garten mähte, und den Daumerling da herumspringen und an den Kräutern auf- und abkriechen sah, mähte sie ihn mit dem Gras schnell zusammen, band alles in ein großes Tuch und warf es heimlich den Kühen vor. Nun war eine große schwarze darunter, die schluckte ihn mit hinab, ohne ihm weh zu tun. Unten gefiels ihm aber schlecht, denn es war da ganz finster und brannte auch kein Licht. Als die Kuh gemelkt wurde, da rief er

»strip, strap, stroll,
ist der Eimer bald voll?«

Doch bei dem Geräusch des Melkens wurde er nicht verstanden. Hernach trat der Hausherr in den Stall und sprach »morgen soll die Kuh da geschlachtet werden.« Da war dem Daumerling angst, daß er mit heller Stimme rief »laßt mich erst heraus, ich sitze ja drin.« Der Herr hörte das wohl, wußte aber nicht, wo die Stimme herkam. »Wo bist du?« fragte er. »In der schwarzen,« antwortete er, aber der Herr verstand nicht, was das heißen sollte, und ging fort.

Am andern Morgen ward die Kuh geschlachtet. Glücklicherweise traf bei dem Zerhacken und Zerlegen den Daumerling kein Hieb, aber er geriet unter das Wurstfleisch. Wie nun der Metzger herbeitrat und seine Arbeit anfing, schrie er aus Leibeskräften »hackt nicht zu tief, hackt nicht zu tief, ich stecke ja drunter.« Von dem Lärmen der Hackmesser hörte das kein Mensch. Nun hatte der arme Daumerling seine Not, aber die Not macht Beine, und da sprang er so behend zwischen den Hackmessern durch, daß ihn keins anrührte und er mit heiler Haut davonkam. Aber entspringen konnte er auch nicht: es war keine andere Auskunft, er mußte sich mit den Speckbrocken in eine Blutwurst hinunterstopfen lassen. Da war das Quartier etwas enge, und dazu ward er noch in den Schornstein zum Räuchern aufgehängt, wo ihm Zeit und Weile gewaltig lang wurde. Endlich im Winter wurde er heruntergeholt, weil die Wurst einem Gast sollte vorgesetzt werden. Als nun die Frau Wirtin die Wurst in Scheiben schnitt, nahm er sich in acht, daß er den Kopf nicht zu weit vorstreckte, damit ihm nicht etwa der Hals mit abgeschnitten würde: endlich ersah er seinen Vorteil, machte sich Luft und sprang heraus.

In dem Hause aber, wo es ihm so übel ergangen war, wollte das Schneiderlein nicht länger mehr bleiben, sondern begab sich gleich wieder auf die Wanderung. Doch seine Freiheit dauerte nicht lange. Auf dem offenen Feld kam es einem Fuchs in den Weg, der schnappte es in Gedanken auf. »Ei, Herr Fuchs,« riefs Schneiderlein, »ich bins ja, der in Eurem Hals steckt, laßt mich wieder frei.« »Du hast recht,« antwortete der Fuchs, »an dir habe ich doch so viel als nichts; versprichst du mir die Hühner in deines Vaters Hof, so will ich dich loslassen.« »Von Herzen gern,« antwortete der Daumerling, »die Hühner sollst du alle haben, das gelobe ich dir.« Da ließ ihn der Fuchs wieder los und trug ihn selber heim. Als der Vater sein liebes Söhnlein wiedersah, gab er dem Fuchs gern alle die Hühner, die er hatte. »Dafür bring ich dir auch ein schön Stück Geld mit,« sprach der Daumerling und reichte ihm den Kreuzer, den er auf seiner Wanderschaft erworben hatte.

»Warum hat aber der Fuchs die armen Piephühner zu fressen kriegt?« »Ei, du Narr, deinem Vater wird ja wohl sein Kind lieber sein als die Hühner auf dem Hof.«

46. Fitchers Vogel.

Es war einmal ein Hexenmeister, der nahm die Gestalt eines armen Mannes an, ging vor die Häuser und bettelte, und fing die schönen Mädchen. Kein Mensch wußte, wo er sie hinbrachte, denn sie kamen nie wieder zum Vorschein. Eines Tages erschien er vor der Türe eines Mannes, der drei schöne Töchter hatte, sah aus wie ein armer schwacher Bettler und trug eine Kötze auf dem Rücken, als wollte er milde Gaben darin sammeln. Er bat um ein bißchen Essen, und als die älteste herauskam und ihm ein Stück Brot reichen wollte, rührte er sie nur an, und sie mußte in seine Kötze springen. Darauf eilte er mit starken Schritten fort und trug sie in einen finstern Wald zu seinem Haus, das mitten darin stand. In dem Haus war alles prächtig: er gab ihr, was sie nur wünschte, und sprach »mein Schatz, es wird dir wohl gefallen bei mir, du hast alles, was dein Herz begehrt.« Das dauerte ein paar Tage, da sagte er »ich muß fortreisen und dich eine kurze Zeit allein lassen, da sind die Hausschlüssel, du kannst überall hingehen und alles betrachten, nur nicht in eine Stube, die dieser kleine Schlüssel da aufschließt, das verbiet ich dir bei Lebensstrafe.« Auch gab er ihr ein Ei und sprach »das Ei verwahre mir sorgfältig und trag es lieber beständig bei dir, denn ginge es verloren, so würde ein großes Unglück daraus entstehen.« Sie nahm die Schlüssel und das Ei, und versprach, alles wohl auszurichten. Als er fort war, ging sie in dem Haus herum von unten bis oben und besah alles, die Stuben glänzten von Silber und Gold, und sie meinte, sie hätte nie so große Pracht gesehen. Endlich kam sie auch zu der verbotenen Tür, sie wollte vorübergehen, aber die Neugierde ließ ihr keine Ruhe. Sie besah den Schlüssel, er sah aus wie ein anderer, sie steckte ihn ein und drehte ein wenig, da sprang die Türe auf. Aber was erblickte sie, als sie hineintrat? ein großes blutiges Becken stand in der Mitte, und darin lagen tote zerhauene Menschen, daneben stand ein Holzblock, und ein blinkendes Beil lag darauf. Sie erschrak so sehr, daß das Ei, das sie in der Hand hielt, hineinplumpte. Sie holte es wieder heraus und wischte das Blut ab, aber vergeblich, es kam den Augenblick wieder zum Vorschein; sie wischte und schabte, aber sie konnte es nicht herunterkriegen.

Nicht lange, so kam der Mann von der Reise zurück, und das erste, was er forderte, war der Schlüssel und das Ei. Sie reichte es ihm hin, aber sie zitterte dabei, und er sah gleich an den roten Flecken, daß sie in der Blutkammer gewesen war. »Bist du gegen meinen Willen in die Kammer gegangen,« sprach er, »so sollst du gegen deinen Willen wieder hinein. Dein Leben ist zu Ende.« Er warf sie nieder, schleifte sie an den Haaren hin, schlug ihr das Haupt auf dem Blocke ab und zerhackte sie, daß ihr Blut auf dem Boden dahinfloß. Dann warf er sie zu den übrigen ins Becken.

»Jetzt will ich mir die zweite holen,« sprach der Hexenmeister, ging wieder in Gestalt eines armen Mannes vor das Haus und bettelte. Da brachte ihm die zweite ein Stück Brot, er fing sie wie die erste durch bloßes Anrühren und trug sie fort. Es erging ihr nicht besser als ihrer Schwester, sie ließ sich von ihrer Neugierde verleiten, öffnete die Blutkammer und schaute hinein, und mußte es bei seiner Rückkehr mit dem Leben büßen. Er ging nun und holte die dritte, die aber war klug und listig. Als er ihr die Schlüssel und das Ei gegeben hatte und fortgereist war, verwahrte sie das Ei erst sorgfältig, dann besah sie das Haus und ging zuletzt in die verbotene Kammer. Ach, was erblickte sie! ihre beiden lieben Schwestern lagen da in dem Becken jämmerlich ermordet und zerhackt. Aber sie hub an und suchte die Glieder zusammen und legte sie zurecht, Kopf, Leib, Arme und Beine. Und als nichts mehr fehlte, da fingen die Glieder an, sich zu regen, und schlossen sich aneinander, und beide Mädchen öffneten die Augen und waren wieder lebendig. Da freuten sie sich, küßten und herzten einander. Der Mann forderte bei seiner Ankunft gleich Schlüssel und Ei, und als er keine Spur von Blut daran entdecken konnte, sprach er »du hast die Probe bestanden, du sollst meine Braut sein.« Er hatte jetzt keine Macht mehr über sie und mußte tun, was sie verlangte. »Wohlan,« antwortete sie, »du sollst vorher einen Korb voll Gold meinem Vater und meiner Mutter bringen und es selbst auf deinem Rücken hintragen; derweil will ich die Hochzeit bestellen.« Dann lief sie zu ihren Schwestern, die sie in einem Kämmerlein versteckt hatte, und sagte »der Augenblick ist da, wo ich euch retten kann: der Bösewicht soll euch selbst wieder heimtragen; aber sobald ihr zu Hause seid, sendet mir Hilfe.« Sie setzte beide in einen Korb und deckte sie mit Gold ganz zu, daß nichts von ihnen zu sehen war, dann rief sie den Hexenmeister herein und sprach »nun trag den Korb fort, aber daß du mir unterwegs nicht stehen bleibst und ruhest, ich schaue durch mein Fensterlein und habe acht.«

Der Hexenmeister hob den Korb auf seinen Rücken und ging damit fort, er drückte ihn aber so schwer, daß ihm der Schweiß über das Angesicht lief. Da setzte er sich nieder und wollte ein wenig ruhen, aber gleich rief eine im Korbe »ich schaue durch mein Fensterlein und sehe, daß du ruhst, willst du gleich weiter.« Er meinte, die Braut rief ihm das zu, und machte sich wieder auf. Nochmals wollte er sich setzen, aber es rief gleich »ich schaue durch mein Fensterlein und sehe, daß du ruhst, willst du gleich weiter.« Und sooft er stillstand, rief es, und da mußte er fort, bis er endlich stöhnend und außer Atem den Korb mit dem Gold und den beiden Mädchen in ihrer Eltern Haus brachte.

Daheim aber ordnete die Braut das Hochzeitsfest an und ließ die Freunde des Hexenmeisters dazu einladen. Dann nahm sie einen Totenkopf mit grinsenden Zähnen, setzte ihm einen Schmuck auf und einen Blumenkranz, trug ihn oben vors Bodenloch und ließ ihn da hinausschauen. Als alles bereit war, steckte sie sich in ein Faß mit Honig, schnitt das Bett auf und wälzte sich darin, daß sie aussah wie ein wunderlicher Vogel und kein Mensch sie erkennen konnte. Da ging sie zum Haus hinaus, und unterwegs begegnete ihr ein Teil der Hochzeitsgäste, die fragten

»du Fitchers Vogel, wo kommst du her?«
»Ich komme von Fitze Fitchers Hause her.«
»Was macht denn da die junge Braut?«

»Hat gekehrt von unten bis oben das Haus,
und guckt zum Bodenloch heraus.«

Endlich begegnete ihr der Bräutigam, der langsam zurückwanderte. Er fragte wie die andern

»du Fitchers Vogel, wo kommst du her?«
»Ich komme von Fitze Fitchers Hause her.«
»Was macht denn da die junge Braut?«
»Hat gekehrt von unten bis oben das Haus,
und guckt zum Bodenloch heraus.«

Der Bräutigam schaute hinauf und sah den geputzten Totenkopf, da meinte er, es wäre seine Braut, und nickte ihr zu und grüßte sie freundlich. Wie er aber samt seinen Gästen ins Haus gegangen war, da langten die Brüder und Verwandte der Braut an, die zu ihrer Rettung gesendet waren. Sie schlossen alle Türen des Hauses zu, daß niemand entfliehen konnte, und steckten es an, also daß der Hexenmeister mitsamt seinem Gesindel verbrennen mußte.

47. Von dem Machandelboom.

Dat is nu all lang heer, wol twe dusend Johr, do wöör dar en ryk Mann, de hadd ene schöne frame Fru, un se hadden sik beyde sehr leef, hadden awerst kene Kinner, se wünschden sik awerst sehr welke, un de Fru bedd'd so veel dorüm Dag un Nacht, man se kregen keen un kregen keen. Vör erem Huse wöör en Hof, dorup stünn en Machandelboom, ünner dem stünn de Fru eens im Winter un schelld sik enen Appel, un as se sik den Appel so schelld, so sneet se sik in'n Finger, un dat Blood feel in den Snee. »Ach,« säd de Fru, un süft'd so recht hoog up, un seg dat Blood vör sik an, un wöör so recht wehmödig, »hadd ik doch en Kind, so rood as Blood un so witt as Snee.« Un as se dat säd, so wurr ehr so recht fröhlich to Mode: ehr wöör recht, as schull dat wat warden. Do güng se to dem Huse, un't güng een Maand hen, de Snee vorgüng: un twe Maand, do wöör dat gröön: und dre Maand, do kömen de Blömer uut der Eerd: un veer Maand, do drungen sik alle Bömer in dat Holt, un de grönen Twyge wören all in eenanner wussen: door süngen de Vögelkens, dat dat ganße Holt schalld, un de Blöiten felen von den Bömern: do wörr de fofte Maand wech, un se stünn ünner dem Machandelboom, de röök so schön, do sprüng ehr dat Hart vör Freuden, un se füll up ere Knee un kunn sik nich laten: un as de soste Maand vorby wöör, do wurren de Früchte dick un staark, do wurr se ganß still: un de söwde Maand, do greep se na den Machandelbeeren un eet se so nydsch, do wurr se trurig un krank: do güng de achte Maand hen, un se reep eren Mann un weend un säd »wenn ik staarw, so begraaf my ünner den Machandelboom.« Do wurr se ganß getrost, un freude sik, bet de neegte Maand vorby wöör, do kreeg se en Kind so witt as Snee un so rood as Blood, un as se dat seeg, so freude se sik so, dat se stürw.

Do begroof ehr Mann se ünner den Machandelboom, un he füng an to wenen so sehr: ene Tyd lang, do wurr dat wat sachter, un do he noch wat weend hadd, do hüll he up, un noch en Tyd, do nöhm he sik wedder ene Fru.

Mit de tweden Fru kreeg he ene Dochter, dat Kind awerst von der eersten Fru wöör en lüttje Sähn, un wöör so rood as Blood un so witt as Snee. Wenn de Fru ere Dochter so anseeg, so hadd se se so leef, awerst denn seeg se den lüttjen Jung an, un dat güng ehr so dorch't Hart, un ehr düchd, as stünn he ehr allerwegen im Weg, un dachd denn man jümmer, wo se ehr Dochter all dat Vörmägent towenden wull, un de Böse gaf ehr dat in, dat se dem lüttjen Jung ganß gramm wurr un stödd em herüm von een Eck in de anner, un buffd em hier un knuffd em door, so dat dat aarme Kind jümmer in Angst wöör. Wenn he denn uut de School köhm, so hadd he kene ruhige Städ.

Eens wöör de Fru up de Kamer gaan, do köhm de lüttje Dochter ook herup un säd »Moder, gif my enen Appel.« »Ja, myn Kind,« säd de Fru un gaf ehr enen schönen Appel uut der Kist; de Kist awerst hadd einen grooten sworen Deckel mit en groot schaarp ysern Slott. »Moder,« säd de lüttje Dochter, »schall Broder nich ook enen hebben?« Dat vördrööt de Fru, doch säd se »ja, wenn he uut de School kummt.« Un as se uut dat Fenster wohr wurr, dat he köhm, so wöör dat recht, as wenn de Böse äwer ehr köhm, un se grappst to un nöhm erer Dochter den Appel wedder wech und säd »du schalst nich ehr enen hebben as Broder.« Do smeet se den Appel in de Kist un maakd de Kist to: do köhm de lüttje Jung in de Döhr, do gaf ehr de Böse in, dat se fründlich to em säd »myn Sähn, wullt du enen Appel hebben?« un seeg em so hastig an. »Moder,« säd de lüttje Jung, »wat sühst du gräsig uut! ja, gif my enen Appel.« Do wöör ehr, as schull se em toreden. »Kumm mit my,« säd se un maakd den Deckel up, »hahl dy enen. Appel heruut.« Un as sik de lüttje Jung henin bückd, so reet ehr de Böse, bratsch! slöögt se den Deckel to, dat de Kopp afflöög un ünner de roden Appel füll. Da äwerleep ehr dat in de Angst, un dachd »kunn ich dat von my bringen!« Da güng se bawen na ere Stuw na erem Draagkasten un hahl uut de bäwelste Schuuflad enen witten Dook, un sett't den Kopp wedder up den Hals un bünd den Halsdook so üm, dat'n niks sehn kunn, un sett't em vör de Döhr up enen Stohl un gaf em den Appel in de Hand.

Do köhm doorna Marleenken to erer Moder in de Kääk, de stünn by dem Führ un hadd enen Putt mit heet Water vör sik, den röhrd se jümmer üm. »Moder,« säd Marleenken, »Broder sitt vör de Döhr un süht ganz witt uut un hett enen Appel in de Hand, ik heb em beden, he schull my den Appel gewen, awerst he antwöörd my nich, do wurr my ganß grolich.« »Gah nochmaal hen,« säd de Moder, »un wenn he dy nich antworden will, so gif em eens an de Oren.« Da güng Marleenken hen und säd »Broder, gif my den Appel.« Awerst he sweeg still, do gaf se em eens up de Oren, do feel de Kopp herünn, doräwer vörschrock se sik un füng an to wenen un to roren, un löp to erer Moder un säd »ach, Moder, ik hebb mynen Broder den Kopp afslagen,« un weend un weend un wull sik nich tofreden gewen. »Marleenken,« säd de Moder, »wat hest du dahn! awerst swyg man still, dat et keen Mensch markt, dat is nu doch nich to ännern; wy willen em in Suhr kaken.« Da nöhm de Moder den lüttjen Jung un hackd em in Stücken, ded de in den Putt un kaakd em in Suhr. Marleenken awerst stünn daarby un weend un weend, un de Tranen füllen all in den Put, un se bruukden gorr keen Solt.

Da köhm de Vader to Huus und sett't sik to Disch un säd »wo is denn myn Sähn?« Da droog de Moder ene groote groote Schöttel up mit Swartsuhr, un Marleenken weend un kunn sich nich hollen. Do säd de Vader wedder »wo is denn myn Sähn?« »Ach,« säd de Moder, »he is äwer Land gaan, na Mütten erer Grootöhm: he wull door wat blywen.« »Wat dait he denn door? un heft my nich maal adjüüs sechd!« »O he wull geern hen un bed my, of he door wol sos Wäken blywen kunn; he is jo woll door uphawen.« »Ach,« säd de Mann, »my is so recht trurig, dat is doch nich recht, he hadd my doch adjüüs sagen schullt.« Mit des füng he an to äten und säd »Marleenken, wat weenst du? Broder wart wol wedder kamen.« »Ach, Fru,« säd he do, »wat smeckt my dat Äten schöön! Gif my mehr!« Un je mehr he eet, je mehr wull he hebben, un säd »geeft my mehr, gy schöhlt niks door af hebben, dat is, as wenn dat all myn wör.« Un he eet un eet, un de Knakens smeet he all ünner den Disch, bet he allens up hadd. Marleenken awerst güng hen na ere Kommod und nöhm ut de ünnerste Schuuf eren besten syden Dook, un hahl all de Beenkens und Knakens ünner den Disch heruut un bünd se in den syden Dook und droog se vör de Döhr un weend ere blödigen Tranen. Door läd se se ünner den Machandelboom in dat gröne Gras, un as se se door henlechd hadd, so war ehr mit eenmal so recht licht, un weend nich mer. Do füng de Machandelboom an sik to bewegen, un de Twyge deden sik jümmer so recht von eenanner, un denn wedder tohoop, so recht as wenn sik eener so recht freut un mit de Händ so dait. Mit des so güng dar so'n Newel von dem Boom, un recht in dem Newel, dar brennd dat as Führ, un uut dem Führ, dar flöög so'n schönen Vagel heruut, de süng so herrlich und flöög hoog in de Luft, un as he wech wöör, do wöör de Machandelboom, as he vörhen west wör, un de Dook mit de Knakens wöör wech. Marleenken awerst wöör so recht licht un vörgnöögt, recht as wenn de Broder noch leewd. Do güng se wedder ganß lustig in dat Huus by Disch un eet.

De Vagel awerst flöög wech un sett't sik up enen Goldsmidt syn Huus un füng an to singen

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,
mein Vater, der mich aß,
mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,
sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind't sie in ein seiden Tuch,
legts unter den Machandelbaum.
Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör'n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

De Goldsmidt seet in syn Waarkstäd un maakd ene gollne Kede, do höörd he den Vagel, de up syn Dack seet und süng, un dat dünkd em so schöön. Da stünn he up, un as he äwer den Süll güng, da vörlöör he eenen Tüffel. He güng awer so recht midden up de Strat hen, eenen Tüffel un een Sock an: syn Schortfell hadd he vör, un in de een Hand hadd he de golln Kede un in de anner de Tang; un de Sünn schynd so hell up de Strat. Door güng he recht so staan un seeg den Vagel an. »Vagel,« secht he do, »wo schöön kannst du singen! Sing my dat Stück nochmaal.« »Ne,« secht de Vagel, »twemaal sing ik nich umsünst. Gif my de golln Kede, so will ik dy't nochmaal singen.« »Door,« secht de Goldsmidt, »hest du de golln Kede, nu sing my dat nochmaal.« Do köhm de Vagel un nöhm de golln Kede so in de rechte Poot, un güng vor den Goldsmidt sitten un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,
mein Vater, der mich aß,
mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,
sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind't sie in ein seiden Tuch,
legts unter den Machandelbaum.
Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör'n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

Da flög de Vagel wech na enem Schooster, und sett't sik up den syn Dack un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,
mein Vater, der mich aß,
mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,
sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind't sie in ein seiden Tuch,
legts unter den Machandelbaum.
Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör'n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

De Schooster höörd dat und leep vör syn Döhr in Hemdsaarmels, un seeg na syn Dack un mussd de Hand vör de Ogen hollen, dat de Sünn em nich blend't. »Vagel,« secht he, »wat kannst du schööön singen.« Do rööp he in syn Döhr henin »Fru, kumm mal heruut, dar is een Vagel: süh mal den Vagel, de kann maal schööön singen.« Do rööp he syn Dochter un Kinner un Gesellen, Jung un Maagd, un se kömen all up de Strat un seegen den Vagel an, wo schööön he wöör, un he hadd so recht rode un gröne Feddern, un üm den Hals wöör dat as luter Gold, un de Ogen blünken em im Kopp as Steern. »Vagel,« sägd de Schooster, »nu sing my dat Stück nochmaal.« »Ne,« secht de Vagel, »tweemal sing ik nich umsünst, du must my wat schenken.« »Fru,« säd de Mann, »gah na dem Bähn: up dem bäwelsten Boord, door staan een Poor rode Schö, de bring herünn.« Do güng de Fru hen un hahl de Schö. »Door, Vagel,« säd de Mann, »nu sing my dat Stück nochmaal.« Do köhm de Vagel und nöhm de Schö in de linke Klau, un flöög wedder up dat Dack un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,
mein Vater, der mich aß,
mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,
sucht alle meine Benichen,
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Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör'n schööön Vagel bün ik!«

Un as he uutsungen hadd, so flöög he wech: de Kede hadd he in de rechte und de Schö in de linke Klau, un he flöög wyt wech na ene Mähl, un de Mähl güng »klippe klappe, klippe klappe, klippe klappe.« Un in de Mähl, door seeten twintig Mählenburßen, de hauden enen Steen und hackden »hick hack, hick hack, hick hack,« un de Mähl güng »klippe klappe, klippe klappe, klippe klappe.« Do güng de Vagel up enen Lindenboom sitten, de vör de Mähl stünn, un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,«

do höörd een up,

»mein Vater, der mich aß,«

do höörden noch twe up un höörden dat,

»mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,«

do höörden wedder veer up,

»sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind’t sie in ein seiden Tuch,«

nu hackden noch man acht,

»legts unter«
nu noch man fyw,

»den Machandelbaum.«

nu noch man een.

»Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör’n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

Da hüll de lezte ook up und hadd dat lezte noch hhöörd. »Vagel,« secht he, »wat singst du schöön! laat my dat ook hören, sing my dat nochmaal.« »Ne,« secht de Vagel, »twemaal sing ik nich umsünst, gif my den Mählensteen, so will ik dat nochmaal singen.« »Ja,« secht he, »wenn he my alleen tohöörd, so schullst du em hebben.« »Ja,« säden de annern, »wenn he nochmaal singt, so schall he em hebben.« Do köhm de Vagel herünn, un de Möllers faat’n all twintig mit Böhm an un böhrden Steen up, »hu uh uhp, hu uh uhp, hu uh uhp!« Da stöök de Vagel den Hals döör dat Lock un nöhm em üm as enen Kragen, un flöög wedder up den Boom un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,
mein Vater, der mich aß,
mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,
sucht alle meine Benichen,
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Kywitt, kywitt, wat vörn schöön Vagel bün ik!«

Un as he dat uutsungen hadd, do deed he de Flünk von eenanner, un hadd in de rechte Klau de Kede un in de linke de Schö un üm den Hals den Mählensteen, un floog wyt wech na synes Vaders Huse.

In de Stuw seet de Vader, de Moder un Marleenken by Disch, un de Vader säd »ach, wat waart my licht, my is recht so good to Mode.« »Nä,« säd de

Moder, »my is recht so angst, so recht, as wenn en swoor Gewitter kummt.« Marleenken awerst seet un weend un weend, da köhm de Vagel anflogen, un as he sik up dat Dack sett't, »ach,« säd de Vader, »my is so recht freudig, un de Sünn schynt buten so schöön, my is recht, as schull ik enen olen Bekannten weddersehn.« »Ne,« säd de Fru, »my is so angst, de Täne klappern my, un dat is my as Führ in den Adern.« Un se reet sik ehr Lyfken up un so mehr, awer Marleenken seet in en Eck un weend, und hadd eren Platen vör de Ogen, un weend den Platen ganß meßnatt. Do sett't sik de Vagel up den Machandelboom un süng

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,«

Do hüll de Moder de Oren to un kneep de Ogen to, un wull nich sehn un hören, awer dat bruusde ehr in de Oren as de allerstaarkste Storm, un de Ogen brennden ehr un zackden as Blitz.

»mein Vater, der mich aß,«

»Ach, Moder,« secht de Mann, »door is en schöön Vagel, de singt so herrlich, de Sünn schynt so warm, un dat rückt as luter Zinnemamen.«

»mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,«

Do läd Marleenken den Kopp up de Knee un weend in eens wech, de Mann awerst säd »ik ga henuut, ik mutt den Vagel dicht by sehn.« »Ach, gah nich,« säd de Fru, »my is, as beewd dat ganße Huus un stünn in Flammen.« Awerst de Mann güng henuut un seeg den Vagel an.

»sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind't sie in ein seiden Tuch,
legts unter den Machandelbaum.
Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör'n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

Mit des leet de Vagel de gollne Kede fallen, un se feel dem Mann jüst um'n Hals, so recht hier herüm, dat se recht so schöön passd. Do güng he herin un säd »süh, wat is dat vör'n schöön Vagel, heft my so'ne schöne gollne Kede schenkd, un süht so schöön uut.« De Fru awerst wöör so angst un füll langs in de Stuw hen, un de Mütz füll ehr von dem Kopp. Do süng de Vagel wedder

»mein Mutter, der mich schlacht,«

»Ach, dat ik dusend Föder ünner de Eerd wöör, dat ik dat nich hören schull!«

»mein Vater, der mich aß,«

Do füll de Fru vör dood nedder.

»mein Schwester, der Marlenichen,«

»Ach,« säd Marleenken, »ik will ook henuut gahn un sehn, of de Vagel my wat schenkt.« Do güng se henuut.

»sucht alle meine Benichen,
bind’t sie in ein seiden Tuch,«

Do schmeet he ehr de Schö herünn.
»legts unter den Machandelbaum.
Kywitt, kywitt, wat vör’n schöön Vagel bün ik!«

Do wöör ehr so licht un fröhlich. Do truck se den neen roden Schö an, un danßd un sprüng herin. »Ach,« säd se, »ik wöör so trurig, as ick henuut güng, un nu is my so licht, dat is maal en herrlichen Vagel, hett my en Poor rode Schö schenkd.« »Ne,« säd de Fru und sprüng up, un de Hoor stünnen ehr to Baarg as Führsflammen, »my is, as schull de Welt ünnergahn, ik will ook henuut, of my lichter warden schull.« Un as se uut de Döhr köhm, bratsch! smeet ehr de Vagel den Mählensteen up den Kopp, dat se ganß tomatscht wurr. De Vader un Marleenken höörden dat un güngen henuut: do güng en Damp un Flamm un Führ up von der Städ, un as dat vorby wöör, do stünn de lüttje Broder door, un he nöhm synen Vader un Marleenken by der Hand, un wören all dre so recht vergnöögt un güngen in dat Huus by Disch, un eeten.

48. Der alte Sultan.

Es hatte ein Bauer einen treuen Hund, der Sultan hieß, der war alt geworden und hatte alle Zähne verloren, so daß er nichts mehr fest packen konnte. Zu einer Zeit stand der Bauer mit seiner Frau vor der Haustüre und sprach »den alten Sultan schieß ich morgen tot, der ist zu nichts mehr nütze.« Die Frau, die Mitleid mit dem treuen Tiere hatte, antwortete »da er uns so lange Jahre gedient hat und ehrlich bei uns gehalten, so könnten wir ihm wohl das Gnadenbrot geben.« »Ei was,« sagte der Mann, »du bist nicht recht gescheit: er hat keinen Zahn mehr im Maul, und kein Dieb fürchtet sich vor ihm, er kann jetzt abgehen. Hat er uns gedient, so hat er sein gutes Fressen dafür gekriegt.«

Der arme Hund, der nicht weit davon in der Sonne ausgestreckt lag, hatte alles mit angehört und war traurig, daß morgen sein letzter Tag sein sollte. Er hatte einen guten Freund, das war der Wolf, zu dem schlich er abends hinaus in den Wald und klagte über das Schicksal, das ihm bevorstände. »Höre, Gevatter,« sagte der Wolf, »sei gutes Mutes, ich will dir aus deiner Not helfen. Ich habe etwas ausgedacht. Morgen in aller Frühe geht dein Herr mit seiner Frau ins Heu, und sie nehmen ihr kleines Kind mit, weil niemand im Hause zurückbleibt. Sie pflegen das Kind während der Arbeit hinter die Hecke in den Schatten zu legen: lege dich daneben, gleich als wolltest du es bewachen. Ich will dann aus dem Walde herauskommen und das Kind rauben: du mußt mir eifrig nachspringen, als wolltest du mir es wieder abjagen. Ich lasse es fallen, und du bringst es den Eltern wieder zurück, die glauben dann, du hättest es gerettet, und sind viel zu dankbar, als daß sie dir ein Leid antun sollten: im Gegenteil, du kommst in völlige Gnade, und sie werden es dir an nichts mehr fehlen lassen.«

Der Anschlag gefiel dem Hund, und wie er ausgedacht war, so ward er auch ausgeführt. Der Vater schrie, als er den Wolf mit seinem Kinde durchs Feld laufen sah, als es aber der alte Sultan zurückbrachte, da war er froh, streichelte ihn und sagte »dir soll kein Härchen gekrümmt werden, du sollst das Gnadenbrot essen, solange du lebst.« Zu seiner Frau aber sprach er »geh gleich heim und koche dem alten Sultan einen Weckbrei, den braucht er nicht zu beißen, und bring das Kopfkissen aus meinem Bette, das schenk ich ihm zu seinem Lager.« Von nun an hatte es der alte Sultan so gut, als er sichs nur wünschen konnte. Bald hernach besuchte ihn der Wolf und freute sich, daß alles so wohl gelungen war. »Aber Gevatter,« sagte er, »du wirst doch ein Auge zudrücken, wenn ich bei Gelegenheit deinem Herrn ein fettes Schaf weghole. Es wird einem heutzutage schwer, sich durchzuschlagen.« »Darauf rechne nicht,« antwortete der Hund, »meinem Herrn bleibe ich treue, das darf ich nicht zugeben.« Der Wolf meinte, das wäre nicht im Ernste gesprochen, kam in der Nacht herangeschlichen und wollte sich das Schaf holen. Aber der Bauer, dem der treue Sultan das Vorhaben des Wolfes verraten hatte, paßte ihm auf und kämmte ihm mit dem Dreschflegel garstig die Haare. Der Wolf mußte ausreißen, schrie aber dem Hund zu »wart du schlechter Geselle, dafür sollst du büßen.«

Am andern Morgen schickte der Wolf das Schwein, und ließ den Hund hinaus in den Wald fordern, da wollten sie ihre Sache ausmachen. Der alte Sultan konnte keinen Beistand finden als eine Katze, die nur drei Beine hatte, und als sie zusammen hinausgingen, humpelte die arme Katze daher und streckte zugleich vor Schmerz den Schwanz in die Höhe. Der Wolf und sein Beistand waren schon an Ort und Stelle, als sie aber ihren Gegner daherkommen sahen, meinten sie, er führte einen Säbel mit sich, weil sie den aufgerichteten Schwanz der Katze dafür ansahen. Und wenn das arme Tier so auf drei Beinen hüpfte, dachten sie nicht anders, als es höbe jedesmal einen Stein auf, wollte damit auf sie werfen. Da ward ihnen beiden angst: das wilde Schwein verkroch sich ins Laub, und der Wolf sprang auf einen Baum. Der Hund und die Katze, als sie herankamen, wunderten sich, daß sich niemand sehen ließ. Das wilde Schwein aber hatte sich im Laub nicht ganz verstecken können, sondern die Ohren ragten noch heraus. Während die Katze sich bedächtig umschaute, zwinste das Schwein mit den Ohren: die Katze, welche meinte, es regte sich da eine Maus, sprang darauf zu und biß herzhaft hinein. Da erhob sich das Schwein mit großem Geschrei, lief fort und rief »dort auf dem Baum, da sitzt der Schuldige.« Der Hund und die Katze schauten hinauf und erblickten den Wolf, der schämte sich, daß er sich so furchtsam gezeigt hatte, und nahm von dem Hund den Frieden an.

49. Die sechs Schwäne.

Es jagte einmal ein König in einem großen Wald und jagte einem Wild so eifrig nach, daß ihm niemand von seinen Leuten folgen konnte. Als der Abend herankam, hielt er still und blickte um sich, da sah er, daß er sich verirrt hatte. Er suchte einen Ausgang, konnte aber keinen finden. Da sah er eine alte Frau mit wackelndem Kopfe, die auf ihn zukam; das war aber eine Hexe. »Liebe Frau,« sprach er zu ihr, »könnt Ihr mir nicht den Weg durch den Wald zeigen?« »O ja, Herr König,« antwortete sie, »das kann ich wohl, aber es ist eine Bedingung dabei, wenn Ihr die nicht erfüllt, so kommt Ihr nimmermehr aus dem Wald und müßt darin Hungers sterben.« »Was ist das für eine Bedingung?« fragte der König. »Ich habe eine Tochter,« sagte die Alte, »die so schön ist, wie Ihr eine auf der Welt finden könnt, und wohl verdient, Eure Gemahlin zu werden, wollt Ihr die zur Frau Königin machen, so zeige ich Euch den Weg aus dem Walde.« Der König in der Angst seines Herzens willigte ein, und die Alte führte ihn zu ihrem Häuschen, wo ihre Tochter beim Feuer saß. Sie empfing den König, als wenn sie ihn erwartet hätte, und er sah wohl, daß sie sehr schön war, aber sie gefiel ihm doch nicht, und er konnte sie ohne heimliches Grausen nicht ansehen. Nachdem er das Mädchen zu sich aufs Pferd gehoben hatte, zeigte ihm die Alte den Weg, und der König gelangte wieder in sein königliches Schloß, wo die Hochzeit gefeiert wurde.

Der König war schon einmal verheiratet gewesen, und hatte von seiner ersten Gemahlin sieben Kinder, sechs Knaben und ein Mädchen, die er über alles auf der Welt liebte. Weil er nun fürchtete, die Stiefmutter möchte sie nicht gut behandeln und ihnen gar ein Leid antun, so brachte er sie in ein einsames Schloß, das mitten in einem Walde stand. Es lag so verborgen, und der Weg war so schwer zu finden, daß er ihn selbst nicht gefunden hätte, wenn ihm nicht eine weise Frau ein Knäuel Garn von wunderbarer Eigenschaft geschenkt hätte; wenn er das vor sich hinwarf, so wickelte es sich von selbst los und zeigte ihm den Weg. Der König ging aber so oft hinaus zu seinen lieben Kindern, daß der Königin seine Abwesenheit auffiel; sie war neugierig und wollte wissen, was er draußen ganz allein in dem Walde zu schaffen habe. Sie gab seinen Dienern viel Geld, und die verrieten ihr das Geheimnis und sagten ihr auch von dem Knäuel, das allein den Weg zeigen könnte. Nun hatte sie keine Ruhe, bis sie herausgebracht hatte, wo der König das Knäuel aufbewahrte, und dann machte sie kleine weißseidene Hemdchen, und da sie von ihrer Mutter die Hexenkünste gelernt hatte, so nähete sie einen Zauber hinein. Und als der König einmal auf die Jagd geritten war, nahm sie die Hemdchen und ging in den Wald, und das Knäuel zeigte ihr den Weg. Die Kinder, die aus der Ferne jemand kommen sahen, meinten, ihr lieber Vater käme zu ihnen, und sprangen ihm voll Freude entgegen. Da warf sie über ein jedes eins von den Hemdchen, und wie das ihren Leib berührt hatte, verwandelten sie sich in Schwäne und flogen über den Wald hinweg. Die Königin ging ganz vergnügt nach Haus und glaubte ihre Stiefkinder los zu sein, aber das Mädchen war ihr mit den Brüdern nicht entgegen gelaufen, und sie wußte nichts von ihm. Andern Tags kam der König und wollte seine Kinder besuchen, er fand aber niemand als das Mädchen. »Wo sind deine Brüder?« fragte der König. »Ach, lieber Vater,« antwortete es, »die sind fort und haben mich allein zurückgelassen,« und erzählte ihm, daß es aus seinem Fensterlein mit angesehen habe, wie seine Brüder als Schwäne über den Wald weggeflogen wären, und zeigte ihm die Federn, die sie in dem Hof hatten fallen lassen, und die es aufgelesen hatte. Der König trauerte, aber er dachte nicht, daß die Königin die böse Tat vollbracht hätte, und weil er fürchtete, das Mädchen würde ihm auch geraubt, so wollte er es mit fortnehmen. Aber es hatte Angst vor der Stiefmutter, und bat den König, daß es nur noch diese Nacht im Waldschloß bleiben dürfte.

Das arme Mädchen dachte »meines Bleibens ist nicht länger hier, ich will gehen und meine Brüder suchen.« Und als die Nacht kam, entfloh es, und ging gerade in den Wald hinein. Es ging die ganze Nacht durch und auch den andern Tag in einem fort, bis es vor Müdigkeit nicht weiter konnte. Da sah es eine Wildhütte, stieg hinauf und fand eine Stube mit sechs kleinen Betten, aber es getraute nicht sich in eins zu legen, sondern kroch unter eins, legte sich auf den harten Boden und wollte die Nacht da zubringen. Als aber die Sonne bald untergehen wollte, hörte es ein Rauschen und sah, daß sechs Schwäne zum Fenster hereingeflogen kamen. Sie setzten sich auf den Boden, und bliesen einander an und bliesen sich alle Federn ab, und ihre Schwanenhaut streifte sich ab wie ein Hemd. Da sah sie das Mädchen an und erkannte ihre Brüder, freute sich und kroch unter dem Bett hervor. Die Brüder waren nicht weniger erfreut, als sie ihr Schwesterchen erblickten, aber ihre Freude war von kurzer Dauer. »Hier kann deines Bleibens nicht sein,« sprachen sie zu ihm, »das ist eine Herberge für Räuber, wenn die heim kommen und finden dich, so ermorden sie dich.« »Könnt ihr mich denn nicht beschützen?« fragte das Schwesterchen. »Nein,« antworteten sie, »denn wir können nur eine Viertelstunde lang jeden Abend unsere Schwanenhaut ablegen, und haben in dieser Zeit unsere menschliche Gestalt, aber dann werden wir wieder in Schwäne verwandelt.« Das Schwesterchen weinte und sagte »könnt ihr denn nicht erlöst werden?« »Ach nein,« antworteten sie, »die Bedingungen sind zu schwer. Du darfst sechs Jahre lang nicht sprechen und nicht lachen, und mußt in der Zeit sechs Hemdchen für uns aus Sternblumen zusammennähen. Kommt ein einziges Wort aus deinem Munde, so ist alle Arbeit verloren.« Und als die Brüder das gesprochen hatten, war die Viertelstunde herum, und sie flogen als Schwäne wieder zum Fenster hinaus.

Das Mädchen aber faßte den festen Entschluß, seine Brüder zu erlösen, und wenn es auch sein Leben kostete. Es verließ die Wildhütte, ging mitten in den Wald und setzte sich auf einen Baum und brachte da die Nacht zu. Am andern Morgen ging es aus, sammelte Sternblumen und fing an zu nähen. Reden konnte es mit niemand, und zum Lachen hatte es keine Lust: es saß da und sah nur auf seine Arbeit. Als es schon lange Zeit da zugebracht hatte, geschah es, daß der König des Landes in dem Wald jagte und seine Jäger zu dem Baum kamen, auf welchem das Mädchen saß. Sie riefen es an und sagten »wer bist du?« Es gab aber keine Antwort. »Komm herab zu uns,« sagten sie, »wir wollen dir nichts zuleid tun.« Es schüttelte bloß mit dem Kopf. Als sie es weiter mit Fragen bedrängten, so warf es ihnen seine goldene Halskette herab und dachte sie damit zufrieden zu stellen. Sie ließen aber nicht ab, da warf es ihnen seinen Gürtel herab, und als auch das nichts half, seine Strumpfbänder, und nach und nach alles, was es anhatte und entbehren konnte, so daß es nichts mehr als sein Hemdlein behielt. Die Jäger ließen sich aber damit nicht abweisen, stiegen auf den Baum, hoben das Mädchen herab und führten es vor den König. Der König fragte »wer bist du? was machst du auf dem Baum?« Aber es antwortete nicht. Er fragte es in allen Sprachen, die er wußte, aber es blieb stumm wie ein Fisch. Weil es aber so schön war, so ward des Königs Herz gerührt, und er faßte eine große Liebe zu ihm. Er tat ihm seinen Mantel um, nahm es vor sich aufs Pferd und brachte es in sein Schloß. Da ließ er ihm reiche Kleider antun, und es strahlte in seiner Schönheit wie der helle Tag, aber es war kein Wort aus ihm herauszubringen. Er setzte es bei Tisch an seine Seite, und seine bescheidenen Mienen und seine Sittsamkeit gefielen ihm so sehr, daß er sprach »diese begehre ich zu heiraten und keine andere auf der Welt,« und nach einigen Tagen vermählte er sich mit ihr.

Der König aber hatte eine böse Mutter, die war unzufrieden mit dieser Heirat und sprach schlecht von der jungen Königin. »Wer weiß, wo die Dirne her ist,« sagte sie, »die nicht reden kann: sie ist eines Königs nicht würdig.« Über ein Jahr, als die Königin das erste Kind zur Welt brachte, nahm es ihr die Alte weg und bestrich ihr im Schlafe den Mund mit Blut. Da ging sie zum König und klagte sie an, sie wäre eine Menschenfresserin. Der König wollte es nicht glauben und litt nicht, daß man ihr ein Leid antat. Sie saß aber beständig und nähete an den Hemdchen, und achtete auf nichts anderes. Das nächstemal, als sie wieder einen schönen Knaben gebar, übte die falsche Schwiegermutter denselben Betrug aus, aber der König konnte sich nicht entschließen, ihren Reden Glauben beizumessen. Er sprach »sie ist zu fromm und gut, als daß sie so etwas tun könnte, wäre sie nicht stumm und könnte sie sich verteidigen, so würde ihre Unschuld an den Tag kommen.« Als aber das drittemal die Alte das neugeborne Kind raubte und die Königin anklagte, die kein Wort zu ihrer Verteidigung vorbrachte, so konnte der König nicht anders, er mußte sie dem Gericht übergeben, und das verurteilte sie, den Tod durchs Feuer zu erleiden.

Als der Tag herankam, wo das Urteil sollte vollzogen werden, da war zugleich der letzte Tag von den sechs Jahren herum, in welchem sie nicht sprechen und nicht lachen durfte, und sie hatte ihre lieben Brüder aus der Macht des Zaubers befreit. Die sechs Hemden waren fertig geworden, nur daß an dem letzten der linke Ärmel noch fehlte. Als sie nun zum Scheiterhaufen geführt wurde, legte sie die Hemden auf ihren Arm, und als sie oben stand und das Feuer eben sollte angezündet werden, so schaute sie sich um, da kamen sechs Schwäne durch die Luft dahergezogen. Da sah sie, daß ihre Erlösung nahte, und ihr Herz regte sich in Freude. Die Schwäne rauschten zu ihr her und senkten sich herab, so daß sie ihnen die Hemden überwerfen konnte: und wie sie davon berührt wurden, fielen die Schwanenhäute ab, und ihre Brüder standen leibhaftig vor ihr und waren frisch und schön; nur dem jüngsten fehlte der linke Arm, und er hatte dafür einen Schwanenflügel am Rücken. Sie herzten und küßten sich, und die Königin ging zu dem Könige, der ganz bestürzt war, und fing an zu reden und sagte »liebster Gemahl, nun darf ich sprechen und dir offenbaren, daß ich unschuldig bin und fälschlich angeklagt,« und erzählte ihm von dem Betrug der Alten, die ihre drei Kinder weggenommen und verborgen hätte. Da wurden sie zu großer Freude des Königs herbeigeholt, und die böse Schwiegermutter wurde zur Strafe auf den Scheiterhaufen gebunden und zu Asche verbrannt. Der König aber und die Königin mit ihren sechs Brüdern lebten lange Jahre in Glück und Frieden.

50. Dornröschen.

Vor Zeiten war ein König und eine Königin, die sprachen jeden Tag »ach, wenn wir doch ein Kind hätten!« und kriegten immer keins. Da trug sich zu, als die Königin einmal im Bade saß, daß ein Frosch aus dem Wasser ans Land kroch und zu ihr sprach »dein Wunsch wird erfüllt werden, ehe ein Jahr vergeht, wirst du eine Tochter zur Welt bringen.« Was der Frosch gesagt hatte, das geschah, und die Königin gebar ein Mädchen, das war so schön, daß der König vor Freude sich nicht zu lassen wußte und ein großes Fest anstellte. Er ladete nicht bloß seine Verwandte, Freunde und Bekannte, sondern auch die weisen Frauen dazu ein, damit sie dem Kind hold und gewogen wären. Es waren ihrer dreizehn in seinem Reiche, weil er aber nur zwölf goldene Teller hatte, von welchen sie essen sollten, so mußte eine von ihnen daheim bleiben. Das Fest ward mit aller Pracht gefeiert, und als es zu Ende war, beschenkten die weisen Frauen das Kind mit ihren Wundergaben: die eine mit Tugend, die andere mit Schönheit, die dritte mit Reichtum, und so mit allem, was auf der Welt zu wünschen ist. Als elfe ihre Sprüche eben getan hatten, trat plötzlich die dreizehnte herein. Sie wollte sich dafür rächen, daß sie nicht eingeladen war, und ohne jemand zu grüßen oder nur anzusehen, rief sie mit lauter Stimme »die Königstochter soll sich in ihrem funfzehnten Jahr an einer Spindel stechen und tot hinfallen.« Und ohne ein Wort weiter zu sprechen, kehrte sie sich um und verließ den Saal. Alle waren erschrocken, da trat die zwölfte hervor, die ihren Wunsch noch übrig hatte, und weil sie den bösen Spruch nicht aufheben, sondern nur ihn mildern konnte, so sagte sie »es soll aber kein Tod sein, sondern ein hundertjähriger tiefer Schlaf, in welchen die Königstochter fällt.« Der König, der sein liebes Kind vor dem Unglück gern bewahren wollte, ließ den Befehl ausgehen, daß alle Spindeln im ganzen Königreiche sollten verbrannt werden. An dem Mädchen aber wurden die Gaben der weisen Frauen sämtlich erfüllt, denn es war so schön, sittsam, freundlich und verständig, daß es jedermann, der es ansah, lieb haben mußte. Es geschah, daß an dem Tage, wo es gerade funfzehn Jahr alt ward, der König und die Königin nicht zu Haus waren, und das Mädchen ganz allein im Schloß zurückblieb. Da ging es allerorten herum, besah Stuben und Kammern, wie es Lust hatte, und kam endlich auch an einen alten Turm. Es stieg die enge Wendeltreppe hinauf, und gelangte zu einer kleinen Türe. In dem Schloß steckte ein verrosteter Schlüssel, und als es umdrehte, sprang die Türe auf, und saß da in einem kleinen Stübchen eine alte Frau mit einer Spindel und spann emsig ihren Flachs. »Guten Tag, du altes Mütterchen,« sprach die Königstochter, »was machst du da?« »Ich spinne,« sagte die Alte und nickte mit dem Kopf. »Was ist das für ein Ding, das so lustig herumspringt?« sprach das Mädchen, nahm die Spindel und wollte auch spinnen. Kaum hatte sie aber die Spindel angerührt, so ging der Zauberspruch in Erfüllung, und sie stach sich damit in den Finger.

In dem Augenblick aber, wo sie den Stich empfand, fiel sie auf das Bett nieder, das da stand, und lag in einem tiefen Schlaf. Und dieser Schlaf verbreitete sich über das ganze Schloß: der König und die Königin, die eben heim gekommen waren und in den Saal getreten waren, fingen an einzuschlafen, und der ganze Hofstaat mit ihnen. Da schliefen auch die Pferde im Stall, die Hunde im Hofe, die Tauben auf dem Dache, die Fliegen an der Wand, ja, das Feuer, das auf dem Herde flackerte, ward still und schlief ein, und der Braten hörte auf zu brutzeln, und der Koch, der den Küchenjungen, weil er etwas versehen hatte, an den Haaren ziehen wollte, ließ ihn los und schlief. Und der Wind legte sich, und auf den Bäumen vor dem Schloß regte sich kein Blättchen mehr.

Rings um das Schloß aber begann eine Dornenhecke zu wachsen, die jedes Jahr höher ward, und endlich das ganze Schloß umzog und darüber hinauswuchs, daß gar nichts mehr davon zu sehen war, selbst nicht die Fahne auf dem Dach. Es ging aber die Sage in dem Land von dem schönen schlafenden Dornröschen, denn so ward die Königstochter genannt, also daß von Zeit zu Zeit Königssöhne kamen und durch die Hecke in das Schloß dringen wollten. Es war ihnen aber nicht möglich, denn die Dornen, als hätten sie Hände, hielten fest zusammen, und die Jünglinge blieben darin hängen, konnten sich nicht wieder losmachen und starben eines jämmerlichen Todes. Nach langen Jahren kam wieder einmal ein Königssohn in das Land, und hörte, wie ein alter Mann von der Dornhecke erzählte, es sollte ein Schloß dahinter stehen, in welchem eine wunderschöne Königstochter, Dornröschen genannt, schon seit hundert Jahren schliefe, und mit ihr schliefe der König und die Königin und der ganze Hofstaat. Er wußte auch von seinem Großvater, daß schon viele Königssöhne gekommen wären und versucht hätten, durch die Dornenhecke zu dringen, aber sie wären darin hängen geblieben und eines traurigen Todes gestorben. Da sprach der Jüngling »ich fürchte mich nicht, ich will hinaus und das schöne Dornröschen sehen.« Der gute Alte mochte ihm abraten, wie er wollte, er hörte nicht auf seine Worte.

Nun waren aber gerade die hundert Jahre verflossen, und der Tag war gekommen, wo Dornröschen wieder erwachen sollte. Als der Königssohn sich der Dornenhecke näherte, waren es lauter große schöne Blumen, die taten sich von selbst auseinander und ließen ihn unbeschädigt hindurch, und hinter ihm taten sie sich wieder als eine Hecke zusammen. Im Schloßhof sah er die Pferde und scheckigen Jagdhunde liegen und schlafen, auf dem Dache saßen die Tauben und hatten das Köpfchen unter den Flügel gesteckt. Und als er ins Haus kam, schliefen die Fliegen an der Wand, der Koch in der Küche hielt noch die Hand, als wollte er den Jungen anpacken, und die Magd saß vor dem schwarzen Huhn, das sollte gerupft werden. Da ging er weiter und sah im Saale den ganzen Hofstaat liegen und schlafen, und oben bei dem Throne lag der König und die Königin. Da ging er noch weiter, und alles war so still, daß einer seinen Atem hören konnte, und endlich kam er zu dem Turm und öffnete die Türe zu der kleinen Stube, in welcher Dornröschen schlief. Da lag es und war so schön, daß er die Augen nicht abwenden konnte, und er bückte sich und gab ihm einen Kuß. Wie er es mit dem Kuß berührt hatte, schlug Dornröschen die Augen auf, erwachte, und blickte ihn ganz freundlich an. Da gingen sie zusammen herab, und der König erwachte und die Königin und der ganze Hofstaat, und sahen einander mit großen Augen an. Und die Pferde im Hof standen auf und rüttelten sich: die Jagdhunde sprangen und wedelten: die Tauben auf dem Dache zogen das Köpfchen unterm Flügel hervor, sahen umher und flogen ins Feld: die Fliegen an den Wänden krochen weiter: das Feuer in der Küche erhob sich, flackerte und kochte das Essen: der Braten fing wieder an zu brutzeln: und der Koch gab dem Jungen eine Ohrfeige, daß er schrie: und die Magd rupfte das Huhn fertig. Und da wurde die Hochzeit des Königssohns mit dem Dornröschen in aller Pracht gefeiert, und sie lebten vergnügt bis an ihr Ende.

51. Fundevogel.

Es war einmal ein Förster, der ging in den Wald auf die Jagd, und wie er in den Wald kam, hörte er schreien, als obs ein kleines Kind wäre. Er ging dem Schreien nach und kam endlich zu einem hohen Baum, und oben darauf saß ein kleines Kind. Es war aber die Mutter mit dem Kinde unter dem Baum eingeschlafen, und ein Raubvogel hatte das Kind in ihrem Schoße gesehen: da war er hinzugeflogen, hatte es mit seinem Schnabel weggenommen und auf den hohen Baum gesetzt.

Der Förster stieg hinauf, holte das Kind herunter und dachte »du willst das Kind mit nach Haus nehmen und mit deinem Lenchen zusammen aufziehn.« Er brachte es also heim, und die zwei Kinder wuchsen miteinander auf. Das aber, das auf dem Baum gefunden worden war, und weil es ein Vogel weggetragen hatte, wurde Fundevogel geheißen. Fundevogel und Lenchen hatten sich so lieb, nein so lieb, daß, wenn eins das andere nicht sah, ward es traurig.

Der Förster hatte aber eine alte Köchin, die nahm eines Abends zwei Eimer und fing an Wasser zu schleppen, und ging nicht einmal, sondern vielemal hinaus an den Brunnen. Lenchen sah es und sprach »hör einmal, alte Sanne, was trägst du denn so viel Wasser zu?« »Wenn dus keinem Menschen wiedersagen willst, so will ich dirs wohl sagen.« Da sagte Lenchen nein, sie wollte es keinem Menschen wiedersagen, so sprach die Köchin »morgen früh, wenn der Förster auf die Jagd ist, da koche ich das Wasser, und wenns im Kessel siedet, werfe ich den Fundevogel nein, und will ihn darin kochen.«

Des andern Morgens in aller Frühe stieg der Förster auf und ging auf die Jagd, und als er weg war, lagen die Kinder noch im Bett. Da sprach Lenchen zum Fundevogel »verläßt du mich nicht, so verlaß ich dich auch nicht;« so sprach der Fundevogel »nun und nimmermehr.« Da sprach Lenchen »ich will es dir nur sagen, die alte Sanne schleppte gestern abend so viel Eimer Wasser ins Haus, da fragte ich sie, warum sie das täte, so sagte sie, wenn ich es keinem Menschen sagen wollte, so wollte sie es mir wohl sagen: sprach ich, ich wollte es gewiß keinem Menschen sagen: da sagte sie, morgen früh, wenn der Vater auf die Jagd wäre, wollte sie den Kessel voll Wasser sieden, dich hineinwerfen und kochen. Wir wollen aber geschwind aufstehen, uns anziehen und zusammen fortgehen.«

Also standen die beiden Kinder auf, zogen sich geschwind an und gingen fort. Wie nun das Wasser im Kessel kochte, ging die Köchin in die Schlafkammer, wollte den Fundevogel holen und ihn hineinwerfen. Aber als sie hineinkam und zu den Betten trat, waren die Kinder alle beide fort: da wurde ihr grausam angst, und sie sprach vor sich »was will ich nun sagen, wenn der Förster heim kommt und sieht, daß die Kinder weg sind? Geschwind hintennach, daß wir sie wiederkriegen.«

Da schickte die Köchin drei Knechte nach, die sollten laufen und die Kinder einfangen. Die Kinder aber saßen vor dem Wald, und als sie die drei

Knechte von weitem laufen sahen, sprach Lenchen zum Fundevogel »verläßt du mich nicht, so verlaß ich dich auch nicht.« So sprach Fundevogel »nun und nimmermehr.« Da sagte Lenchen »werde du zum Rosenstöckchen, und ich zum Röschen darauf.« Wie nun die drei Knechte vor den Wald kamen, so war nichts da als ein Rosenstrauch und ein Röschen oben drauf, die Kinder aber nirgend. Da sprachen sie »hier ist nichts zu machen,« und gingen heim und sagten der Köchin, sie hätten nichts in der Welt gesehen als nur ein Rosenstöckchen und ein Röschen oben darauf. Da schalt die alte Köchin »ihr Einfaltspinsel, ihr hättet das Rosenstöckchen sollen entzweischneiden und das Röschen abbrechen und mit nach Haus bringen, geschwind und tuts.« Sie mußten also zum zweitenmal hinaus und suchen. Die Kinder sahen sie aber von weitem kommen, da sprach Lenchen »Fundevogel, verläßt du mich nicht, so verlaß ich dich auch nicht.« Fundevogel sagte »nun und nimmermehr.« Sprach Lenchen »so werde du eine Kirche und ich die Krone darin.« Wie nun die drei Knechte dahinkamen, war nichts da als eine Kirche und eine Krone darin. Sie sprachen also zueinander »was sollen wir hier machen, laßt uns nach Hause gehen.« Wie sie nach Haus kamen, fragte die Köchin, ob sie nichts gefunden hätten: so sagten sie nein, sie hätten nichts gefunden als eine Kirche, da wäre eine Krone darin gewesen. »Ihr Narren,« schalt die Köchin, »warum habt ihr nicht die Kirche zerbrochen und die Krone mit heim gebracht?« Nun machte sich die alte Köchin selbst auf die Beine und ging mit den drei Knechten den Kindern nach. Die Kinder sahen aber die drei Knechte von weitem kommen, und die Köchin wackelte hintennach. Da sprach Lenchen »Fundevogel, verläßt du mich nicht, so verlaß ich dich auch nicht.« Da sprach der Fundevogel »nun und nimmermehr.« Sprach Lenchen »werde zum Teich und ich die Ente drauf.« Die Köchin aber kam herzu, und als sie den Teich sah, legte sie sich drüberhin und wollte ihn aussaufen. Aber die Ente kam schnell geschwommen, faßte sie mit ihrem Schnabel beim Kopf und zog sie ins Wasser hinein: da mußte die alte Hexe ertrinken. Da gingen die Kinder zusammen nach Haus und waren herzlich froh; und wenn sie nicht gestorben sind, leben sie noch.

52. König Drosselbart.

Ein König hatte eine Tochter, die war über alle Maßen schön, aber dabei so stolz und übermütig, daß ihr kein Freier gut genug war. Sie wies einen nach dem andern ab, und trieb noch dazu Spott mit ihnen. Einmal ließ der König ein großes Fest anstellen, und ladete dazu aus der Nähe und Ferne die heiratslustigen Männer ein. Sie wurden alle in eine Reihe nach Rang und Stand geordnet; erst kamen die Könige, dann die Herzöge, die Fürsten, Grafen und Freiherrn, zuletzt die Edelleute. Nun ward die Königstochter durch die Reihen geführt, aber an jedem hatte sie etwas auszusetzen. Der eine war ihr zu dick, »das Weinfaß!« sprach sie. Der andere zu lang, »lang und schwank hat keinen Gang.« Der dritte zu kurz, »kurz und dick hat kein Geschick.« Der vierte zu blaß, »der bleiche Tod!« der fünfte zu rot, »der Zinshahn!« der sechste war nicht gerad genug, »grünes Holz, hinterm Ofen getrocknet!« Und so hatte sie an einem jeden etwas auszusetzen, besonders aber machte sie sich über einen guten König lustig, der ganz oben stand und dem das Kinn ein wenig krumm gewachsen war. »Ei,« rief sie und lachte, »der hat ein Kinn, wie die Drossel einen Schnabel;« und seit der Zeit bekam er den Namen Drosselbart. Der alte König aber, als er sah, daß seine Tochter nichts tat als über die Leute spotten, und alle Freier, die da versammelt waren, verschmähte, ward er zornig und schwur, sie sollte den ersten besten Bettler zum Manne nehmen, der vor seine Türe käme. Ein paar Tage darauf hub ein Spielmann an unter dem Fenster zu singen, um damit ein geringes Almosen zu verdienen. Als es der König hörte, sprach er »laßt ihn heraufkommen.« Da trat der Spielmann in seinen schmutzigen verlumpten Kleidern herein, sang vor dem König und seiner Tochter, und bat, als er fertig war, um eine milde Gabe. Der König sprach »dein Gesang hat mir so wohl gefallen, daß ich dir meine Tochter da zur Frau geben will.« Die Königstochter erschrak, aber der König sagte »ich habe den Eid getan, dich dem ersten besten Bettelmann zu geben, den will ich auch halten.« Es half keine Einrede, der Pfarrer ward geholt, und sie mußte sich gleich mit dem Spielmann trauen lassen. Als das geschehen war, sprach der König »nun schickt sichs nicht, daß du als ein Bettelweib noch länger in meinem Schloß bleibst, du kannst nur mit deinem Manne fortziehen.«

Der Bettelmann führte sie an der Hand hinaus, und sie mußte mit ihm zu Fuß fortgehen. Als sie in einen großen Wald kamen, da fragte sie

»ach, wem gehört der schöne Wald?«
»Der gehört dem König Drosselbart;
hättst du'n genommen, so wär er dein.«
»Ich arme Jungfer zart,
ach, hätt ich genommen den König Drosselbart!«

Darauf kamen sie über eine Wiese, da fragte sie wieder

»wem gehört die schöne grüne Wiese?«
»Sie gehört dem König Drosselbart;
hättst du’n genommen, so wär sie dein.«
»Ich arme Jungfer zart,
ach, hätt ich genommen den König Drosselbart!«

Dann kamen sie durch eine große Stadt, da fragte sie wieder
»wem gehört diese schöne große Stadt?«
»Sie gehört dem König Drosselbart;
hättst du’n genommen, so wär sie dein.«
»Ich arme Jungfer zart,
ach, hätt ich genommen den König Drosselbart!«

»Es gefällt mir gar nicht,« sprach der Spielmann, »daß du dir immer einen andern zum Mann wünschest: bin ich dir nicht gut genug?« Endlich kamen sie an ein ganz kleines Häuschen, da sprach sie

»ach, Gott, was ist das Haus so klein!
wem mag das elende winzige Häuschen sein?«

Der Spielmann antwortete »das ist mein und dein Haus, wo wir zusammen wohnen.« Sie mußte sich bücken, damit sie zu der niedrigen Tür hineinkam. »Wo sind die Diener?« sprach die Königstochter. »Was Diener!« antwortete der Bettelmann, »du mußt selber tun, was du willst getan haben. Mach nur gleich Feuer an und stell Wasser auf, daß du mir mein Essen kochst; ich bin ganz müde.« Die Königstochter verstand aber nichts vom Feueranmachen und Kochen, und der Bettelmann mußte selber mit Hand anlegen, daß es noch so leidlich ging. Als sie die schmale Kost verzehrt hatten, legten sie sich zu Bett: aber am Morgen trieb er sie schon ganz früh heraus, weil sie das Haus besorgen sollte. Ein paar Tage lebten sie auf diese Art schlecht und recht, und zehrten ihren Vorrat auf. Da sprach der Mann »Frau, so gehts nicht länger, daß wir hier zehren und nichts verdienen. Du sollst Körbe flechten.« Er ging aus, schnitt Weiden und brachte sie heim: da fing sie an zu flechten, aber die harten Weiden stachen ihr die zarten Hände wund. »Ich sehe, das geht nicht,« sprach der Mann, »spinn lieber, vielleicht kannst du das besser.« Sie setzte sich hin und versuchte zu spinnen, aber der harte Faden schnitt ihr bald in die weichen Finger, daß das Blut daran herunterlief. »Siehst du,« sprach der Mann, »du taugst zu keiner Arbeit, mit dir bin ich schlimm angekommen. Nun will ichs versuchen, und einen Handel mit Töpfen und irdenem Geschirr anfangen: du sollst dich auf den Markt setzen und die Ware feil halten.« »Ach,« dachte sie, »wenn auf den Markt Leute aus meines Vaters Reich kommen, und sehen mich da sitzen und feil halten, wie werden sie mich verspotten!« Aber es half nichts, sie mußte sich fügen, wenn sie nicht Hungers sterben wollten. Das erstemal gings gut, denn die Leute kauften der Frau, weil sie schön war, gern ihre Ware ab, und bezahlten, was sie forderte: ja, viele gaben ihr das Geld, und ließen ihr die Töpfe noch dazu. Nun lebten sie von dem Erworbenen, solange es dauerte, da handelte der Mann wieder eine Menge neues Geschirr ein. Sie setzte sich damit an eine Ecke des Marktes, und stellte es um sich her und hielt feil. Da kam plötzlich ein trunkener Husar dahergejagt, und ritt geradezu in die Töpfe hinein, daß alles in tausend Scherben zersprang. Sie fing an zu weinen und wußte vor Angst nicht, was sie anfangen sollte. »Ach, wie wird mirs ergehen!« rief sie, »was wird mein Mann dazu sagen!« Sie lief heim und erzählte ihm das Unglück. »Wer setzt sich auch an die Ecke des Marktes mit irdenem Geschirr!« sprach der Mann, »laß nur das Weinen, ich sehe wohl, du bist zu keiner ordentlichen Arbeit zu gebrauchen. Da bin ich in unseres Königs Schloß gewesen und habe gefragt, ob sie nicht eine Küchenmagd brauchen könnten, und sie haben mir versprochen, sie wollten dich dazu nehmen; dafür bekommst du freies Essen.«

Nun ward die Königstochter eine Küchenmagd, mußte dem Koch zur Hand gehen und die sauerste Arbeit tun. Sie machte sich in beiden Taschen ein Töpfchen fest, darin brachte sie nach Haus, was ihr von dem Übriggebliebenen zuteil ward, und davon nährten sie sich. Es trug sich zu, daß die Hochzeit des ältesten Königssohnes sollte gefeiert werden, da ging die arme Frau hinauf, stellte sich vor die Saaltüre und wollte zusehen. Als nun die Lichter angezündet waren, und immer einer schöner als der andere hereintrat, und alles voll Pracht und Herrlichkeit war, da dachte sie mit betrübtem Herzen an ihr Schicksal und verwünschte ihren Stolz und Übermut, der sie erniedrigt und in so große Armut gestürzt hatte. Von den köstlichen Speisen, die da ein- und ausgetragen wurden, und von welchen der Geruch zu ihr aufstieg, warfen ihr Diener manchmal ein paar Brocken zu, die tat sie in ihr Töpfchen und wollte es heimtragen. Auf einmal trat der Königssohn herein, war in Samt und Seide gekleidet und hatte goldene Ketten um den Hals. Und als er die schöne Frau in der Türe stehen sah, ergriff er sie bei der Hand und wollte mit ihr tanzen, aber sie weigerte sich und erschrak, denn sie sah, daß es der König Drosselbart war, der um sie gefreit und den sie mit Spott abgewiesen hatte. Ihr Sträuben half nichts, er zog sie in den Saal: da zerriß das Band, an welchem die Taschen hingen, und die Töpfe fielen heraus, daß die Suppe floß und die Brocken umhersprangen. Und wie das die Leute sahen, entstand ein allgemeines Gelächter und Spotten, und sie war so beschämt, daß sie sich lieber tausend Klafter unter die Erde gewünscht hätte. Sie sprang zur Türe hinaus und wollte entfliehen, aber auf der Treppe holte sie ein Mann ein und brachte sie zurück: und wie sie ihn ansah, war es wieder der König Drosselbart. Er sprach ihr freundlich zu »fürchte dich nicht, ich und der Spielmann, der mit dir in dem elenden Häuschen gewohnt hat, sind eins: dir zuliebe habe ich mich so verstellt, und der Husar, der dir die Töpfe entzweigeritten hat, bin ich auch gewesen. Das alles ist geschehen, um deinen stolzen Sinn zu beugen und dich für deinen Hochmut zu strafen, womit du mich verspottet hast.« Da weinte sie bitterlich und sagte »ich habe großes Unrecht gehabt und bin nicht wert, deine Frau zu sein.« Er aber sprach »tröste dich, die bösen Tage sind vorüber, jetzt wollen wir unsere Hochzeit feiern.« Da kamen die Kammerfrauen und taten ihr die prächtigsten Kleider an, und ihr Vater kam und der ganze Hof, und wünschten ihr Glück zu ihrer Vermählung mit dem König Drosselbart, und die rechte Freude fing jetzt erst an. Ich wollte, du und ich, wir wären auch dabei gewesen.

53. Sneewittchen.

Es war einmal mitten im Winder, und die Schneeflocken fielen wie Federn vom Himmel herab, da saß eine Königin an einem Fenster, das einen Rahmen von schwarzem Ebenholz hatte, und nähte. Und wie sie so nähte und nach dem Schnee aufblickte, stach sie sich mit der Nadel in den Finger, und es fielen drei Tropfen Blut in den Schnee. Und weil das Rote im weißen Schnee so schön aussah, dachte sie bei sich »hätt ich ein Kind so weiß wie Schnee, so rot wie Blut, und so schwarz wie das Holz an dem Rahmen.« Bald darauf bekam sie ein Töchterlein, das war so weiß wie Schnee, so rot wie Blut, und so schwarzhaarig wie Ebenholz, und ward darum das Sneewittchen (Schneeweißchen) genannt. Und wie das Kind geboren war, starb die Königin.

Über ein Jahr nahm sich der König eine andere Gemahlin. Es war eine schöne Frau, aber sie war stolz und übermütig, und konnte nicht leiden, daß sie an Schönheit von jemand sollte übertroffen werden. Sie hatte einen wunderbaren Spiegel, wenn sie vor den trat und sich darin beschaute, sprach sie

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

so antwortete der Spiegel

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste im Land.«

Da war sie zufrieden, denn sie wußte, daß der Spiegel die Wahrheit sagte.

Sneewittchen aber wuchs heran und wurde immer schöner, und als es sieben Jahre alt war, war es so schön wie der klare Tag, und schöner als die Königin selbst. Als diese einmal ihren Spiegel fragte

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

so antwortete er

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste hier,
aber Sneewittchen ist tausendmal schöner als Ihr.«

Da erschrak die Königin und ward gelb und grün vor Neid. Von Stund an, wenn sie Sneewittchen erblickte, kehrte sich ihr das Herz im Leibe herum, so haßte sie das Mädchen. Und der Neid und Hochmut wuchsen wie ein Unkraut in ihrem Herzen immer höher, daß sie Tag und Nacht keine Ruhe mehr hatte. Da rief sie einen Jäger und sprach »bring das Kind hinaus in den Wald, ich wills nicht mehr vor meinen Augen sehen. Du sollst es töten und mir Lunge und Leber zum Wahrzeichen mitbringen.« Der Jäger gehorchte und führte es hinaus, und als er den Hirschfänger gezogen hatte und Sneewittchens unschuldiges Herz durchbohren wollte, fing es an zu weinen und sprach »ach, lieber Jäger, laß mir mein Leben; ich will in den wilden Wald laufen und nimmermehr wieder heim kommen.« Und weil es so schön war, hatte der Jäger Mitleid und sprach »so lauf hin, du armes Kind.« »Die wilden Tiere werden dich bald gefressen haben,« dachte er, und doch wars ihm, als wär ein Stein von seinem Herzen gewälzt, weil er es nicht zu töten brauchte. Und als gerade ein junger Frischling dahergesprungen kam, stach er ihn ab, nahm Lunge und Leber heraus, und brachte sie als Wahrzeichen der Königin mit. Der Koch mußte sie in Salz kochen, und das boshafte Weib aß sie auf und meinte, sie hätte Sneewittchens Lunge und Leber gegessen.

Nun war das arme Kind in dem großen Wald mutterseelig allein, und ward ihm so angst, daß es alle Blätter an den Bäumen ansah und nicht wußte, wie es sich helfen sollte. Da fing es an zu laufen und lief über die spitzen Steine und durch die Dornen, und die wilden Tiere sprangen an ihm vorbei, aber sie taten ihm nichts. Es lief, solange nur die Füße noch fort konnten, bis es bald Abend werden wollte, da sah es ein kleines Häuschen und ging hinein, sich zu ruhen. In dem Häuschen war alles klein, aber so zierlich und reinlich, daß es nicht zu sagen ist. Da stand ein weißgedecktes Tischlein mit sieben kleinen Tellern, jedes Tellerlein mit seinem Löffelein, ferner sieben Messerlein und Gäblein, und sieben Becherlein. An der Wand waren sieben Bettlein nebeneinander aufgestellt und schneeweiße Laken darüber gedeckt. Sneewittchen, weil es so hungrig und durstig war, aß von jedem Tellerlein ein wenig Gemüs und Brot, und trank aus jedem Becherlein einen Tropfen Wein; denn es wollte nicht einem allein alles wegnehmen. Hernach, weil es so müde war, legte es sich in ein Bettchen, aber keins paßte; das eine war zu lang, das andere zu kurz, bis endlich das siebente recht war: und darin blieb es liegen, befahl sich Gott und schlief ein.

Als es ganz dunkel geworden war, kamen die Herren von dem Häuslein, das waren die sieben Zwerge, die in den Bergen nach Erz hackten und gruben. Sie zündeten ihre sieben Lichtlein an, und wie es nun hell im Häuslein ward, sahen sie, daß jemand darin gewesen war, denn es stand nicht alles so in der Ordnung, wie sie es verlassen hatten. Der erste sprach »wer hat auf meinem Stühlchen gesessen?« Der zweite »wer hat von meinem Tellerchen gegessen?« Der dritte »wer hat von meinem Brötchen genommen?« Der vierte »wer hat von meinem Gemüschen gegessen?« Der fünfte »wer hat mit meinem Gäbelchen gestochen?« Der sechste »wer hat mit meinem Messerchen geschnitten?« Der siebente »wer hat aus meinem Becherlein getrunken?« Dann sah sich der erste um und sah, daß auf seinem Bett eine kleine Delle war, da sprach er »wer hat in mein Bettchen getreten?« Die andern kamen gelaufen und riefen »in meinem hat auch jemand gelegen.« Der siebente aber, als er in sein Bett sah, erblickte Sneewittchen, das lag darin und schlief. Nun rief er die andern, die kamen herbeigelaufen, und schrien vor Verwunderung, holten ihre sieben Lichtlein und beleuchteten Sneewittchen. »Ei, du mein Gott! ei, du mein Gott!« riefen sie, »was ist das Kind so schön!« und hatten so große Freude, daß sie es nicht aufweckten, sondern im Bettlein fortschlafen ließen. Der siebente Zwerg aber schlief bei seinen Gesellen, bei jedem eine Stunde, da war die Nacht herum.

Als es Morgen war, erwachte Sneewittchen, und wie es die sieben Zwerge sah, erschrak es. Sie waren aber freundlich und fragten »wie heißt du?« »Ich heiße Sneewittchen,« antwortete es. »Wie bist du in unser Haus gekommen?« sprachen weiter die Zwerge. Da erzählte es ihnen, daß seine Stiefmutter es hätte wollen umbringen lassen, der Jäger hätte ihm aber das Leben geschenkt, und da wär es gelaufen den ganzen Tag, bis es endlich ihr Häuslein gefunden hätte. Die Zwerge sprachen »willst du unsern Haushalt versehen, kochen, betten, waschen, nähen und stricken, und willst du alles ordentlich und reinlich halten, so kannst du bei uns bleiben, und es soll dir an nichts fehlen.« »Ja,« sagte Sneewittchen, »von Herzen gern,« und blieb bei ihnen. Es hielt ihnen das Haus in Ordnung: morgens gingen sie in die Berge und suchten Erz und Gold, abends kamen sie wieder, und da mußte ihr Essen bereit sein. Den Tag über war das Mädchen allein, da warnten es die guten Zwerglein und sprachen »hüte dich vor deiner Stiefmutter, die wird bald wissen, daß du hier bist; laß ja niemand herein.«

Die Königin aber, nachdem sie Sneewittchens Lunge und Leber glaubte gegessen zu haben, dachte nicht anders, als sie wäre wieder die erste und Allerschönste, trat vor ihren Spiegel und sprach

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

Da antwortete der Spiegel

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste hier,
aber Sneewittchen über den Bergen
bei den sieben Zwergen
ist noch tausendmal schöner als Ihr.«

Da erschrak sie, denn sie wußte, daß der Spiegel keine Unwahrheit sprach, und merkte, daß der Jäger sie betrogen hatte und Sneewittchen noch am Leben war. Und da sann und sann sie aufs neue, wie sie es umbringen wollte; denn solange sie nicht die Schönste war im ganzen Land, ließ ihr der Neid keine Ruhe. Und als sie sich endlich etwas ausgedacht hatte, färbte sie sich das Gesicht, und kleidete sich wie eine alte Krämerin, und war ganz unkenntlich. In dieser Gestalt ging sie über die sieben Berge zu den sieben Zwergen, klopfte an die Türe und rief »schöne Ware feil! feil!« Sneewittchen guckte zum Fenster heraus und rief »guten Tag, liebe Frau, was habt Ihr zu verkaufen?« »Gute Ware, schöne Ware«, antwortete sie, »Schnürriemen von allen Farben,« und holte einen hervor, der aus bunter Seide geflochten war. »Die ehrliche Frau kann ich hereinlassen,« dachte Sneewittchen, riegelte die Türe auf und kaufte sich den hübschen

Schnürriemen. »Kind,« sprach die Alte, »wie du aussiehst! komm, ich will dich einmal ordentlich schnüren.« Sneewittchen hatte kein Arg, stellte sich vor sie, und ließ sich mit dem neuen Schnürriemen schnüren: aber die Alte schnürte geschwind und schnürte so fest, daß dem Sneewittchen der Atem verging, und es für tot hinfiel. »Nun bist du die Schönste gewesen,« sprach sie und eilte hinaus.

Nicht lange darauf, zur Abendzeit, kamen die sieben Zwerge nach Haus, aber wie erschraken sie, als sie ihr liebes Sneewittchen auf der Erde liegen sahen; und es regte und bewegte sich nicht, als wäre es tot. Sie hoben es in die Höhe, und weil sie sahen, daß es zu fest geschnürt war, schnitten sie den Schnürriemen entzwei: da fing es an ein wenig zu atmen, und ward nach und nach wieder lebendig. Als die Zwerge hörten, was geschehen war, sprachen sie »die alte Krämerfrau war niemand als die gottlose Königin: hüte dich und laß keinen Menschen herein, wenn wir nicht bei dir sind.«

Das böse Weib aber, als es nach Haus gekommen war, ging vor den Spiegel und fragte

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

Da antwortete er wie sonst

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste hier,
aber Sneewittchen über den Bergen
bei den sieben Zwergen
ist noch tausendmal schöner als Ihr.«

Als sie das hörte, lief ihr alles Blut zum Herzen, so erschrak sie, denn sie sah wohl, daß Sneewittchen wieder lebendig geworden war. »Nun aber,« sprach sie, »will ich etwas aussinnen, das dich zugrunde richten soll,« und mit Hexenkünsten, die sie verstand, machte sie einen giftigen Kamm. Dann verkleidete sie sich und nahm die Gestalt eines andern alten Weibes an. So ging sie hin über die sieben Berge zu den sieben Zwergen, klopfte an die Türe und rief »gute Ware feil! feil!« Sneewittchen schaute heraus und sprach »geht nur weiter, ich darf niemand hereinlassen.« »Das Ansehen wird dir doch erlaubt sein,« sprach die Alte, zog den giftigen Kamm heraus und hielt ihn in die Höhe. Da gefiel er dem Kinde so gut, daß es sich betören ließ und die Türe öffnete. Als sie des Kaufs einig waren, sprach die Alte »nun will ich dich einmal ordentlich kämmen.« Das arme Sneewittchen dachte an nichts, und ließ die Alte gewähren, aber kaum hatte sie den Kamm in die Haare gesteckt, als das Gift darin wirkte, und das Mädchen ohne Besinnung niederfiel. »Du Ausbund von Schönheit,« sprach das boshafte Weib, »jetzt ists um dich geschehen,« und ging fort. Zum Glück aber war es bald Abend, wo die sieben Zwerglein nach Haus kamen. Als sie Sneewittchen wie tot auf der Erde liegen sahen, hatten sie gleich die Stiefmutter in Verdacht, suchten nach, und fanden den giftigen Kamm, und kaum hatten sie ihn herausgezogen, so kam Sneewittchen wieder zu sich und erzählte, was vorgegangen war. Da warnten sie es noch einmal, auf seiner Hut zu sein und niemand die Türe zu öffnen.

Die Königin stellte sich daheim vor den Spiegel und sprach

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

Da antwortete er wie vorher

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste hier,
aber Sneewittchen über den Bergen
bei den sieben Zwergen
ist noch tausendmal schöner als Ihr.«

Als sie den Spiegel so reden hörte, zitterte und bebte sie vor Zorn. »Sneewittchen soll sterben,« rief sie, »und wenn es mein eignes Leben kostet.« Darauf ging sie in eine ganz verborgene einsame Kammer, wo niemand hinkam, und machte da einen giftigen giftigen Apfel. Äußerlich sah er schön aus, weiß mit roten Backen, daß jeder, der ihn erblickte, Lust danach bekam, aber wer ein Stückchen davon aß, der mußte sterben. Als der Apfel fertig war, färbte sie sich das Gesicht und verkleidete sich in eine Bauersfrau, und so ging sie über die sieben Berge zu den sieben Zwergen. Sie klopfte an, Sneewittchen streckte den Kopf zum Fenster heraus und sprach »ich darf keinen Menschen einlassen, die sieben Zwerge haben mirs verboten.« »Mir auch recht,« antwortete die Bäuerin, »meine Äpfel will ich schon los werden. Da, einen will ich dir schenken.« »Nein,« sprach Sneewittchen, »ich darf nichts annehmen.« »Fürchtest du dich vor Gift?« sprach die Alte, »siehst du, da schneide ich den Apfel in zwei Teile; den roten Backen iß du, den weißen will ich essen.« Der Apfel war aber so künstlich gemacht, daß der rote Backen allein vergiftet war. Sneewittchen lusterte den schönen Apfel an, und als es sah, daß die Bäuerin davon aß, so konnte es nicht länger widerstehen, streckte die Hand hinaus und nahm die giftige Hälfte. Kaum aber hatte es einen Bissen davon im Mund, so fiel es tot zur Erde nieder. Da betrachtete es die Königin mit grausigen Blicken und lachte überlaut und sprach »weiß wie Schnee, rot wie Blut, schwarz wie Ebenholz! diesmal können dich die Zwerge nicht wieder erwecken.« Und als sie daheim den Spiegel befragte

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

so antwortete er endlich

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste im Land.«

Da hatte ihr neidisches Herz Ruhe, so gut ein neidisches Herz Ruhe haben kann. Die Zwerglein, wie sie abends nach Haus kamen, fanden Sneewittchen auf der Erde liegen, und es ging kein Atem mehr aus seinem Mund, und es war tot. Sie hoben es auf, suchten, ob sie was Giftiges fänden, schnürten es auf, kämmten ihm die Haare, wuschen es mit Wasser und Wein, aber es half alles nichts; das liebe Kind war tot und blieb tot. Sie legten es auf eine Bahre und setzten sich alle siebene daran und beweinten es, und weinten drei Tage lang. Da wollten sie es begraben, aber es sah noch so frisch aus wie ein lebender Mensch, und hatte noch seine schönen roten Backen. Sie sprachen »das können wir nicht in die schwarze Erde versenken,« und ließen einen durchsichtigen Sarg von Glas machen, daß man es von allen Seiten sehen konnte, legten es hinein, und schrieben mit goldenen Buchstaben seinen Namen darauf, und daß es eine Königstochter wäre. Dann setzten sie den Sarg hinaus auf den Berg, und einer von ihnen blieb immer dabei und bewachte ihn. Und die Tiere kamen auch und beweinten Sneewittchen, erst eine Eule, dann ein Rabe, zuletzt ein Täubchen. Nun lag Sneewittchen lange lange Zeit in dem Sarg und verweste nicht, sondern sah aus, als wenn es schliefe, denn es war noch so weiß als Schnee, so rot als Blut, und so schwarzhaarig wie Ebenholz. Es geschah aber, daß ein Königssohn in den Wald geriet und zu dem Zwergenhaus kam, da zu übernachten. Er sah auf dem Berg den Sarg und das schöne Sneewittchen darin, und las, was mit goldenen Buchstaben darauf geschrieben war. Da sprach er zu den Zwergen »laßt mir den Sarg, ich will euch geben, was ihr dafür haben wollt.« Aber die Zwerge antworteten »wir geben ihn nicht um alles Gold in der Welt.« Da sprach er »so schenkt mir ihn, denn ich kann nicht leben, ohne Sneewittchen zu sehen, ich will es ehren und hochachten wie mein Liebstes.« Wie er so sprach, empfanden die guten Zwerglein Mitleiden mit ihm und gaben ihm den Sarg. Der Königssohn ließ ihn nun von seinen Dienern auf den Schultern forttragen. Da geschah es, daß sie über einen Strauch stolperten, und von dem Schüttern fuhr der giftige Apfelgrütz, den Sneewittchen abgebissen hatte, aus dem Hals. Und nicht lange, so öffnete es die Augen, hob den Deckel vom Sarg in die Höhe, und richtete sich auf, und war wieder lebendig. »Ach Gott, wo bin ich?« rief es. Der Königssohn sagte voll Freude »du bist bei mir,« und erzählte, was sich zugetragen hatte, und sprach »ich habe dich lieber als alles auf der Welt; komm mit mir in meines Vaters Schloß, du sollst meine Gemahlin werden.« Da war ihm Sneewittchen gut und ging mit ihm, und ihre Hochzeit ward mit großer Pracht und Herrlichkeit angeordnet. Zu dem Fest wurde aber auch Sneewittchens gottlose Stiefmutter eingeladen. Wie sie sich nun mit schönen Kleidern angetan hatte, trat sie vor den Spiegel und sprach

»Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?«

Der Spiegel antwortete

»Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste hier,
aber die junge Königin ist tausendmal schöner als Ihr.«

Da stieß das böse Weib einen Fluch aus, und ward ihr so angst, so angst, daß sie sich nicht zu lassen wußte. Sie wollte zuerst gar nicht auf die Hochzeit kommen: doch ließ es ihr keine Ruhe, sie mußte fort und die junge Königin sehen. Und wie sie hineintrat, erkannte sie Sneewittchen, und vor Angst und Schrecken stand sie da und konnte sich nicht regen. Aber es waren schon eiserne Pantoffeln über Kohlenfeuer gestellt und wurden mit Zangen hereingetragen und vor sie hingestellt. Da mußte sie in die rotglühenden Schuhe treten und so lange tanzen, bis sie tot zur Erde fiel.

54. Der Ranzen, das Hütlein und das Hörnlein.

Es waren einmal drei Brüder, die waren immer tiefer in Armut geraten, und endlich war die Not so groß, daß sie Hunger leiden mußten und nichts mehr zu beißen und zu brechen hatten. Da sprachen sie »es kann so nicht bleiben: es ist besser, wir gehen in die Welt und suchen unser Glück.« Sie machten sich also auf, und waren schon weite Wege und über viele Grashälmerchen gegangen, aber das Glück war ihnen noch nicht begegnet. Da gelangten sie eines Tages in einen großen Wald, und mitten darin war ein Berg, und als sie näher kamen, so sahen sie, daß der Berg ganz von Silber war. Da sprach der älteste »nun habe ich das gewünschte Glück gefunden und verlange kein größeres.« Er nahm von dem Silber, soviel er nur tragen konnte, kehrte dann um und ging wieder nach Haus. Die beiden andern aber sprachen »wir verlangen vom Glück noch etwas mehr als bloßes Silber,« rührten es nicht an und gingen weiter. Nachdem sie abermals ein paar Tage gegangen waren, so kamen sie zu einem Berg, der ganz von Gold war. Der zweite Bruder stand, besann sich und war ungewiß. »Was soll ich tun?« sprach er, »soll ich mir von dem Golde so viel nehmen, daß ich mein Lebtag genug habe, oder soll ich weitergehen?« Endlich faßte er einen Entschluß, füllte in seine Taschen, was hinein wollte, sagte seinem Bruder Lebewohl und ging heim. Der dritte aber sprach »Silber und Gold, das rührt mich nicht: ich will meinem Glück nicht absagen, vielleicht ist mir etwas Besseres beschert.« Er zog weiter, und als er drei Tage gegangen war, so kam er in einen Wald, der noch größer war als die vorigen und gar kein Ende nehmen wollte; und da er nichts zu essen und zu trinken fand, so war er nahe daran zu verschmachten. Da stieg er auf einen hohen Baum, ob er da oben Waldes Ende sehen möchte, aber so weit sein Auge reichte, sah er nichts als die Gipfel der Bäume. Da begab er sich von dem Baume wieder herunterzusteigen, aber der Hunger quälte ihn, und er dachte »wenn ich nur noch einmal meinen Leib ersättigen könnte.« Als er herabkam, sah er mit Erstaunen unter dem Baum einen Tisch, der mit Speisen reichlich besetzt war, die ihm entgegendampften. »Diesmal,« sprach er, »ist mein Wunsch zu rechter Zeit erfüllt worden,« und ohne zu fragen, wer das Essen gebracht und wer es gekocht hätte, nahte er sich dem Tisch und aß mit Lust, bis er seinen Hunger gestillt hatte. Als er fertig war, dachte er »es wäre doch schade, wenn das feine Tischtüchlein hier in dem Walde verderben sollte,« legte es säuberlich zusammen und steckte es ein. Darauf ging er weiter, und abends, als der Hunger sich wieder regte, wollte er sein Tüchlein auf die Probe stellen, breitete es aus und sagte »so wünsche ich, daß du abermals mit guten Speisen besetzt wärest,« und kaum war der Wunsch über seine Lippen gekommen, so standen so viel Schüsseln mit dem schönsten Essen darauf, als nur Platz hatten. »Jetzt merke ich,« sagte er, »in welcher Küche für mich gekocht wird; du sollst mir lieber sein als der Berg von Silber und Gold,« denn er sah wohl, daß es ein Tüchleindeckdich war. Das Tüchlein war ihm aber noch nicht genug, um sich daheim zur Ruhe zu setzen, sondern er wollte lieber noch in der Welt herumwandern und weiter sein Glück versuchen. Eines Abends traf er in einem einsamen Walde einen schwarz bestaubten Köhler, der brannte da Kohlen, und hatte Kartoffeln am Feuer stehen, damit wollte er seine Mahlzeit halten. »Guten Abend, du Schwarzamsel,« sagte er, »wie geht dirs in deiner Einsamkeit?« »Einen Tag wie den andern,« erwiderte der Köhler, »und jeden Abend Kartoffeln; hast du Lust dazu und willst mein Gast sein?« »Schönen Dank,« antwortete der Reisende, »ich will dir die Mahlzeit nicht wegnehmen, du hast auf einen Gast nicht gerechnet, aber wenn du mit mir vorlieb nehmen willst, so sollst du eingeladen sein.« »Wer soll dir anrichten?« sprach der Köhler, »ich sehe, daß du nichts bei dir hast, und ein paar Stunden im Umkreis ist niemand, der dir etwas geben könnte.« »Und doch solls ein Essen sein,« antwortete er, »so gut, wie du noch keins gekostet hast.« Darauf holte er sein Tüchlein aus dem Ranzen, breitete es auf die Erde und sprach »Tüchlein, deck dich,« und alsbald stand da Gesottenes und Gebratenes, und war so warm, als wenn es eben aus der Küche käme. Der Köhler machte große Augen, ließ sich aber nicht lange bitten, sondern langte zu und schob immer größere Bissen in sein schwarzes Maul hinein. Als sie abgegessen hatten, schmunzelte der Köhler und sagte »hör, dein Tüchlein hat meinen Beifall, das wäre so etwas für mich in dem Walde, wo mir niemand etwas Gutes kocht. Ich will dir einen Tausch vorschlagen, da in der Ecke hängt ein Soldatenranzen, der zwar alt und unscheinbar ist, in dem aber wunderbare Kräfte stecken; da ich ihn doch nicht mehr brauche, so will ich ihn für das Tüchlein geben.« »Erst muß ich wissen, was das für wunderbare Kräfte sind,« erwiderte er. »Das will ich dir sagen,« antwortete der Köhler, »wenn du mit der Hand darauf klopfst, so kommt jedesmal ein Gefreiter mit sechs Mann, die haben Ober- und Untergewehr, und was du befiehlst, das vollbringen sie.« »Meinetwegen,« sagte er, »wenns nicht anders sein kann, so wollen wir tauschen,« gab dem Köhler das Tüchlein, hob den Ranzen von dem Haken, hing ihn um und nahm Abschied. Als er ein Stück Wegs gegangen war, wollte er die Wunderkräfte seines Ranzens versuchen und klopfte darauf. Alsbald traten die sieben Kriegshelden vor ihn, und der Gefreite sprach »was verlangt mein Herr und Gebieter?« »Marschiert im Eilschritt zu dem Köhler und fordert mein Wünschtüchlein zurück.« Sie machten links um, und gar nicht lange, so brachten sie das Verlangte und hatten es dem Köhler, ohne viel zu fragen, abgenommen. Er hieß sie wieder abziehen, ging weiter und hoffte, das Glück würde ihm noch heller scheinen. Bei Sonnenuntergang kam er zu einem anderen Köhler, der bei dem Feuer seine Abendmahlzeit bereitete. »Willst du mit mir essen,« sagte der rußige Geselle, »Kartoffeln mit Salz, aber ohne Schmalz, so setz dich zu mir nieder.« »Nein,« antwortete er, »für diesmal sollst du mein Gast sein,« deckte sein Tüchlein auf, das gleich mit den schönsten Gerichten besetzt war. Sie aßen und tranken zusammen und waren guter Dinge. Nach dem Essen sprach der Kohlenbrenner »da oben auf der Kammbank liegt ein altes abgegriffenes Hütlein, das hat seltsame Eigenschaften: wenn das einer aufsetzt und dreht es auf dem Kopf herum, so gehen die Feldschlangen, als wären zwölfe nebeneinander aufgeführt, und schießen alles darnieder, daß niemand dagegen bestehen kann. Mir nützt das Hütlein nichts, und für dein Tischtuch will ichs wohl hingeben.« »Das läßt sich hören,« antwortete er, nahm das Hütlein, setzte es auf und ließ sein Tüchlein zurück. Kaum aber war er ein Stück Wegs gegangen, so klopfte er auf seinen Ranzen, und seine Soldaten mußten ihm das Tüchlein wieder holen. »Es kommt eins zum andern,« dachte er, »und es ist mir, als wäre mein Glück noch nicht zu Ende.« Seine Gedanken hatten ihn auch nicht betrogen. Nachdem er abermals einen Tag gegangen war, kam er zu einem dritten Köhler, der ihn nicht anders als die vorigen zu ungeschmälzten Kartoffeln einlud. Er ließ ihn aber von seinem Wunschtüchlein mitessen, und das schmeckte dem Köhler so gut, daß er ihm zuletzt ein Hörnlein dafür bot, das noch ganz andere Eigenschaften hatte als das Hütlein. Wenn man darauf blies, so fielen alle Mauern und Festungswerke, endlich alle Städte und Dörfer übern Haufen. Er gab dem Köhler zwar das Tüchlein dafür, ließ sichs aber hernach von seiner Mannschaft wieder abfordern, so daß er endlich Ranzen, Hütlein und Hörnlein beisammen hatte. »Jetzt,« sprach er, »bin ich ein gemachter Mann, und es ist Zeit, daß ich heimkehre und sehe, wie es meinen Brüdern ergeht.«

Als er daheim anlangte, hatten sich seine Brüder von ihrem Silber und Gold ein schönes Haus gebaut und lebten in Saus und Braus. Er trat bei ihnen ein, weil er aber in einem halb zerrissenen Rock kam, das schäbige Hütlein auf dem Kopf und den alten Ranzen auf dem Rücken, so wollten sie ihn nicht für ihren Bruder anerkennen. Sie spotteten und sagten »du gibst dich für unsern Bruder aus, der Silber und Gold verschmähte, und für sich ein besseres Glück verlangte: der kommt gewiß in voller Pracht als ein mächtiger König angefahren, nicht als ein Bettelmann,« und jagten ihn zur Türe hinaus. Da geriet er in Zorn, klopfte auf seinen Ranzen so lange, bis hundert und fünfzig Mann in Reih und Glied vor ihm standen. Er befahl ihnen, das Haus seiner Brüder zu umzingeln, und zwei sollten Haselgerten mitnehmen und den beiden Übermütigen die Haut auf dem Leib so lange weich gerben, bis sie wüßten, wer er wäre. Es entstand ein gewaltiger Lärm, die Leute liefen zusammen und wollten den beiden in der Not Beistand leisten, aber sie konnten gegen die Soldaten nichts ausrichten. Es geschah endlich dem Könige Meldung davon, der ward unwillig, und ließ einen Hauptmann mit seiner Schar ausrücken, der sollte den Ruhestörer aus der Stadt jagen: aber der Mann mit dem Ranzen hatte bald eine größere Mannschaft zusammen, die schlug den Hauptmann mit seinen Leuten zurück, daß sie mit blutigen Nasen abziehen mußten. Der König sprach »der hergelaufene Kerl ist noch zu bändigen,« und schickte am andern Tage eine größere Schar gegen ihn aus, aber sie konnte noch weniger ausrichten. Er stellte noch mehr Volk entgegen, und um noch schneller fertig zu werden, drehte er ein paarmal sein Hütlein auf dem Kopfe herum; da fing das schwere Geschütz an zu spielen, und des Königs Leute wurden geschlagen und in die Flucht gejagt. »Jetzt mache ich nicht eher Frieden,« sprach er, »als bis mir der König seine Tochter zur Frau gibt, und ich in seinem Namen das ganze Reich beherrsche.« Das ließ er dem König verkündigen, und dieser sprach zu einer Tochter »Muß ist eine harte Nuß: was bleibt mir anders übrig, als daß ich tue, was er verlangt? will ich Frieden haben und die Krone auf meinem Haupte behalten, so muß ich dich hingeben.«

Die Hochzeit ward also gefeiert, aber die Königstochter war verdrießlich, daß ihr Gemahl ein gemeiner Mann war, der einen schäbigen Hut trug und einen alten Ranzen umhängen hatte. Sie wäre ihn gerne wieder los gewesen und sann Tag und Nacht, wie sie das bewerkstelligen könnte. Da dachte sie »sollten seine Wunderkräfte wohl in dem Ranzen stecken?« verstellte sich und liebkoste ihn, und als sein Herz weich geworden war, sprach sie »wenn du nur den schlechten Ranzen ablegen wolltest, er verunziert dich so sehr, daß ich mich deiner schämen muß.« »Liebes Kind,« antwortete er, »dieser Ranzen ist mein größter Schatz, solange ich den habe, fürchte ich keine Macht der Welt;« und verriet ihr, mit welchen Wunderkräften er begabt war. Da fiel sie ihm um den Hals, als wenn sie ihn küssen wollte, nahm ihm aber mit Behendigkeit den Ranzen von der Schulter und lief damit fort. So bald sie allein war, klopfte sie darauf und befahl den Kriegsleuten, sie sollten ihren vorigen Herrn festnehmen und aus dem königlichen Palast fortführen. Sie gehorchten, und die falsche Frau ließ noch mehr Leute hinter ihm herziehen, die ihn ganz zum Lande hinausjagen sollten. Da wäre er verloren gewesen, wenn er nicht das Hütlein gehabt hätte. Kaum aber waren seine Hände frei, so schwenkte er es ein paarmal: alsbald fing das Geschütz an zu donnern und schlug alles nieder, und die Königstochter mußte selbst kommen und um Gnade bitten. Weil sie so beweglich bat und sich zu bessern versprach, so ließ er sich überreden und bewilligte ihr Frieden. Sie tat freundlich mit ihm, stellte sich an, als hätte sie ihn sehr lieb, und wußte ihn nach einiger Zeit so zu betören, daß er ihr vertraute, wenn auch einer den Ranzen in seine Gewalt bekäme, so könnte er doch nichts gegen ihn ausrichten, solange das alte Hütlein noch sein wäre. Als sie das Geheimnis wußte, wartete sie, bis er eingeschlafen war, dann nahm sie ihm das Hütlein weg und ließ ihn hinaus auf die Straße werfen. Aber noch war ihm das Hörnlein übrig, und in großem Zorne blies er aus allen Kräften hinein. Alsbald fiel alles zusammen, Mauern, Festungswerk, Städte und Dörfer, und schlugen den König und die Königstochter tot. Und wenn er das Hörnlein nicht abgesetzt und nur noch ein wenig länger geblasen hätte, so wäre alles über den Haufen gestürzt und kein Stein auf dem andern geblieben. Da widerstand ihm niemand mehr, und er setzte sich zum König über das ganze Reich.

55. Rumpelstilzchen.

Es war einmal ein Müller, der war arm, aber er hatte eine schöne Tochter. Nun traf es sich, daß er mit dem König zu sprechen kam, und um sich ein Ansehen zu geben, sagte er zu ihm »ich habe eine Tochter, die kann Stroh zu Gold spinnen.« Der König sprach zum Müller, »das ist eine Kunst, die mir wohl gefällt, wenn deine Tochter so geschickt ist, wie du sagst, so bring sie morgen in mein Schloß, da will ich sie auf die Probe stellen.« Als nun das Mädchen zu ihm gebracht ward, führte er es in eine Kammer, die ganz voll Stroh lag, gab ihr Rad und Haspel und sprach »jetzt mache dich an die Arbeit, und wenn du diese Nacht durch bis morgen früh dieses Stroh nicht zu Gold versponnen hast, so mußt du sterben.« Darauf schloß er die Kammer selbst zu, und sie blieb allein darin.

Da saß nun die arme Müllerstochter und wußte um ihr Leben keinen Rat: sie verstand gar nichts davon, wie man Stroh zu Gold spinnen konnte, und ihre Angst ward immer größer, daß sie endlich zu weinen anfing. Da ging auf einmal die Türe auf, und trat ein kleines Männchen herein und sprach »guten Abend, Jungfer Müllerin, warum weint sie so sehr?« »Ach,« antwortete das Mädchen, »ich soll Stroh zu Gold spinnen und verstehe das nicht.« Sprach das Männchen »was gibst du mir, wenn ich dirs spinne?« »Mein Halsband,« sagte das Mädchen. Das Männchen nahm das Halsband, setzte sich vor das Rädchen, und schnurr, schnurr, schnurr, dreimal gezogen, war die Spule voll. Dann steckte es eine andere auf, und schnurr, schnurr, schnurr, dreimal gezogen, war auch die zweite voll: und so gings fort bis zum Morgen, da war alles Stroh versponnen, und alle Spulen waren voll Gold. Bei Sonnenaufgang kam schon der König, und als er das Gold erblickte, erstaunte er und freute sich, aber sein Herz ward nur noch goldgieriger. Er ließ die Müllerstochter in eine andere Kammer voll Stroh bringen, die noch viel größer war, und befahl ihr, das auch in einer Nacht zu spinnen, wenn ihr das Leben lieb wäre. Das Mädchen wußte sich nicht zu helfen und weinte, da ging abermals die Türe auf, und das kleine Männchen erschien und sprach »was gibst du mir, wenn ich dir das Stroh zu Gold spinne?« »Meinen Ring von dem Finger,« antwortete das Mädchen. Das Männchen nahm den Ring, fing wieder an zu schnurren mit dem Rade und hatte bis zum Morgen alles Stroh zu glänzendem Gold gesponnen. Der König freute sich über die Maßen bei dem Anblick, war aber noch immer nicht Goldes satt, sondern ließ die Müllerstochter in eine noch größere Kammer voll Stroh bringen und sprach »die mußt du noch in dieser Nacht verspinnen: gelingt dirs aber, so sollst du meine Gemahlin werden.« »Wenns auch eine Müllerstochter ist,« dachte er, »eine reichere Frau finde ich in der ganzen Welt nicht.« Als das Mädchen allein war, kam das Männlein zum drittenmal wieder und sprach »was gibst du mir, wenn ich dir noch diesmal das Stroh spinne?« »Ich habe nichts mehr, das ich geben könnte,« antwortete das Mädchen. »So versprich mir, wenn du Königin wirst, dein erstes Kind.« »Wer weiß, wie das noch geht,« dachte die Müllerstochter und wußte sich auch in der Not nicht anders zu helfen; sie versprach also dem Männchen, was es verlangte, und das Männchen spann dafür noch einmal das Stroh zu Gold. Und als am Morgen der König kam und alles fand, wie er gewünscht hatte, so hielt er Hochzeit mit ihr, und die schöne Müllerstochter ward eine Königin.

Über ein Jahr brachte sie ein schönes Kind zur Welt und dachte gar nicht mehr an das Männchen: da trat es plötzlich in ihre Kammer und sprach »nun gib mir, was du versprochen hast.« Die Königin erschrak und bot dem Männchen alle Reichtümer des Königreichs an, wenn es ihr das Kind lassen wollte: aber das Männchen sprach »nein, etwas Lebendes ist mir lieber als alle Schätze der Welt.« Da fing die Königin so an zu jammern und zu weinen, daß das Männchen Mitleiden mit ihr hatte: »drei Tage will ich dir Zeit lassen,« sprach er, »wenn du bis dahin meinen Namen weißt, so sollst du dein Kind behalten.«

Nun besann sich die Königin die ganze Nacht über auf alle Namen, die sie jemals gehört hatte, und schickte einen Boten über Land, der sollte sich erkundigen weit und breit, was es sonst noch für Namen gäbe. Als am andern Tag das Männchen kam, fing sie an mit Kaspar, Melchior, Balzer, und sagte alle Namen, die sie wußte, nach der Reihe her, aber bei jedem sprach das Männlein »so heiß ich nicht.« Den zweiten Tag ließ sie in der Nachbarschaft herumfragen, wie die Leute da genannt würden, und sagte dem Männlein die ungewöhnlichsten und seltsamsten Namen vor »heißt du vielleicht Rippenbiest oder Hammelswade oder Schnürbein?« aber es antwortete immer »so heiß ich nicht.« Den dritten Tag kam der Bote wieder zurück und erzählte »neue Namen habe ich keinen einzigen finden können, aber wie ich an einen hohen Berg um die Waldecke kam, wo Fuchs und Has sich gute Nacht sagen, so sah ich da ein kleines Haus, und vor dem Haus brannte ein Feuer, und um das Feuer sprang ein gar zu lächerliches Männchen, hüpfte auf einem Bein und schrie

»heute back ich, morgen brau ich,
übermorgen hol ich der Königin ihr Kind;
ach, wie gut ist, daß niemand weiß,
daß ich Rumpelstilzchen heiß!«

Da könnt ihr denken, wie die Königin froh war, als sie den Namen hörte, und als bald hernach das Männlein hereintrat und fragte »nun, Frau Königin, wie heiß ich?« fragte sie erst »heißest du Kunz?« »Nein.« »Heißest du Heinz?« »Nein.«

»Heißt du etwa Rumpelstilzchen?«

»Das hat dir der Teufel gesagt, das hat dir der Teufel gesagt,« schrie das Männlein und stieß mit dem rechten Fuß vor Zorn so tief in die Erde, daß es bis an den Leib hineinfuhr, dann packte es in seiner Wut den linken Fuß mit beiden Händen und riß sich selbst mitten entzwei.

56. Der Liebste Roland.

Es war einmal eine Frau, die war eine rechte Hexe, und hatte zwei Töchter, eine häßlich und böse, und die liebte sie, weil sie ihre rechte Tochter war, und eine schön und gut, die haßte sie, weil sie ihre Stieftochter war. Zu einer Zeit hatte die Stieftochter eine schöne Schürze, die der andern gefiel, so daß sie neidisch war und ihrer Mutter sagte, sie wollte und müßte die Schürze haben. »Sei still, mein Kind,« sprach die Alte, »du sollst sie auch haben. Deine Stiefschwester hat längst den Tod verdient, heute nacht, wenn sie schläft, so komm ich und haue ihr den Kopf ab. Sorge nur, daß du hinten ins Bett zu liegen kommst, und schieb sie recht vornen hin.« Um das arme Mädchen war es geschehen, wenn es nicht gerade in einer Ecke gestanden und alles mit angehört hätte. Es durfte den ganzen Tag nicht zur Türe hinaus, und als Schlafenszeit gekommen war, mußte es zuerst ins Bett steigen, damit sie sich hinten hinlegen konnte; als sie aber eingeschlafen war, da schob es sie sachte vornen hin und nahm den Platz hinten an der Wand. In der Nacht kam die Alte geschlichen, in der rechten Hand hielt sie eine Axt, mit der linken fühlte sie erst, ob auch jemand vornen lag, und dann faßte sie die Axt mit beiden Händen, hieb und hieb ihrem eigenen Kinde den Kopf ab.

Als sie fortgegangen war, stand das Mädchen auf und ging zu seinem Liebsten, der Roland hieß, und klopfte an seine Türe. Als er herauskam, sprach sie zu ihm »höre, liebster Roland, wir müssen eilig flüchten, die Stiefmutter hat mich totschlagen wollen, hat aber ihr eigenes Kind getroffen. Kommt der Tag, und sie sieht, was sie getan hat, so sind wir verloren.« »Aber ich rate dir,« sagte Roland, »daß du erst ihren Zauberstab wegnimmst, sonst können wir uns nicht retten, wenn sie uns nachsetzt und verfolgt.« Das Mädchen holte den Zauberstab, und dann nahm es den toten Kopf und tröpfelte drei Blutstropfen auf die Erde, einen vors Bett, einen in die Küche und einen auf die Treppe. Darauf eilte es mit seinem Liebsten fort.

Als nun am Morgen die alte Hexe aufgestanden war, rief sie ihre Tochter, und wollte ihr die Schürze geben, aber sie kam nicht. Da rief sie »wo bist du?« »Ei, hier auf der Treppe, da kehr ich,« antwortete der eine Blutstropfen. Die Alte ging hinaus, sah aber niemand auf der Treppe und rief abermals »wo bist du?« »Ei, hier in der Küche, da wärm ich mich,« rief der zweite Blutstropfen. Sie ging in die Küche, aber sie fand niemand. Da rief sie noch einmal »wo bist du?« »Ach, hier im Bette, da schlaf ich,« rief der dritte Blutstropfen. Sie ging in die Kammer ans Bett. Was sah sie da? Ihr eigenes Kind, das in seinem Blute schwamm, und dem sie selbst den Kopf abgehauen hatte.

Die Hexe geriet in Wut, sprang ans Fenster, und da sie weit in die Welt schauen konnte, erblickte sie ihre Stieftochter, die mit ihrem Liebsten Roland forteilte. »Das soll euch nichts helfen,« rief sie, »wenn ihr auch schon weit weg seid, ihr entflieht mir doch nicht.« Sie zog ihre Meilenstiefeln an, in welchen sie mit jedem Schritt eine Stunde machte, und es dauerte nicht lange, so hatte sie beide eingeholt. Das Mädchen aber, wie es die Alte daherschreiten sah, verwandelte mit dem Zauberstab seinen Liebsten Roland in einen See, sich selbst aber in eine Ente, die mitten auf dem See schwamm. Die Hexe stellte sich ans Ufer, warf Brotbrocken hinein und gab sich alle Mühe, die Ente herbeizulocken: aber die Ente ließ sich nicht locken, und die Alte mußte abends unverrichteter Sache wieder umkehren. Darauf nahm das Mädchen mit seinem Liebsten Roland wieder die natürliche Gestalt an, und sie gingen die ganze Nacht weiter bis zu Tagesanbruch. Da verwandelte sich das Mädchen in eine schöne Blume, die mitten in einer Dornhecke stand, seinen Liebsten Roland aber in einen Geigenspieler. Nicht lange, so kam die Hexe herangeschritten und sprach zu dem Spielmann »lieber Spielmann, darf ich mir wohl die schöne Blume abbrechen?« »O ja,« antwortete er, »ich will dazu aufspielen.« Als sie nun mit Hast in die Hecke kroch und die Blume brechen wollte, denn sie wußte wohl, wer die Blume war, so fing er an aufzuspielen, und, sie mochte wollen oder nicht, sie mußte tanzen, denn es war ein Zaubertanz. Je schneller er spielte, desto gewaltigere Sprünge mußte sie machen, und die Dornen rissen ihr die Kleider vom Leibe, stachen sie blutig und wund, und da er nicht aufhörte, mußte sie so lange tanzen, bis sie tot liegen blieb.

Als sie nun erlöst waren, sprach Roland »nun will ich zu meinem Vater gehen und die Hochzeit bestellen.« »So will ich derweil hier bleiben,« sagte das Mädchen, »und auf dich warten, und damit mich niemand erkennt, will ich mich in einen roten Feldstein verwandeln.« Da ging Roland fort, und das Mädchen stand als ein roter Stein auf dem Felde und wartete auf seinen Liebsten. Als aber Roland heim kam, geriet er in die Fallstricke einer andern, die es dahin brachte, daß er das Mädchen vergaß. Das arme Mädchen stand lange Zeit, als er aber endlich gar nicht wiederkam, so ward es traurig und verwandelte sich in eine Blume und dachte »es wird ja wohl einer dahergehen und mich umtreten.«

Es trug sich aber zu, daß ein Schäfer auf dem Felde seine Schafe hütete und die Blume sah, und weil sie so schön war, so brach er sie ab, nahm sie mit sich, und legte sie in seinen Kasten. Von der Zeit ging es wunderlich in des Schäfers Hause zu. Wenn er morgens aufstand, so war schon alle Arbeit getan: die Stube war gekehrt, Tische und Bänke abgeputzt, Feuer auf den Herd gemacht und Wasser getragen; und mittags, wenn er heim kam, war der Tisch gedeckt und ein gutes Essen aufgetragen. Er konnte nicht begreifen, wie das zuging, denn er sah niemals einen Menschen in seinem Haus, und es konnte sich auch niemand in der kleinen Hütte versteckt haben. Die gute Aufwartung gefiel ihm freilich, aber zuletzt ward ihm doch angst, so daß er zu einer weisen Frau ging und sie um Rat fragte. Die weise Frau sprach »es steckt Zauberei dahinter; gib einmal morgens in aller Frühe acht, ob sich etwas in der Stube regt, und wenn du etwas siehst, es mag sein, was es will, so wirf schnell ein weißes Tuch darüber, dann wird der Zauber gehemmt.« Der Schäfer tat, wie sie gesagt hatte, und am andern Morgen, eben als der Tag anbrach, sah er, wie sich der Kasten auftat und die Blume herauskam. Schnell sprang er hinzu und warf ein weißes Tuch darüber. Alsbald war die Verwandlung vorbei, und ein schönes Mädchen stand vor ihm, das bekannte ihm, daß es die Blume gewesen wäre und seinen Haushalt bisher besorgt hätte. Es erzählte ihm sein Schicksal, und weil es ihm gefiel, fragte er, ob es ihn heiraten wollte, aber es antwortete »nein,« denn es wollte seinem Liebsten Roland, obgleich er es verlassen hatte, doch treu bleiben: aber es versprach, daß es nicht weggehen, sondern ihm fernerhin haushalten wollte.

Nun kam die Zeit heran, daß Roland Hochzeit halten sollte: da ward nach altem Brauch im Lande bekanntgemacht, daß alle Mädchen sich einfinden und zu Ehren des Brautpaars singen sollten. Das treue Mädchen, als es davon hörte, ward so traurig, daß es meinte, das Herz im Leibe würde ihm zerspringen, und wollte nicht hingehen, aber die andern kamen und holten es herbei. Wenn aber die Reihe kam, daß es singen sollte, so trat es zurück, bis es allein noch übrig war, da konnte es nicht anders. Aber wie es seinen Gesang anfing, und er zu Rolands Ohren kam, so sprang er auf und rief »die Stimme kenne ich, das ist die rechte Braut, eine andere begehr ich nicht.« Alles, was er vergessen hatte und ihm aus dem Sinn verschwunden war, das war plötzlich in sein Herz wieder heim gekommen. Da hielt das treue Mädchen Hochzeit mit seinem Liebsten Roland, und war sein Leid zu Ende und fing seine Freude an.

57. Der goldene Vogel.

Es war vor Zeiten ein König, der hatte einen schönen Lustgarten hinter seinem Schloß, darin stand ein Baum, der goldene Äpfel trug. Als die Äpfel reiften, wurden sie gezählt, aber gleich den nächsten Morgen fehlte einer. Das ward dem König gemeldet, und er befahl, daß alle Nächte unter dem Baume Wache sollte gehalten werden. Der König hatte drei Söhne, davon schickte er den ältesten bei einbrechender Nacht in den Garten; wie es aber Mitternacht war, konnte er sich des Schlafes nicht wehren, und am nächsten Morgen fehlte wieder ein Apfel. In der folgenden Nacht mußte der zweite Sohn wachen, aber dem erging es nicht besser: als es zwölf Uhr geschlagen hatte, schlief er ein, und morgens fehlte ein Apfel. Jetzt kam die Reihe zu wachen an den dritten Sohn, der war auch bereit, aber der König traute ihm nicht viel zu und meinte, er würde noch weniger ausrichten als seine Brüder: endlich aber gestattete er es doch. Der Jüngling legte sich also unter den Baum, wachte und ließ den Schlaf nicht Herr werden. Als es zwölf schlug, so rauschte etwas durch die Luft, und er sah im Mondschein einen Vogel daherfliegen, dessen Gefieder ganz von Gold glänzte. Der Vogel ließ sich auf dem Baume nieder und hatte eben einen Apfel abgepickt, als der Jüngling einen Pfeil nach ihm abschoß. Der Vogel entflog, aber der Pfeil hatte sein Gefieder getroffen, und eine seiner goldenen Federn fiel herab. Der Jüngling hob sie auf, brachte sie am andern Morgen dem König und erzählte ihm, was er in der Nacht gesehen hatte. Der König versammelte seinen Rat, und jedermann erklärte, eine Feder wie diese sei mehr wert als das gesamte Königreich. »Ist die Feder so kostbar,« erklärte der König, »so hilft mir auch die eine nichts, sondern ich will und muß den ganzen Vogel haben.«

Der älteste Sohn machte sich auf den Weg, verließ sich auf seine Klugheit und meinte den goldenen Vogel schon zu finden. Wie er eine Strecke gegangen war, sah er an dem Rande eines Waldes einen Fuchs sitzen, legte seine Flinte an und zielte auf ihn. Der Fuchs rief »schieß mich nicht, ich will dir dafür einen guten Rat geben. Du bist auf dem Weg nach dem goldenen Vogel, und wirst heut abend in ein Dorf kommen, wo zwei Wirtshäuser einander gegenüberstehen. Eins ist hell erleuchtet, und es geht darin lustig her: da kehr aber nicht ein, sondern geh ins andere, wenn es dich auch schlecht ansieht.« »Wie kann mir wohl so ein albernes Tier einen vernünftigen Rat erteilen!« dachte der Königssohn und drückte los, aber er fehlte den Fuchs, der den Schwanz streckte und schnell in den Wald lief. Darauf setzte er seinen Weg fort und kam abends in das Dorf, wo die beiden Wirtshäuser standen: in dem einen ward gesungen und gesprungen, das andere hatte ein armseliges betrübtes Ansehen. »Ich wäre wohl ein Narr,« dachte er, »wenn ich in das lumpige Wirtshaus ginge und das schöne liegen ließ.« Also ging er in das lustige ein, lebte da in Saus und Braus, und vergaß den Vogel, seinen Vater und alle guten Lehren.

Als eine Zeit verstrichen und der älteste Sohn immer und immer nicht nach Haus gekommen war, so machte sich der zweite auf den Weg und wollte den goldenen Vogel suchen. Wie dem ältesten begegnete ihm der Fuchs und gab ihm den guten Rat, den er nicht achtete. Er kam zu den beiden Wirtshäusern, wo sein Bruder am Fenster des einen stand, aus dem der Jubel erschallte, und ihn anrief. Er konnte nicht widerstehen, ging hinein und lebte nur seinen Lüsten.

Wiederum verstrich eine Zeit, da wollte der jüngste Königssohn ausziehen und sein Heil versuchen, der Vater aber wollte es nicht zulassen. »Es ist vergeblich,« sprach er, »der wird den goldenen Vogel noch weniger finden als seine Brüder, und wenn ihm ein Unglück zustößt, so weiß er sich nicht zu helfen; es fehlt ihm am Besten.« Doch endlich, wie keine Ruhe mehr da war, ließ er ihn ziehen. Vor dem Walde saß wieder der Fuchs, bat um sein Leben und erteilte den guten Rat. Der Jüngling war gutmütig und sagte »sei ruhig, Füchslein, ich tue dir nichts zuleid.« »Es soll dich nicht gereuen,« antwortete der Fuchs, »und damit du schneller fortkommst, so steig hinten auf meinen Schwanz.« Und kaum hatte er sich aufgesetzt, so fing der Fuchs an zu laufen, und da gings über Stock und Stein, daß die Haare im Winde pfiffen. Als sie zu dem Dorfe kamen, stieg der Jüngling ab, befolgte den guten Rat und kehrte, ohne sich umzusehen, in das geringe Wirtshaus ein, wo er ruhig übernachtete. Am andern Morgen, wie er auf das Feld kam, saß da schon der Fuchs und sagte »ich will dir weiter sagen, was du zu tun hast. Geh du immer geradeaus, endlich wirst du an ein Schloß kommen, vor dem eine ganze Schar Soldaten liegt, aber kümmre dich nicht darum, denn sie werden alle schlafen und schnarchen: geh mitten durch und geradeswegs in das Schloß hinein, und geh durch alle Stuben, zuletzt wirst du in eine Kammer kommen, wo ein goldener Vogel in einem hölzernen Käfig hängt. Nebenan steht ein leerer Goldkäfig zum Prunk, aber hüte dich, daß du den Vogel nicht aus seinem schlechten Käfig herausnimmst und in den prächtigen tust, sonst möchte es dir schlimm ergehen.« Nach diesen Worten streckte der Fuchs wieder seinen Schwanz aus, und der Königssohn setzte sich auf: da gings über Stock und Stein, daß die Haare im Winde pfiffen. Als er bei dem Schloß angelangt war, fand er alles so, wie der Fuchs gesagt hatte. Der Königssohn kam in die Kammer, wo der goldene Vogel in einem hölzernen Käfig saß, und ein goldener stand daneben: die drei goldenen Äpfel aber lagen in der Stube umher. Da dachte er, es wäre lächerlich, wenn er den schönen Vogel in dem gemeinen und häßlichen Käfig lassen wollte, öffnete die Türe, packte ihn und setzte ihn in den goldenen. In dem Augenblick aber tat der Vogel einen durchdringenden Schrei. Die Soldaten erwachten, stürzten herein und führten ihn ins Gefängnis. Den andern Morgen wurde er vor ein Gericht gestellt und, da er alles bekannte, zum Tode verurteilt. Doch sagte der König, er wollte ihm unter einer Bedingung das Leben schenken, wenn er ihm nämlich das goldene Pferd brächte, welches noch schneller liefe als der Wind, und dann sollte er obendrein zur Belohnung den goldenen Vogel erhalten.

Der Königssohn machte sich auf den Weg, seufzte aber und war traurig, denn wo sollte er das goldene Pferd finden? Da sah er auf einmal seinen alten Freund, den Fuchs, an dem Wege sitzen. »Siehst du,« sprach der Fuchs, »so ist es gekommen, weil du mir nicht gehört hast. Doch sei gutes Mutes, ich will mich deiner annehmen und dir sagen, wie du zu dem goldenen Pferd gelangst. Du mußt geradesweges fortgehen, so wirst du zu einem Schloß kommen, wo das Pferd im Stalle steht. Vor dem Stall werden die Stallknechte liegen, aber sie werden schlafen und schnarchen, und du kannst geruhig das goldene Pferd herausführen. Aber eins mußt du in acht nehmen, leg ihm den schlechten Sattel von Holz und Leder auf und ja nicht den goldenen, der dabeihängt, sonst wird es dir schlimm ergehen.« Dann streckte der Fuchs seinen Schwanz aus, der Königssohn setzte sich auf, und es ging fort über Stock und Stein, daß die Haare im Winde pfiffen. Alles traf so ein, wie der Fuchs gesagt hatte, er kam in den Stall, wo das goldene Pferd stand: als er ihm aber den schlechten Sattel auflegen wollte, so dachte er »ein so schönes Tier wird verschändet, wenn ich ihm nicht den guten Sattel auflege, der ihm gebührt.« Kaum aber berührte der goldene Sattel das Pferd, so fing es an laut zu wiehern. Die Stallknechte erwachten, ergriffen den Jüngling und warfen ihn ins Gefängnis. Am andern Morgen wurde er vom Gerichte zum Tode verurteilt, doch versprach ihm der König das Leben zu schenken und dazu das goldene Pferd, wenn er die schöne Königstochter vom goldenen Schlosse herbeischaffen könnte.

Mit schwerem Herzen machte sich der Jüngling auf den Weg, doch zu seinem Glücke fand er bald den treuen Fuchs. »Ich sollte dich nur deinem Unglück überlassen,« sagte der Fuchs, »aber ich habe Mitleiden mit dir und will dir noch einmal aus deiner Not helfen. Dein Weg führt dich gerade zu dem goldenen Schlosse: abends wirst du anlangen, und nachts, wenn alles still ist, dann geht die schöne Königstochter ins Badehaus, um da zu baden. Und wenn sie hineingeht, so spring auf sie zu und gib ihr einen Kuß, dann folgt sie dir, und du kannst sie mit dir fortführen: nur dulde nicht, daß sie vorher von ihren Eltern Abschied nimmt, sonst kann es dir schlimm ergehen.« Dann streckte der Fuchs seinen Schwanz, der Königssohn setzte sich auf, und so ging es über Stock und Stein, daß die Haare im Winde pfiffen. Als er beim goldenen Schloß ankam, war es so, wie der Fuchs gesagt hatte. Er wartete bis um Mitternacht, als alles in tiefem Schlaf lag und die schöne Jungfrau ins Badehaus ging, da sprang er hervor und gab ihr einen Kuß. Sie sagte, sie wollte gerne mit ihm gehen, bat ihn aber flehentlich und mit Tränen, er möchte ihr erlauben, vorher von ihren Eltern Abschied zu nehmen. Er widerstand anfänglich ihren Bitten, als sie aber immer mehr weinte und ihm zu Fuß fiel, so gab er endlich nach. Kaum aber war die Jungfrau zu dem Bette ihres Vaters getreten, so wachte er und alle anderen, die im Schloß waren, auf, und der Jüngling ward festgehalten und ins Gefängnis gesetzt.

Am andern Morgen sprach der König zu ihm »dein Leben ist verwirkt, und du kannst bloß Gnade finden, wenn du den Berg abträgst, der vor meinen Fenstern liegt, und über welchen ich nicht hinaussehen kann, und das mußt du binnen acht Tagen zustande bringen. Gelingt dir das, so sollst du meine Tochter zur Belohnung haben.« Der Königssohn fing an, grub und schaufelte, ohne abzulassen, als er aber nach sieben Tagen sah, wie wenig er ausgerichtet hatte, und alle seine Arbeit so gut wie nichts war, so fiel er in große Traurigkeit und gab alle Hoffnung auf. Am Abend des siebenten Tags aber erschien der Fuchs und sagte »du verdienst nicht, daß ich mich deiner annehme, aber geh nur hin und lege dich schlafen, ich will die Arbeit für dich tun.« Am andern Morgen, als er erwachte und zum Fenster hinaussah, so war der Berg verschwunden. Der Jüngling eilte vor Freude zum König und meldete ihm, daß die Bedingung erfüllt wäre, und der König mochte wollen oder nicht, er mußte Wort halten und ihm seine Tochter geben.

Nun zogen die beiden zusammen fort, und es währte nicht lange, so kam der treue Fuchs zu ihnen. »Das Beste hast du zwar,« sagte er, »aber zu der Jungfrau aus dem goldenen Schloß gehört auch das goldene Pferd.« »Wie soll ich das bekommen?« fragte der Jüngling. »Das will ich dir sagen,« antwortete der Fuchs, »zuerst bring dem Könige, der dich nach dem goldenen Schlosse geschickt hat, die schöne Jungfrau. Da wird unerhörte Freude sein, sie werden dir das goldene Pferd gerne geben und werden dirs vorführen. Setz dich alsbald auf und reiche allen zum Abschied die Hand herab, zuletzt der schönen Jungfrau, und, wenn du sie gefaßt hast, so zieh sie mit einem Schwung hinauf und jage davon: und niemand ist imstande, dich einzuholen, denn das Pferd läuft schneller als der Wind.«

Alles wurde glücklich vollbracht und der Königssohn führte die schöne Jungfrau auf dem goldenen Pferde fort. Der Fuchs blieb nicht zurück und sprach zu dem Jüngling »jetzt will ich dir auch zu dem goldenen Vogel verhelfen. Wenn du nahe bei dem Schlosse bist, wo sich der Vogel befindet, so laß die Jungfrau absitzen, und ich will sie in meine Obhut nehmen. Dann reit mit dem goldenen Pferd in den Schloßhof: bei dem Anblick wird große Freude sein, und sie werden dir den goldenen Vogel herausbringen. Wie du den Käfig in der Hand hast, so jage zu uns zurück und hole dir die Jungfrau wieder ab.« Als der Anschlag geglückt war und der Königssohn mit seinen Schätzen heimreiten wollte, so sagte der Fuchs »nun sollst du mich für meinen Beistand belohnen.« »Was verlangst du dafür?« fragte der Jüngling. »Wenn wir dort in den Wald kommen, so schieß mich tot und hau mir Kopf und Pfoten ab.« »Das wäre eine schöne Dankbarkeit,« sagte der Königssohn, »das kann ich dir unmöglich gewähren.« Sprach der Fuchs »wenn du es nicht tun willst, so muß ich dich verlassen; ehe ich aber fortgehe, will ich dir noch einen guten Rat geben. Vor zwei Stücken hüte dich, kauf kein Galgenfleisch und setze dich an keinen Brunnenrand.« Damit lief er in den Wald.

Der Jüngling dachte »das ist ein wunderliches Tier, das seltsame Grillen hat. Wer wird Galgenfleisch kaufen! und die Lust, mich an einen Brunnenrand zu setzen, ist mir noch niemals gekommen.« Er ritt mit der schönen Jungfrau weiter, und sein Weg führte ihn wieder durch das Dorf, in welchem seine beiden Brüder geblieben waren. Da war großer Auflauf und Lärmen, und als er fragte, was da vor wäre, hieß es, es sollten zwei Leute aufgehängt werden. Als er näher hinzukam, sah er, daß es seine Brüder waren, die allerhand schlimme Streiche verübt und all ihr Gut vertan hatten. Er fragte, ob sie nicht könnten frei gemacht werden. »Wenn Ihr für sie bezahlen wollt,« antworteten die Leute, »aber was wollt Ihr an die schlechten Menschen Euer Geld hängen und sie loskaufen.« Er besann sich aber nicht, zahlte für sie, und als sie frei gegeben waren, so setzten sie die Reise gemeinschaftlich fort.

Sie kamen in den Wald, wo ihnen der Fuchs zuerst begegnet war, und da es darin kühl und lieblich war und die Sonne heiß brannte, so sagten die beiden Brüder »laßt uns hier an dem Brunnen ein wenig ausruhen, essen und trinken.« Er willigte ein, und während des Gesprächs vergaß er sich, setzte sich an den Brunnenrand und versah sich nichts Arges. Aber die beiden Brüder warfen ihn rückwärts in den Brunnen, nahmen die Jungfrau, das Pferd und den Vogel, und zogen heim zu ihrem Vater. »Da bringen wir nicht bloß den goldenen Vogel,« sagten sie, »wir haben auch das goldene Pferd und die Jungfrau von dem goldenen Schlosse erbeutet.« Da war große Freude, aber das Pferd, das fraß nicht, der Vogel, der pfiff nicht, und die Jungfrau, die saß und weinte.

Der jüngste Bruder war aber nicht umgekommen. Der Brunnen war zum Glück trocken, und er fiel auf weiches Moos, ohne Schaden zu nehmen, konnte aber nicht wieder heraus. Auch in dieser Not verließ ihn der treue Fuchs nicht, kam zu ihm herabgesprungen und schalt ihn, daß er seinen Rat vergessen hätte. »Ich kanns aber doch nicht lassen,« sagte er, »ich will dir wieder an das Tageslicht helfen.« Er sagte ihm, er sollte seinen Schwanz anpacken und sich fest daran halten, und zog ihn dann in die Höhe. »Noch bist du nicht aus aller Gefahr,« sagte der Fuchs, »deine Brüder waren deines Todes nicht gewiß und haben den Wald mit Wächtern umstellt, die sollen dich töten, wenn du dich sehen ließest.« Da saß ein armer Mann am Weg, mit dem vertauschte der Jüngling die Kleider und gelangte auf diese Weise an des Königs Hof. Niemand erkannte ihn, aber der Vogel fing an zu pfeifen, das Pferd fing an zu fressen, und die schöne Jungfrau hörte Weinens auf. Der König fragte verwundert »was hat das zu bedeuten?« Da sprach die Jungfrau »ich weiß es nicht, aber ich war so traurig, und nun bin ich so fröhlich. Es ist mir, als wäre mein rechter Bräutigam gekommen.« Sie erzählte ihm alles, was geschehen war, obgleich die andern Brüder ihr den Tod angedroht hatten, wenn sie etwas verraten würde. Der König hieß alle Leute vor sich bringen, die in seinem Schloß waren, da kam auch der Jüngling als ein armer Mann in seinen Lumpenkleidern, aber die Jungfrau erkannte ihn gleich und fiel ihm um den Hals. Die gottlosen Brüder wurden ergriffen und hingerichtet, er aber ward mit der schönen Jungfrau vermählt und zum Erben des Königs bestimmt.

Aber wie ist es dem armen Fuchs ergangen? Lange danach ging der Königssohn einmal wieder in den Wald, da begegnete ihm der Fuchs und sagte »du hast nun alles, was du dir wünschen kannst, aber mit meinem Unglück will es kein Ende nehmen, und es steht doch in deiner Macht, mich zu erlösen,« und abermals bat er flehentlich, er möchte ihn totschießen und ihm Kopf und Pfoten abhauen. Also tat ers, und kaum war es geschehen, so verwandelte sich der Fuchs in einen Menschen, und war niemand anders als der Bruder der schönen Königstochter, der endlich von dem Zauber, der auf ihm lag, erlöst war. Und nun fehlte nichts mehr zu ihrem Glück, solange sie lebten.

58. Der Hund und der Sperling.

Ein Schäferhund hatte keinen guten Herrn, sondern einen, der ihn Hunger leiden ließ. Wie ers nicht länger bei ihm aushalten konnte, ging er ganz traurig fort. Auf der Straße begegnete ihm ein Sperling, der sprach »Bruder Hund, warum bist du so traurig?« Antwortete der Hund »ich bin hungrig und habe nichts zu fressen.« Da sprach der Sperling »lieber Bruder, komm mit in die Stadt, so will ich dich satt machen.« Also gingen sie zusammen in die Stadt, und als sie vor einen Fleischerladen kamen, sprach der Sperling zum Hunde »da bleib stehen, ich will dir ein Stück Fleisch herunterpicken,« setzte sich auf den Laden, schaute sich um, ob ihn auch niemand bemerkte, und pickte, zog und zerrte so lang an einem Stück, das am Rande lag, bis es herunterrutschte. Da packte es der Hund, lief in eine Ecke und fraß es auf. Sprach der Sperling »nun komm mit zu einem andern Laden, da will ich dir noch ein Stück herunterholen, damit du satt wirst.« Als der Hund auch das zweite Stück gefressen hatte, fragte der Sperling »Bruder Hund, bist du nun satt?« »Ja, Fleisch bin ich satt,« antwortete er, »aber ich habe noch kein Brot gekriegt.« Sprach der Sperling »das sollst du auch haben, komm nur mit.« Da führte er ihn an einen Bäckerladen und pickte an ein paar Brötchen, bis sie herunterrollten, und als der Hund noch mehr wollte, führte er ihn zu einem andern und holte ihm noch einmal Brot herab. Wie das verzehrt war, sprach der Sperling »Bruder Hund, bist du nun satt?« »Ja,« antwortete er, »nun wollen wir ein bißchen vor die Stadt gehen.«

Da gingen sie beide hinaus auf die Landstraße. Es war aber warmes Wetter, und als sie ein Eckchen gegangen waren, sprach der Hund »ich bin müde und möchte gerne schlafen.« »Ja, schlaf nur,« antwortete der Sperling, »ich will mich derweil auf einen Zweig setzen.« Der Hund legte sich also auf die Straße und schlief fest ein. Während er da lag und schlief, kam ein Fuhrmann herangefahren, der hatte einen Wagen mit drei Pferden, und hatte zwei Fässer Wein geladen. Der Sperling aber sah, daß er nicht ausbiegen wollte, sondern in der Fahrgleise blieb, in welcher der Hund lag, da rief er »Fuhrmann, tus nicht, oder ich mache dich arm.« Der Fuhrmann aber brummte vor sich »du wirst mich nicht arm machen,« knallte mit der Peitsche und trieb den Wagen über den Hund, daß ihn die Räder totfuhren. Da rief der Sperling »du hast mir meinen Bruder Hund totgefahren, das soll dich Karre und Gaul kosten.« »Ja, Karre und Gaul,« sagte der Fuhrmann, »was könntest du mir schaden!« und fuhr weiter. Da kroch der Sperling unter das Wagentuch und pickte an dem einen Spundloch so lange, bis er den Spund losbrachte: da lief der ganze Wein heraus, ohne daß es der Fuhrmann merkte. Und als er einmal hinter sich blickte, sah er, daß der Wagen tröpfelte, untersuchte die Fässer und fand, daß eins leer war. »Ach, ich armer Mann!« rief er. »Noch nicht arm genug,« sprach der Sperling und flog dem einen Pferd auf den Kopf und pickte ihm die Augen aus. Als der Fuhrmann das sah, zog er seine Hacke heraus und wollte den Sperling treffen, aber der Sperling flog in die Höhe, und der Fuhrmann traf seinen

Gaul auf den Kopf, daß er tot hinfiel. »Ach, ich armer Mann!« rief er. »Noch nicht arm genug,« sprach der Sperling, und als der Fuhrmann mit den zwei Pferden weiterfuhr, kroch der Sperling wieder unter das Tuch und pickte den Spund auch am zweiten Faß los, daß aller Wein herausschwankte. Als es der Fuhrmann gewahr wurde, rief er wieder »ach, ich armer Mann!« aber der Sperling antwortete »noch nicht arm genug,« setzte sich dem zweiten Pferd auf den Kopf und pickte ihm die Augen aus. Der Fuhrmann lief herbei und holte mit seiner Hacke aus, aber der Sperling flog in die Höhe, da traf der Schlag das Pferd, daß es hinfiel. »Ach, ich armer Mann!« »Noch nicht arm genug,« sprach der Sperling, setzte sich auch dem dritten Pferd auf den Kopf und pickte ihm nach den Augen. Der Fuhrmann schlug in seinem Zorn, ohne umzusehen, auf den Sperling los, traf ihn aber nicht, sondern schlug auch sein drittes Pferd tot. »Ach, ich armer Mann!« rief er. »Noch nicht arm genug,« antwortete der Sperling, »jetzt will ich dich daheim arm machen,« und flog fort.

Der Fuhrmann mußte den Wagen stehen lassen und ging voll Zorn und Ärger heim. »Ach,« sprach er zu seiner Frau, »was hab ich Unglück gehabt! der Wein ist ausgelaufen, und die Pferde sind alle drei tot.« »Ach, Mann,« antwortete sie, »was für ein böser Vogel ist ins Haus gekommen! er hat alle Vögel auf der Welt zusammengebracht, und die sind droben über unsern Weizen hergefallen und fressen ihn auf.« Da stieg er hinauf, und tausend und tausend Vögel saßen auf dem Boden und hatten den Weizen aufgefressen, und der Sperling saß mitten darunter. Da rief der Fuhrmann »ach, ich armer Mann!« »Noch nicht arm genug,« antwortete der Sperling, »Fuhrmann, es kostet dir noch dein Leben,« und flog hinaus.

Da hatte der Fuhrmann all sein Gut verloren, ging hinab in die Stube, setzte sich hinter den Ofen und zwar ganz bös und giftig. Der Sperling aber saß draußen vor dem Fenster und rief »Fuhrmann, es kostet dir dein Leben.« Da griff der Fuhrmann die Hacke und warf sie nach dem Sperling: aber er schlug nur die Fensterscheiben entzwei und traf den Vogel nicht. Der Sperling hüpfte nun herein, setzte sich auf den Ofen und rief »Fuhrmann, es kostet dir dein Leben.« Die ser, ganz toll und blind vor Wut, schlägt den Ofen entzwei, und so fort, wie der Sperling von einem Ort zum andern fliegt, sein ganzes Hausgerät, Spieglein, Bänke, Tisch, und zuletzt die Wände seines Hauses, und kann ihn nicht treffen. Endlich aber erwischt er ihn doch mit der Hand. Da sprach seine Frau »soll ich ihn totschlagen?« »Nein,« rief er, »das wäre zu gelind, der soll viel mörderlicher sterben, ich will ihn verschlingen,« und nimmt ihn, und verschlingt ihn auf einmal. Der Sperling aber fängt an in seinem Leibe zu flattern, flattert wieder herauf, dem Mann in den Mund: da streckte er den Kopf heraus und ruft »Fuhrmann, es kostet dir doch dein Leben.« Der Fuhrmann reicht seiner Frau die Hacke und spricht »Frau, schlag mir den Vogel im Munde tot.« Die Frau schlägt zu, schlägt aber fehl, und schlägt dem Fuhrmann gerade auf den Kopf, so daß er tot hinfällt. Der Sperling aber fliegt auf und davon.

59. Der Frieder und das Katherlieschen.

Es war ein Mann, der hieß Frieder, und eine Frau, die hieß Katherlieschen, die hatten einander geheiratet und lebten zusammen als junge Eheleute. Eines Tages sprach der Frieder »ich will jetzt zu Acker, Katherlieschen, wann ich wiederkomme, muß etwas Gebratenes auf dem Tisch stehen für den Hunger, und ein frischer Trunk dabei für den Durst.« »Geh nur, Friederchen,« antwortete die Katherlies, »geh nur, will dirs schon recht machen.« Als nun die Essenszeit herbeirückte, holte sie eine Wurst aus dem Schornstein, tat sie in eine Bratpfanne, legte Butter dazu und stellte sie übers Feuer. Die Wurst fing an zu braten und zu brutzeln, Katherlieschen stand dabei, hielt den Pfannenstiel und hatte so seine Gedanken: da fiel ihm ein »bis die Wurst fertig wird, derweil könntest du ja im Keller den Trunk zapfen.« Also stellte es den Pfannenstiel fest, nahm eine Kanne, ging hinab in den Keller und zapfte Bier. Das Bier lief in die Kanne, und Katherlieschen sah ihm zu, da fiel ihm ein »holla, der Hund oben ist nicht beigetan, der könnte die Wurst aus der Pfanne holen, du kämst mir recht!« und im Hui war es die Kellertreppe hinauf; aber der Spitz hatte die Wurst schon im Maul und schleifte sie auf der Erde mit sich fort. Doch Katherlieschen, nicht faul, setzte ihm nach und jagte ihn ein gut Stück ins Feld; aber der Hund war geschwinder als Katherlieschen, ließ auch die Wurst nicht fahren, sondern über die Äcker hinhüpfen. »Hin ist hin!« sprach Katherlieschen, kehrte um, und weil es sich müde gelaufen hatte, ging es hübsch langsam und kühlte sich ab. Während der Zeit lief das Bier aus dem Faß immerzu, denn Katherlieschen hatte den Hahn nicht umgedreht, und als die Kanne voll und sonst kein Platz da war, so lief es in den Keller und hörte nicht eher auf, als bis das ganze Faß leer war. Katherlieschen sah schon auf der Treppe das Unglück. »Spuk,« rief es, »was fängst du jetzt an, daß es der Frieder nicht merkt!« Es besann sich ein Weilchen, endlich fiel ihm ein, von der letzten Kirmes stände noch ein Sack mit schönem Weizenmehl auf dem Boden, das wollte es herabholen und in das Bier streuen. »Ja,« sprach es, »wer zu rechter Zeit was spart, der hats hernach in der Not,« stieg auf den Boden, trug den Sack herab und warf ihn gerade auf die Kanne voll Bier, daß sie umstürzte und der Trunk des Frieders auch im Keller schwamm. »Es ist ganz recht,« sprach Katherlieschen, »wo eins ist, muß das andere auch sein,« und zerstreute das Mehl im ganzen Keller. Als es fertig war, freute es sich gewaltig über seine Arbeit und sagte »wies so reinlich und sauber hier aussieht!«

Um Mittagszeit kam der Frieder heim. »Nun, Frau, was hast du mir zurecht gemacht?« »Ach, Friederchen,« antwortete sie, »ich wollte dir ja eine Wurst braten, aber während ich das Bier dazu zapfte, hat sie der Hund aus der Pfanne weggeholt, und während ich dem Hund nachsprang, ist das Bier ausgelaufen, und als ich das Bier mit dem Weizenmehl auftrocknen wollte, hab ich die Kanne auch noch umgestoßen; aber sei nur zufrieden, der Keller ist wieder ganz trocken.« Sprach der Frieder »Katherlieschen,

Katherlieschen, das hättest du nicht tun müssen! läßt die Wurst wegholen und das Bier aus dem Faß laufen, und verschüttest obendrein unser feines Mehl!« »Ja, Friederchen, das habe ich nicht gewußt, hättest mirs sagen müssen.«

Der Mann dachte »geht das so mit deiner Frau, so mußt du dich besser vorsehen.« Nun hatte er eine hübsche Summe Taler zusammengebracht, die wechselte er in Gold ein und sprach zum Katherlieschen »siehst du, das sind gelbe Gickelinge, die will ich in einen Topf tun und im Stall unter der Kuhkrippe vergraben: aber daß du mir ja davonbleibst, sonst geht dirs schlimm.« Sprach sie »nein, Friederchen, wills gewiß nicht tun.« Nun, als der Frieder fort war, da kamen Krämer, die irdene Näpfe und Töpfe feil hatten, ins Dorf und fragten bei der jungen Frau an, ob sie nichts zu handeln hätte. »O, ihr lieben Leute,« sprach Katherlieschen, »ich hab kein Geld und kann nichts kaufen; aber könnt ihr gelbe Gickelinge brauchen, so will ich wohl kaufen.« »Gelbe Gickelinge, warum nicht? laßt sie einmal sehen.« »So geht in den Stall und grabt unter der Kuhkrippe, so werdet ihr die gelben Gickelinge finden, ich darf nicht dabeigehen.« Die Spitzbuben gingen hin, gruben und fanden eitel Gold. Da packten sie auf damit, liefen fort und ließen Töpfe und Näpfe im Hause stehen. Katherlieschen meinte, sie müßte das neue Geschirr auch brauchen: weil nun in der Küche ohnehin kein Mangel daran war, schlug sie jedem Topf den Boden aus und steckte sie insgesamt zum Zierat auf die Zaunpfähle rings ums Haus herum. Wie der Frieder kam und den neuen Zierat sah, sprach er »Katherlieschen, was hast du gemacht?« »Habs gekauft, Friederchen, für die gelben Gickelinge, die unter der Kuhkrippe steckten: bin selber nicht dabeigegangen, die Krämer haben sichs herausgraben müssen.« »Ach, Frau,« sprach der Frieder, »was hast du gemacht! das waren keine Gickelinge, es war eitel Gold, und war all unser Vermögen; das hättest du nicht tun sollen.« »Ja, Friederchen,« antwortete sie, »das hab ich nicht gewußt, hättest mirs vorher sagen sollen.«

Katherlieschen stand ein Weilchen und besann sich, da sprach sie »hör, Friederchen, das Gold wollen wir schon wiederkriegen, wollen hinter den Dieben herlaufen.« »So komm,« sprach der Frieder, »wir wollens versuchen; nimm aber Butter und Käse mit, daß wir auf dem Weg was zu essen haben.« »Ja, Friederchen, wills mitnehmen.« Sie machten sich fort, und weil der Frieder besser zu Fuß war, ging Katherlieschen hintennach. »Ist mein Vorteil,« dachte es, »wenn wir umkehren, hab ich ja ein Stück voraus.« Nun kam es an einen Berg, wo auf beiden Seiten des Wegs tiefe Fahrgleisen waren. »Da sehe einer,« sprach Katherlieschen, »was sie das arme Erdreich zerrissen, geschunden und gedrückt haben! das wird sein Lebtag nicht wieder heil.« Und aus mitleidigem Herzen nahm es seine Butter und bestrich die Gleisen, rechts und links, damit sie von den Rädern nicht so gedrückt würden: und wie es sich bei seiner Barmherzigkeit so bückte, rollte ihm ein Käse aus der Tasche den Berg hinab. Sprach das Katherlieschen »ich habe den Weg schon einmal herauf gemacht, ich gehe nicht wieder hinab, es mag ein anderer hinlaufen und ihn wieder holen.« Also nahm es einen andern Käs und rollte ihn hinab. Die Käse aber kamen nicht wieder, da ließ es noch einen dritten hinablaufen und dachte »vielleicht warten sie auf Gesellschaft und gehen nicht gern allein.« Als sie alle drei ausblieben, sprach es »ich weiß nicht, was das vorstellen soll! doch kanns ja sein, der dritte hat den Weg nicht gefunden und sich verirrt, ich will nur den vierten schicken, daß er sie herbeiruft.« Der vierte machte es aber nicht besser als der dritte. Da ward das Katherlieschen ärgerlich und warf noch den fünften und sechsten hinab, und das waren die letzten. Eine Zeitlang blieb es stehen und lauerte, daß sie kämen, als sie aber immer nicht kamen, sprach es »o, ihr seid gut nach dem Tod schicken, ihr bleibt fein lange aus; meint ihr, ich wollt noch länger auf euch warten? ich gehe meiner Wege, ihr könnt mir nachlaufen, ihr habt jüngere Beine als ich.« Katherlieschen ging fort und fand den Frieder, der war stehen geblieben und hatte gewartet, weil er gerne was essen wollte. »Nun, gib einmal her, was du mitgenommen hast.« Sie reichte ihm das trockene Brot. »Wo ist Butter und Käse?« fragte der Mann. »Ach, Friederchen,« sagte Katherlieschen, »mit der Butter hab ich die Fahrgleisen geschmiert, und die Käse werden bald kommen; einer lief mir fort, da hab ich die andern nachgeschickt, sie sollten ihn rufen.« Sprach der Frieder »das hättest du nicht tun sollen, Katherlieschen, die Butter an den Weg schmieren und die Käse den Berg hinabrollen.« »Ja, Friederchen, hättest mirs sagen müssen.«

Da aßen sie das trockne Brot zusammen, und der Frieder sagte »Katherlieschen, hast du auch unser Haus verwahrt, wie du fortgegangen bist?« »Nein, Friederchen, hättest mirs vorher sagen sollen.« »So geh wieder heim und bewahr erst das Haus, ehe wir weitergehen; bring auch etwas anderes zu essen mit, ich will hier auf dich warten.« Katherlieschen ging zurück und dachte »Friederchen will etwas anderes zu essen, Butter und Käse schmeckt ihm wohl nicht, so will ich ein Tuch voll Hutzeln und einen Krug Essig zum Trunk mitnehmen.« Danach riegelte es die Obertüre zu, aber die Untertüre hob es aus, nahm sie auf die Schulter und glaubte, wenn es die Türe in Sicherheit gebracht hätte, müßte das Haus wohl bewahrt sein. Katherlieschen nahm sich Zeit zum Weg und dachte »desto länger ruht sich Friederchen aus.« Als es ihn wieder erreicht hatte, sprach es »da, Friederchen, hast du die Haustüre, da kannst du das Haus selber verwahren.« »Ach, Gott,« sprach er, »was hab ich für eine kluge Frau! hebt die Türe unten aus, daß alles hineinlaufen kann, und riegelt sie oben zu. Jetzt ists zu spät, noch einmal nach Haus zu gehen, aber hast du die Türe hierher gebracht, so sollst du sie auch ferner tragen.« »Die Türe will ich tragen, Friederchen, aber die Hutzeln und der Essigkrug werden mir zu schwer: ich hänge sie an die Türe, die mag sie tragen.«

Nun gingen sie in den Wald und suchten die Spitzbuben, aber sie fanden sie nicht. Weils endlich dunkel ward, stiegen sie auf einen Baum und wollten da übernachten. Kaum aber saßen sie oben, so kamen die Kerle daher, die forttragen, was nicht mitgehen will, und die Dinge finden, ehe sie verloren sind. Sie ließen sich gerade unter dem Baum nieder, auf dem Frieder und Katherlieschen saßen, machten sich ein Feuer an und wollten ihre Beute teilen. Der Frieder stieg von der andern Seite herab und sammelte Steine, stieg damit wieder hinauf und wollte die Diebe totwerfen. Die Steine aber trafen nicht, und die Spitzbuben riefen »es ist bald Morgen, der Wind schüttelt die Tannäpfel herunter.« Katherlieschen hatte die Türe noch immer auf der Schulter, und weil sie so schwer drückte, dachte es, die Hutzeln wären schuld, und sprach »Friederchen, ich muß die Hutzeln hinabwerfen.« »Nein, Katherlieschen, jetzt nicht,« antwortete er, »sie könnten uns verraten.« »Ach, Friederchen, ich muß, sie drücken mich gar zu sehr.« »Nun so tus, ins Henkers Namen!« Da rollten die Hutzeln zwischen den Ästen herab, und die Kerle unten sprachen »die Vögel misten.« Eine Weile danach, weil die Türe noch immer drückte, sprach Katherlieschen »ach, Friederchen, ich muß den Essig ausschütten.« »Nein, Katherlieschen, das darfst du nicht, es könnte uns verraten.« »Ach, Friederchen, ich muß, er drückt mich gar zu sehr.« »Nun so tus ins Henkers Namen!« Da schüttete es den Essig aus, daß er die Kerle bespritzte. Sie sprachen untereinander »der Tau tröpfelt schon herunter.« Endlich dachte Katherlieschen »sollte es wohl die Türe sein, was mich so drückt?« und sprach »Friederchen, ich muß die Türe hinabwerfen.« »Nein, Katherlieschen, jetzt nicht, sie könnte uns verraten.« »Ach, Friederchen, ich muß, sie drückt mich gar zu sehr.« »Nein, Katherlieschen, halt sie ja fest.« »Ach, Friederchen, ich laß sie fallen.« »Ei,« antwortete Frieder ärgerlich, »so laß sie fallen ins Teufels Namen!« Da fiel sie herunter mit starkem Gepolter, und die Kerle unten riefen »der Teufel kommt vom Baum herab,« rissen aus und ließen alles im Stich. Frühmorgens, wie die zwei herunterkamen, fanden sie all ihr Gold wieder und trugens heim.

Als sie wieder zu Haus waren, sprach der Frieder »Katherlieschen, nun mußt du aber auch fleißig sein und arbeiten.« »Ja, Friederchen, wills schon tun, will ins Feld gehen, Frucht schneiden.« Als Katherlieschen im Feld war, sprachs mit sich selber »eß ich, eh ich schneid, oder schlaf ich, eh ich schneid? hei, ich will ehr essen!« Da aß Katherlieschen und ward überm Essen schläfrig, und fing an zu schneiden und schnitt halb träumend alle seine Kleider entzwei, Schürze, Rock und Hemd. Wie Katherlieschen nach langem Schlaf wieder erwachte, stand es halb nackigt da und sprach zu sich selber »bin ichs, oder bin ichs nicht? ach, ich bins nicht!« Unterdessen wards Nacht, da lief Katherlieschen ins Dorf hinein, klopfte an ihres Mannes Fenster und rief »Friederchen?« »Was ist denn?« »Möcht gern wissen, ob Katherlieschen drinnen ist.« »Ja, ja,« antwortete der Frieder, »es wird wohl drin liegen und schlafen.« Sprach sie »gut, dann bin ich gewiß schon zu Haus,« und lief fort.

Draußen fand Katherlieschen Spitzbuben, die wollten stehlen. Da ging es bei sie und sprach »ich will euch helfen stehlen.« Die Spitzbuben meinten, es wüßte die Gelegenheit des Orts, und warens zufrieden. Katherlieschen ging vor die Häuser und rief »Leute, habt ihr was? wir wollen stehlen.« Dachten die Spitzbuben »das wird gut werden,« und wünschten, sie wären Katherlieschen wieder los. Da sprachen sie zu ihm »vorm Dorfe hat der Pfarrer Rüben auf dem Feld, geh hin und rupf uns Rüben.« Katherlieschen ging hin aufs Land und fing an zu rupfen, war aber so faul und hob sich nicht in die Höhe. Da kam ein Mann vorbei, sahs und stand still und dachte, das wäre der Teufel, der so in den Rüben wühlte. Lief fort ins Dorf zum Pfarrer und sprach »Herr Pfarrer, in Eurem Rübenland ist der Teufel und rupft.« »Ach Gott,« antwortete der Pfarrer, »ich habe einen lahmen Fuß, ich kann nicht hinaus und ihn wegbannen.« Sprach der Mann »so will ich Euch hockeln,« und hockelte ihn hinaus. Und als sie bei das Land kamen, machte sich das Katherlieschen auf und reckte sich in die Höhe. »Ach, der Teufel!« rief der Pfarrer, und beide eilten fort, und der Pfarrer konnte vor großer Angst mit seinem lahmen Fuße gerader laufen als der Mann, der ihn gehockt hatte, mit seinen gesunden Beinen.

60. Die zwei Brüder.

Es waren einmal zwei Brüder, ein reicher und ein armer. Der reiche war ein Goldschmied und bös von Herzen: der arme nährte sich davon, daß er Besen band, und war gut und redlich. Der arme hatte zwei Kinder, das waren Zwillingsbrüder und sich so ähnlich wie ein Tropfen Wasser dem andern. Die zwei Knaben gingen in des Reichen Haus ab und zu, und erhielten von dem Abfall manchmal etwas zu essen. Es trug sich zu, daß der arme Mann, als er in den Wald ging, Reisig zu holen, einen Vogel sah, der ganz golden war und so schön, wie ihm noch niemals einer vor Augen gekommen war. Da hob er ein Steinchen auf, warf nach ihm und traf ihn auch glücklich: es fiel aber nur eine goldene Feder herab, und der Vogel flog fort. Der Mann nahm die Feder und brachte sie seinem Bruder, der sah sie an und sprach »es ist eitel Gold,« und gab ihm viel Geld dafür. Am andern Tag stieg der Mann auf einen Birkenbaum und wollte ein paar Äste abhauen: da flog derselbe Vogel heraus, und als der Mann nachsuchte, fand er ein Nest, und ein Ei lag darin, das war von Gold. Er nahm das Ei mit heim und brachte es seinem Bruder, der sprach wiederum »es ist eitel Gold,« und gab ihm, was es wert war. Zuletzt sagte der Goldschmied »den Vogel selber möcht ich wohl haben.« Der Arme ging zum drittenmal in den Wald und sah den Goldvogel wieder auf dem Baum sitzen: da nahm er einen Stein und warf ihn herunter und brachte ihn seinem Bruder, der gab ihm einen großen Haufen Gold dafür. »Nun kann ich mir forthelfen,« dachte er und ging zufrieden nach Haus.

Der Goldschmied war klug und listig und wußte wohl, was das für ein Vogel war. Er rief seine Frau und sprach »brat mir den Goldvogel und sorge, daß nichts davon wegkommt; ich habe Lust, ihn ganz allein zu essen.« Der Vogel war aber kein gewöhnlicher, sondern so wunderbarer Art, daß, wer Herz und Leber von ihm aß, jeden Morgen ein Goldstück unter seinem Kopfkissen fand. Die Frau machte den Vogel zurecht, steckte ihn an einen Spieß und ließ ihn braten. Nun geschah es, daß während er am Feuer stand und die Frau anderer Arbeiten wegen notwendig aus der Küche gehen mußte, die zwei Kinder des armen Besenbinders hereinliefen, sich vor den Spieß stellten und ihn ein paarmal herumdrehten. Und als da gerade zwei Stücklein aus dem Vogel in die Pfanne herabfielen, sprach der eine »die paar Bißchen wollen wir essen, ich bin so hungrig, es wirds ja niemand daran merken.« Da aßen sie beide die Stückchen auf; die Frau kam aber dazu, sah, daß sie etwas aßen, und sprach »was habt ihr gegessen?« »Ein paar Stückchen, die aus dem Vogel herausgefallen sind,« antworteten sie. »Das ist Herz und Leber gewesen,« sprach die Frau ganz erschrocken, und damit ihr Mann nichts vermißte und nicht böse ward, schlachtete sie geschwind ein Hähnchen, nahm Herz und Leber heraus und legte es zu dem Goldvogel. Als er gar war, trug sie ihn dem Goldschmied auf, der ihn ganz allein verzehrte und nichts übrig ließ. Am andern Morgen aber, als er unter sein Kopfkissen griff und dachte, das Goldstück hervorzuholen, war so wenig wie sonst eins zu finden.

Die beiden Kinder aber wußten nicht, was ihnen für ein Glück zuteil geworden war. Am andern Morgen, wie sie aufstanden, fiel etwas auf die Erde und klingelte, und als sie es aufhoben, da warens zwei Goldstücke. Sie brachten sie ihrem Vater, der wunderte sich und sprach »wie sollte das zugegangen sein?« Als sie aber am andern Morgen wieder zwei fanden, und so jeden Tag, da ging er zu seinem Bruder und erzählte ihm die seltsame Geschichte. Der Goldschmied merkte gleich, wie es gekommen war, und daß die Kinder Herz und Leber von dem Goldvogel gegessen hatten, und um sich zu rächen, und weil er neidisch und hartherzig war, sprach er zu dem Vater »deine Kinder sind mit dem Bösen im Spiel, nimm das Gold nicht, und dulde sie nicht länger in deinem Haus, denn er hat Macht über sie und kann dich selbst noch ins Verderben bringen.« Der Vater fürchtete den Bösen, und so schwer es ihm ankam, führte er doch die Zwillinge hinaus in den Wald und verließ sie da mit traurigem Herzen.

Nun liefen die zwei Kinder im Wald umher und suchten den Weg nach Haus, konnten ihn aber nicht finden, sondern verirrten sich immer weiter. Endlich begegneten sie einem Jäger, der fragte »wem gehört ihr, Kinder?« »Wir sind des armen Besenbinders Jungen,« antworteten sie und erzählten ihm, daß ihr Vater sie nicht länger im Hause hätte behalten wollen, weil alle Morgen ein Goldstück unter ihrem Kopfkissen läge. »Nun,« sagte der Jäger, »das ist gerade nichts Schlimmes, wenn ihr nur rechtschaffen dabei bleibt und euch nicht auf die faule Haut legt.« Der gute Mann, weil ihm die Kinder gefielen und er selbst keine hatte, so nahm er sie mit nach Haus und sprach »ich will euer Vater sein und euch großziehen.« Sie lernten da bei ihm die Jägerei, und das Goldstück, das ein jeder beim Aufstehen fand, das hob er ihnen auf, wenn sies in Zukunft nötig hätten.

Als sie herangewachsen waren, nahm sie ihr Pflegevater eines Tages mit in den Wald und sprach »heute sollt ihr euern Probeschuß tun, damit ich euch freisprechen und zu Jägern machen kann.« Sie gingen mit ihm auf den Anstand und warteten lange, aber es kam kein Wild. Der Jäger sah über sich und sah eine Kette von Schneegänsen in der Gestalt eines Dreiecks fliegen, da sagte er zu dem einen »nun schieß von jeder Ecke eine herab.« Der tats und vollbrachte damit seinen Probeschuß. Bald darauf kam noch eine Kette angeflogen und hatte die Gestalt der Ziffer Zwei: da hieß der Jäger den andern gleichfalls von jeder Ecke eine herunterholen, und dem gelang sein Probeschuß auch. Nun sagte der Pflegevater »ich spreche euch frei, ihr seid ausgelernte Jäger.« Darauf gingen die zwei Brüder zusammen in den Wald, ratschlagten miteinander und verabredeten etwas. Und als sie abends sich zum Essen niedergesetzt hatten, sagten sie zu ihrem Pflegevater »wir rühren die Speise nicht an und nehmen keinen Bissen, bevor Ihr uns eine Bitte gewährt habt.« Sprach er »was ist denn eure Bitte?« Sie antworteten »wir haben nun ausgelernt, wir müssen uns auch in der Welt versuchen, so erlaubt, daß wir fortziehen und wandern.« Da sprach der Alte mit Freuden »ihr redet wie brave Jäger, was ihr begehrt, ist mein eigener Wunsch gewesen; zieht aus, es wird euch wohl ergehen.« Darauf aßen und tranken sie fröhlich zusammen.

Als der bestimmte Tag kam, schenkte der Pflegevater jedem eine gute Büchse und einen Hund und ließ jeden von seinen gesparten Goldstücken nehmen, so viel er wollte. Darauf begleitete er sie ein Stück Wegs, und beim Abschied gab er ihnen noch ein blankes Messer und sprach »wann ihr euch einmal trennt, so stoßt dies Messer am Scheideweg in einen Baum, daran kann einer, wenn er zurückkommt, sehen, wie es seinem abwesenden Bruder ergangen ist, denn die Seite, nach welcher dieser ausgezogen ist, rostet, wann er stirbt: solange er aber lebt, bleibt sie blank.« Die zwei Brüder gingen immer weiter fort und kamen in einen Wald, so groß, daß sie unmöglich in einem Tag heraus konnten. Also blieben sie die Nacht darin und aßen, was sie in die Jägertasche gesteckt hatten; sie gingen aber auch noch den zweiten Tag und kamen nicht heraus. Da sie nichts zu essen hatten, so sprach der eine »wir müssen uns etwas schießen, sonst leiden wir Hunger,« lud seine Büchse und sah sich um. Und als ein alter Hase dahergelaufen kam, legte er an, aber der Hase rief

»lieber Jäger, laß mich leben,
ich will dir auch zwei Junge geben.«

Sprang auch gleich ins Gebüsch und brachte zwei Junge; die Tierlein spielten aber so munter und waren so artig, daß die Jäger es nicht übers Herz bringen konnten, sie zu töten. Sie behielten sie also bei sich, und die kleinen Hasen folgten ihnen auf dem Fuße nach. Bald darauf schlich ein Fuchs vorbei, den wollten sie niederschießen, aber der Fuchs rief

»lieber Jäger, laß mich leben,
ich will dir auch zwei Junge geben.«

Er brachte auch zwei Füchslein, und die Jäger mochten sie auch nicht töten, gaben sie den Hasen zur Gesellschaft, und sie folgten ihnen nach. Nicht lange, so schritt ein Wolf aus dem Dickicht, die Jäger legten auf ihn an, aber der Wolf rief

»lieber Jäger, laß mich leben,
ich will dir auch zwei Junge geben.«

Die zwei jungen Wölfe taten die Jäger zu den anderen Tieren, und sie folgten ihnen nach. Darauf kam ein Bär, der wollte gern noch länger herumtraben und rief
»lieber Jäger, laß mich leben,
ich will dir auch zwei Junge geben.«

Die zwei jungen Bären wurden zu den andern gesellt und waren ihrer schon acht. Endlich, wer kam? ein Löwe kam und schüttelte seine Mähnen. Aber die Jäger ließen sich nicht schrecken und zielten auf ihn: aber der

Löwe sprach gleichfalls

»lieber Jäger, laß mich leben,
ich will dir auch zwei Junge geben.«

Er holte auch seine Jungen herbei, und nun hatten die Jäger zwei Löwen, zwei Bären, zwei Wölfe, zwei Füchse und zwei Hasen, die ihnen nachzogen und dienten. Indessen war ihr Hunger damit nicht gestillt worden, da sprachen sie zu den Füchsen »hört, ihr Schleicher, schafft uns etwas zu essen, ihr seid ja listig und verschlagen.« Sie antworteten »nicht weit von hier liegt ein Dorf, wo wir schon manches Huhn geholt haben; den Weg dahin wollen wir euch zeigen.« Da gingen sie ins Dorf, kauften sich etwas zu essen und ließen auch ihren Tieren Futter geben, und zogen dann weiter. Die Füchse aber wußten guten Bescheid in der Gegend, wo die Hühnerhöfe waren, und konnten die Jäger überall zurechtweisen.

Nun zogen sie eine Weile herum, konnten aber keinen Dienst finden, wo sie zusammengeblieben wären, da sprachen sie »es geht nicht anders, wir müssen uns trennen.« Sie teilten die Tiere, so daß jeder einen Löwen, einen Bären, einen Wolf, einen Fuchs und einen Hasen bekam: dann nahmen sie Abschied, versprachen sich brüderliche Liebe bis in den Tod und stießen das Messer, das ihnen ihr Pflegevater mitgegeben, in einen Baum; worauf der eine nach Osten, der andere nach Westen zog.

Der jüngste aber kam mit seinen Tieren in eine Stadt, die war ganz mit schwarzem Flor überzogen. Er ging in ein Wirtshaus und fragte den Wirt, ob er nicht seine Tiere beherbergen könnte. Der Wirt gab ihnen einen Stall, wo in der Wand ein Loch war: da kroch der Hase hinaus und holte sich ein Kohlhaupt, und der Fuchs holte sich ein Huhn, und als er das gefressen hatte, auch den Hahn dazu; der Wolf aber, der Bär und der Löwe, weil sie zu groß waren, konnten nicht hinaus.

Da ließ sie der Wirt hinbringen, wo eben eine Kuh auf dem Rasen lag, daß sie sich satt fraßen. Und als der Jäger für seine Tiere gesorgt hatte, fragte er erst den Wirt, warum die Stadt so mit Trauerflor ausgehängt wäre. Sprach der Wirt »weil morgen unseres Königs einzige Tochter sterben wird.« Fragte der Jäger »ist sie sterbenskrank?« »Nein,« antwortete der Wirt, »sie ist frisch und gesund, aber sie muß doch sterben.« »Wie geht das zu?« fragte der Jäger. »Draußen vor der Stadt ist ein hoher Berg, darauf wohnt ein Drache, der muß alle Jahr eine reine Jungfrau haben, sonst verwüstet er das ganze Land. Nun sind schon alle Jungfrauen hingegeben, und ist niemand mehr übrig als die Königstochter, dennoch ist keine Gnade, sie muß ihm überliefert werden; und das soll morgen geschehen.« Sprach der Jäger »warum wird der Drache nicht getötet?« »Ach,« antwortete der Wirt, »so viele Ritter habens versucht, aber allesamt ihr Leben eingebüßt; der König hat dem, der den Drachen besiegt, seine Tochter zur Frau versprochen, und er soll auch nach seinem Tode das Reich erben.«

Der Jäger sagte dazu weiter nichts, aber am andern Morgen nahm er seine Tiere und stieg mit ihnen auf den Drachenberg. Da stand oben eine kleine

Kirche, und auf dem Altar standen drei gefüllte Becher, und dabei war die Schrift »wer die Becher austrinkt, wird der stärkste Mann auf Erden, und wird das Schwert führen, das vor der Türschwelle vergraben liegt.« Der Jäger trank da nicht, ging hinaus und suchte das Schwert in der Erde, vermochte aber nicht, es von der Stelle zu bewegen. Da ging er hin und trank die Becher aus und war nun stark genug, das Schwert aufzunehmen, und seine Hand konnte es ganz leicht führen. Als die Stunde kam, wo die Jungfrau dem Drachen sollte ausgeliefert werden, begleitete sie der König, der Marschall und die Hofleute hinaus. Sie sah von weitem den Jäger oben auf dem Drachenberg und meinte, der Drache stände da und erwartete sie, und wollte nicht hinaufgehen, endlich aber, weil die ganze Stadt sonst wäre verloren gewesen, mußte sie den schweren Gang tun. Der König und die Hofleute kehrten voll großer Trauer heim, des Königs Marschall aber sollte stehen bleiben und aus der Ferne alles mit ansehen.

Als die Königstochter oben auf den Berg kam, stand da nicht der Drache, sondern der junge Jäger, der sprach ihr Trost ein und sagte, er wollte sie retten, führte sie in die Kirche und verschloß sie darin. Gar nicht lange, so kam mit großem Gebraus der siebenköpfige Drache dahergefahren. Als er den Jäger erblickte, verwunderte er sich und sprach »was hast du hier auf dem Berge zu schaffen?« Der Jäger antwortete »ich will mit dir kämpfen.« Sprach der Drache »so mancher Rittersmann hat hier sein Leben gelassen, mit dir will ich auch fertig werden,« und atmete Feuer aus sieben Rachen. Das Feuer sollte das trockene Gras anzünden, und der Jäger sollte in der Glut und dem Dampf ersticken, aber die Tiere kamen herbeigelaufen und traten das Feuer aus. Da fuhr der Drache gegen den Jäger, aber er schwang sein Schwert, daß es in der Luft sang, und schlug ihm drei Köpfe ab. Da ward der Drache erst recht wütend, erhob sich in die Luft, spie die Feuerflammen über den Jäger aus und wollte sich auf ihn stürzen, aber der Jäger zückte nochmals sein Schwert und hieb ihm wieder drei Köpfe ab. Das Untier ward matt und sank nieder, und wollte doch wieder auf den Jäger los, aber er schlug ihm mit der letzten Kraft den Schweif ab, und weil er nicht mehr kämpfen konnte, rief er seine Tiere herbei, die zerrissen es in Stücke. Als der Kampf zu Ende war, schloß der Jäger die Kirche auf, und fand die Königstochter auf der Erde liegen, weil ihr die Sinne vor Angst und Schrecken während des Streites vergangen waren. Er trug sie heraus, und als sie wieder zu sich selbst kam und die Augen aufschlug, zeigte er ihr den zerrissenen Drachen und sagte ihr, daß sie nun erlöst wäre. Sie freute sich und sprach »nun wirst du mein liebster Gemahl werden, denn mein Vater hat mich demjenigen versprochen, der den Drachen tötet.« Darauf hing sie ihr Halsband von Korallen ab und verteilte es unter die Tiere, um sie zu belohnen, und der Löwe erhielt das goldene Schlößchen davon. Ihr Taschentuch aber, in dem ihr Name stand, schenkte sie dem Jäger, der ging hin und schnitt aus den sieben Drachenköpfen die Zungen aus, wickelte sie in das Tuch und verwahrte sie wohl.

Als das geschehen war, weil er von dem Feuer und dem Kampf so matt und müde war, sprach er zur Jungfrau »wir sind beide so matt und müde, wir wollen ein wenig schlafen.« Da sagte sie ja, und sie ließen sich auf die Erde nieder, und der Jäger sprach zu dem Löwen »du sollst wachen, damit uns niemand im Schlaf überfällt,« und beide schliefen ein. Der Löwe legte sich neben sie, um zu wachen, aber er war vom Kampf auch müde, daß er den Bären rief und sprach »lege dich neben mich, ich muß ein wenig schlafen, und wenn was kommt, so wecke mich auf.« Da legte sich der Bär neben ihn, aber er war auch müde und rief den Fuchs und sprach »lege dich neben mich, ich muß ein wenig schlafen, und wenn was kommt, so wecke mich auf.« Da legte sich der Wolf neben ihn, aber er war auch müde und rief den Fuchs und sprach »lege dich neben mich, ich muß ein wenig schlafen, und wenn was kommt, so wecke mich auf.« Da legte sich der Fuchs neben ihn, aber er war auch müde, rief den Hasen und sprach »lege dich neben mich, ich muß ein wenig schlafen, und wenn was kommt, so wecke mich auf.« Da setzte sich der Hase neben ihn, aber der arme Has war auch müde, und hatte niemand, den er zur Wache herbeirufen konnte, und schlief ein. Da schlief nun die Königstochter, der Jäger, der Löwe, der Bär, der Wolf, der Fuchs und der Has, und schliefen alle einen festen Schlaf.

Der Marschall aber, der von weitem hatte zuschauen sollen, als er den Drachen nicht mit der Jungfrau fortfliegen sah und alles auf dem Berg ruhig ward, nahm sich ein Herz und stieg hinauf. Da lag der Drache zerstückt und zerrissen auf der Erde, und nicht weit davon die Königstochter und ein Jäger mit seinen Tieren, die waren alle in tiefen Schlaf versunken. Und weil er bös und gottlos war, so nahm er sein Schwert und hieb dem Jäger das Haupt ab, und faßte die Jungfrau auf den Arm und trug sie den Berg hinab. Da erwachte sie und erschrak, aber der Marschall sprach »du bist in meinen Händen, du sollst sagen, daß ich es gewesen bin, der den Drachen getötet hat.« »Das kann ich nicht,« antwortete sie, »denn ein Jäger mit seinen Tieren hats getan.« Da zog er sein Schwert und drohte sie zu töten, wo sie ihm nicht gehorchte, und zwang sie damit, daß sie es versprach. Darauf brachte er sie vor den König, der sich vor Freude nicht zu lassen wußte, als er sein liebes Kind wieder lebend erblickte, das er von dem Untier zerrissen glaubte. Der Marschall sprach zu ihm »ich habe den Drachen getötet, und die Jungfrau und das ganze Reich befreit, darum fordere ich sie zur Gemahlin, so wie es zugesagt ist.« Der König fragte die Jungfrau »ist das wahr, was er spricht?« »Ach ja,« antwortete sie, »es muß wohl wahr sein: aber ich halte mir aus, daß erst über Jahr und Tag die Hochzeit gefeiert wird,« denn sie dachte in der Zeit etwas von ihrem lieben Jäger zu hören.

Auf dem Drachenberg aber lagen noch die Tiere neben ihrem toten Herrn und schliefen, da kam eine große Hummel und setzte sich dem Hasen auf die Nase, aber der Hase wischte sie mit der Pfote ab und schlief weiter. Die Hummel kam zum zweitenmal, aber der Hase wischte sie wieder ab und schlief fort. Da kam sie zum drittenmal und stach ihm in die Nase, daß der aufwachte. Sobald der Hase wach war, weckte er den Fuchs, und der Fuchs den Wolf, und der Wolf den Bär, und der Bär den Löwen. Und als der Löwe aufwachte und sah, daß die Jungfrau fort war und sein Herr tot, fing er an fürchterlich zu brüllen und rief: »wer hat das vollbracht? Bär, warum hast du mich nicht geweckt?« der Bär fragte den Wolf »warum hast du mich nicht geweckt?« und der Wolf den Fuchs »warum hast du mich nicht geweckt?« und der Fuchs den Hasen »warum hast du mich nicht geweckt?« Der arme Has wußte allein nichts zu antworten, und die Schuld blieb auf ihm hangen. Da wollten sie über ihn herfallen, aber er bat und sprach »bringt mich nicht um, ich will unsern Herrn wieder lebendig machen. Ich weiß einen Berg, da wächst eine Wurzel, wer die im Mund hat, der wird von aller Krankheit und allen Wunden geheilt. Aber der Berg liegt zweihundert Stunden von hier.« Sprach der Löwe »in vierundzwanzig Stunden mußt du hin- und hergelaufen sein und die Wurzel mitbringen.« Da sprang der Hase fort, und in vierundzwanzig Stunden war er zurück und brachte die Wurzel mit. Der Löwe setzte dem Jäger den Kopf wieder an, und der Hase steckte ihm die Wurzel in den Mund, alsbald fügte sich alles wieder zusammen, und das Herz schlug, und das Leben kehrte zurück. Da erwachte der Jäger und erschrak, als er die Jungfrau nicht mehr sah, und dachte »sie ist wohl fortgegangen, während ich schlief, um mich los zu werden.« Der Löwe hatte in der großen Eile seinem Herrn den Kopf verkehrt aufgesetzt, der aber merkte es nicht bei seinen traurigen Gedanken an die Königstochter: erst zu Mittag, als er etwas essen wollte, da sah er, daß ihm der Kopf nach dem Rücken zu stand, konnte es nicht begreifen und fragte die Tiere, was ihm im Schlaf widerfahren wäre. Da erzählte ihm der Löwe, daß sie auch alle aus Müdigkeit eingeschlafen wären, und beim Erwachen hätten sie ihn tot gefunden mit abgeschlagenem Haupte, der Hase hätte die Lebenswurzel geholt, er aber in der Eil den Kopf verkehrt gehalten; doch wollte er seinen Fehler wieder gutmachen. Dann riß er dem Jäger den Kopf wieder ab, drehte ihn herum, und der Hase heilte ihn mit der Wurzel fest.

Der Jäger aber war traurig, zog in der Welt herum und ließ seine Tiere vor den Leuten tanzen. Es trug sich zu, daß er gerade nach Verlauf eines Jahres wieder in dieselbe Stadt kam, wo er die Königstochter vom Drachen erlöst hatte, und die Stadt war diesmal ganz mit rotem Scharlach ausgehängt. Da sprach er zum Wirt »was will das sagen? vorm Jahr war die Stadt mit schwarzem Flor überzogen, was soll heute der rote Scharlach?« Der Wirt antwortete »vorm Jahr sollte unsers Königs Tochter dem Drachen ausgeliefert werden, aber der Marschall hat mit ihm gekämpft und ihn getötet, und da soll morgen ihre Vermählung gefeiert werden; darum war die Stadt damals mit schwarzem Flor zur Trauer, und ist heute mit rotem Scharlach zur Freude ausgehängt.«

Am andern Tag, wo die Hochzeit sein sollte, sprach der Jäger um Mittagszeit zum Wirt »glaubt er wohl, Herr Wirt, daß ich heut Brot von des Königs Tisch hier bei ihm essen will?« »Ja,« sprach der Wirt, »da wollt ich doch noch hundert Goldstücke dran setzen, daß das nicht wahr ist.« Der Jäger nahm die Wette an und setzte einen Beutel mit ebenso viel Goldstücken dagegen. Dann rief er den Hasen und sprach »geh hin, lieber Springer, und hol mir von dem Brot, das der König ißt.« Nun war das Häslein das geringste und konnte es keinem andern wieder auftragen, sondern mußte sich selbst auf die Beine machen. »Ei,« dachte es, »wann ich so allein durch die Straßen springe, da werden die Metzgerhunde hinter mir drein sein.« Wie es dachte, so geschah es auch, und die Hunde kamen hinter ihm drein und wollten ihm sein gutes Fell flicken. Es sprang aber, hast du nicht gesehen! und flüchtete sich in ein Schilderhaus, ohne daß es der Soldat gewahr wurde. Da kamen die Hunde und wollten es heraushaben, aber der Soldat verstand keinen Spaß und schlug mit dem Kolben drein, daß sie schreiend und heulend fortliefen. Als der Hase merkte, daß die Luft rein war, sprang er zum Schloß hinein und gerade zur Königstochter, setzte sich unter ihren Stuhl, und kratzte sie am Fuß. Da sagte sie »willst du fort!« und meinte, es wäre ihr Hund. Der Hase kratzte zum zweitenmal am Fuß, da sagte sie wieder »willst du fort!« und meinte, es wäre ihr Hund. Aber der Hase ließ sich nicht irre machen und kratzte zum drittenmal, da guckte sie herab, und erkannte den Hasen an seinem Halsband. Nun nahm sie ihn auf ihren Schoß, trug ihn in ihre Kammer und sprach »lieber Hase, was willst du?« Antwortete er »mein Herr, der den Drachen getötet hat, ist hier und schickt mich, ich soll um ein Brot bitten, wie es der König ißt.« Da war sie voll Freude, und ließ den Bäcker kommen und befahl ihm, ein Brot zu bringen, wie es der König aß. Sprach das Häslein »aber der Bäcker muß mirs auch hintragen, damit mir die Metzgerhunde nichts tun.« Der Bäcker trug es ihm bis an die Türe der Wirtsstube, da stellte sich der Hase auf die Hinterbeine, nahm alsbald das Brot in die Vorderpfoten und brachte es seinem Herrn. Da sprach der Jäger »sieht er, Herr Wirt, die hundert Goldstücke sind mein.« Der Wirt wunderte sich, aber der Jäger sagte weiter »ja, Herr Wirt, das Brot hätt ich, nun will ich aber auch von des Königs Braten essen!« Der Wirt sagte »das möcht ich sehen,« aber wetten wollte er nicht mehr. Rief der Jäger den Fuchs und sprach »mein Füchslein, geh hin und hol mir Braten, wie ihn der König ißt.« Der Rotfuchs wußte die Schliche besser, ging an den Ecken und durch die Winkel, ohne daß ihn ein Hund sah, setzte sich unter der Königstochter Stuhl, und kratzte an ihrem Fuß. Da sah sie herab und erkannte den Fuchs am Halsband, nahm ihn mit in ihre Kammer und sprach »lieber Fuchs, was willst du?« Antwortete er »mein Herr, der den Drachen getötet hat, ist hier, und schickt mich, ich soll bitten um einen Braten, wie ihn der König ißt.« Da ließ sie den Koch kommen, der mußte einen Braten, wie ihn der König aß, anrichten und dem Fuchs bis an die Türe tragen; da nahm ihm der Fuchs die Schüssel ab, wedelte mit seinem Schwanz erst die Fliegen weg, die sich auf den Braten gesetzt hatten, und brachte ihn dann seinem Herrn. »Sieht er, Herr Wirt,« sprach der Jäger, »Brot und Fleisch ist da, nun will ich auch Zugemüs essen, wie es der König ißt.« Da rief er den Wolf und sprach »lieber Wolf, geh hin und hol mir Zugemüs, wies der König ißt.« Da ging der Wolf geradezu ins Schloß, weil er sich vor niemand fürchtete, und als er in der Königstochter Zimmer kam, da zupfte er sie hinten am Kleid, daß sie sich umschauen mußte. Sie erkannte ihn am Halsband, und nahm ihn mit in ihre Kammer und sprach »lieber Wolf, was willst du?« Antwortete er »mein Herr, der den Drachen getötet hat, ist hier, ich soll bitten um ein Zugemüs, wie es der König ißt.« Da ließ sie den Koch kommen, der mußte ein Zugemüs bereiten, wie es der

König aß, und mußte es dem Wolf bis vor die Türe tragen, da nahm ihm der Wolf die Schüssel ab und brachte sie seinem Herrn. »Sieht er, Herr Wirt,« sprach der Jäger, »nun hab ich Brot, Fleisch und Zugemüs, aber ich will auch Zuckerwerk essen, wie es der König ißt.« Rief er den Bären und sprach »lieber Bär, du leckst doch gern etwas Süßes, geh hin und hol mir Zuckerwerk, wies der König ißt.« Da trabte der Bär nach dem Schlosse, und ging ihm jedermann aus dem Wege: als er aber zu der Wache kam, hielt sie die Flinten vor und wollte ihn nicht ins königliche Schloß lassen. Aber er hob sich in die Höhe und gab mit seinen Tatzen links und rechts ein paar Ohrfeigen, daß die ganze Wache zusammenfiel, und darauf ging er geradesweges zu der Königstochter, stellte sich hinter sie und brummte ein wenig. Da schaute sie rückwärts und erkannte den Bären, und hieß ihn mitgehen in ihre Kammer und sprach »lieber Bär, was willst du?« Antwortete er »mein Herr, der den Drachen getötet hat, ist hier, ich soll bitten um Zuckerwerk, wies der König ißt.« Da ließ sie den Zuckerbäcker kommen, der mußte Zuckerwerk backen, wies der König aß, und dem Bären vor die Türe tragen: da leckte der Bär erst die Zuckererbsen auf, die heruntergerollt waren, dann stellte er sich aufrecht, nahm die Schüssel und brachte sie seinem Herrn. »Sieht er, Herr Wirt,« sprach der Jäger, »nun habe ich Brot, Fleisch, Zugemüs und Zuckerwerk, aber ich will auch Wein trinken, wie ihn der König trinkt.« Er rief seinen Löwen herbei und sprach »lieber Löwe, du trinkst dir doch gerne einen Rausch, geh und hol mir Wein, wie ihn der König trinkt.« Da schritt der Löwe über die Straße, und die Leute liefen vor ihm, und als er an die Wache kam, wollte sie den Weg sperren, aber er brüllte nur einmal, so sprang alles fort. Nun ging der Löwe vor das königliche Zimmer und klopfte mit seinem Schweif an die Türe. Da kam die Königstochter heraus, und wäre fast über den Löwen erschrocken, aber sie erkannte ihn an dem goldenen Schloß von ihrem Halsbande, und hieß ihn mit in ihre Kammer gehen und sprach »lieber Löwe, was willst du?« Antwortete er »mein Herr, der den Drachen getötet hat, ist hier, ich soll bitten um Wein, wie ihn der König trinkt.« Da ließ sie den Mundschenk kommen, der sollte dem Löwen Wein geben, wie ihn der König tränke. Sprach der Löwe »ich will mitgehen und sehen, daß ich den rechten kriege.« Da ging er mit dem Mundschenk hinab, und als sie unten hinkamen, wollte ihm dieser von dem gewöhnlichen Wein zapfen, wie ihn des Königs Diener tranken, aber der Löwe sprach »halt! ich will den Wein erst versuchen,« zapfte sich ein halbes Maß und schluckte es auf einmal hinab. »Nein,« sagte er, »das ist nicht der rechte.« Der Mundschenk sah ihn schief an, ging aber und wollte ihm aus einem andern Faß geben, das für des Königs Marschall war. Sprach der Löwe »halt! erst will ich den Wein versuchen,« zapfte sich ein halbes Maß und trank es, »der ist besser, aber noch nicht der rechte.« Da ward der Mundschenk bös und sprach »was so ein dummes Vieh vom Wein verstehen will!« Aber der Löwe gab ihm einen Schlag hinter die Ohren, daß er unsanft zur Erde fiel, und als er sich wieder aufgemacht hatte, führte er den Löwen ganz stillschweigens in einen kleinen besonderen Keller, wo des Königs Wein lag, von dem sonst kein Mensch zu trinken bekam. Der Löwe zapfte sich erst ein halbes Maß und versuchte den Wein, dann sprach er »das kann von dem rechten sein,« und hieß den Mundschenk sechs Flaschen füllen. Nun stiegen sie herauf, wie der Löwe aber aus dem Keller ins Freie kam, schwankte er hin und her und war ein wenig trunken, und der Mundschenk mußte ihm den Wein bis vor die Türe tragen, da nahm der Löwe den Henkelkorb in das Maul und brachte ihn seinem Herrn. Sprach der Jäger »sieht er, Herr Wirt, da hab ich Brot, Fleisch, Zugemüs, Zuckerwerk und Wein, wie es der König hat, nun will ich mit meinen Tieren Mahlzeit halten,« und setzte sich hin, aß und trank, und gab dem Hasen, dem Fuchs, dem Wolf, dem Bär und dem Löwen auch davon zu essen und zu trinken, und war guter Dinge, denn er sah, daß ihn die Königstochter noch lieb hatte. Und als er Mahlzeit gehalten hatte, sprach er »Herr Wirt, nun hab ich gegessen und getrunken, wie der König ißt und trinkt, jetzt will ich an des Königs Hof gehen und die Königs tochter, heiraten.« Fragte der Wirt »wie soll das zugehen, da sie schon einen Bräutigam hat und heute die Vermählung gefeiert wird?« Da zog der Jäger das Taschentuch heraus, das ihm die Königstochter auf dem Drachenberg gegeben hatte, und worin die sieben Zungen des Untiers eingewickelt waren, und sprach »dazu soll mir helfen, was ich da in der Hand halte.« Da sah der Wirt das Tuch an und sprach »wenn ich alles glaube, so glaube ich das nicht, und will wohl Haus und Hof dran setzen.« Der Jäger aber nahm einen Beutel mit tausend Goldstücken, stellte ihn auf den Tisch und sagte »das setze ich dagegen.«

Nun sprach der König an der königlichen Tafel zu seiner Tochter »was haben die wilden Tiere alle gewollt, die zu dir gekommen und in mein Schloß ein-und ausgegangen sind?« Da antwortete sie »ich darfs nicht sagen, aber schickt hin und laßt den Herrn dieser Tiere holen, so werdet Ihr wohl tun.« Der König schickte einen Diener ins Wirtshaus und ließ den fremden Mann einladen, und der Diener kam gerade, wie der Jäger mit dem Wirt gewettet hatte. Da sprach er »sieht er, Herr Wirt, da schickt der König einen Diener und läßt mich einladen, aber ich gehe so noch nicht.« Und zu dem Diener sagte er »ich lasse den Herrn König bitten, daß er mir königliche Kleider schickt, einen Wagen mit sechs Pferden und Diener, die mir aufwarten.« Als der König die Antwort hörte, sprach er zu seiner Tochter »was soll ich tun?« Sagte sie »laßt ihn holen, wie ers verlangt, so werdet Ihr wohl tun.« Da schickte der König königliche Kleider, einen Wagen mit sechs Pferden und Diener, die ihm aufwarten sollten. Als der Jäger sie kommen sah, sprach er »sieht er, Herr Wirt, nun werde ich abgeholt, wie ich es verlangt habe,« und zog die königlichen Kleider an, nahm das Tuch mit den Drachenzungen und fuhr zum König. Als ihn der König kommen sah, sprach er zu seiner Tochter »wie soll ich ihn empfangen?« Antwortete sie »geht ihm entgegen, so werdet Ihr wohl tun.« Da ging ihm der König entgegen und führte ihn herauf, und seine Tiere folgten ihm nach. Der König wies ihm einen Platz an neben sich und seiner Tochter, der Marschall saß auf der andern Seite, als Bräutigam, aber der kannte ihn nicht mehr. Nun wurden gerade die sieben Häupter des Drachen zur Schau aufgetragen, und der König sprach »die sieben Häupter hat der Marschall dem Drachen abgeschlagen, darum geb ich ihm heute meine Tochter zur Gemahlin.« Da stand der Jäger auf, öffnete die sieben Rachen und sprach »wo sind die sieben Zungen des Drachen?« Da erschrak der Marschall, ward bleich und wußte nicht, was er antworten sollte, endlich sagte er in der Angst »Drachen haben keine Zungen.« Sprach der Jäger »die Lügner sollten keine haben, aber die Drachenzungen sind das Wahrzeichen des Siegers,« und wickelte das Tuch auf, da lagen sie alle siebene darin, und dann steckte er jede Zunge in den Rachen, in den sie gehörte, und sie paßte genau. Darauf nahm er das Tuch, in welches der Name der Königstochter gestickt war, und zeigte es der Jungfrau und fragte sie, wem sie es gegeben hätte, da antwortete sie »dem, der den Drachen getötet hat.« Und dann rief er sein Getier, nahm jedem das Halsband und dem Löwen das goldene Schloß ab, und zeigte es der Jungfrau und fragte, wem es angehörte. Antwortete sie »das Halsband und das goldene Schloß waren mein, ich habe es unter die Tiere verteilt, die den Drachen besiegen halfen.« Da sprach der Jäger »als ich müde von dem Kampf geruht und geschlafen habe, da ist der Marschall gekommen und hat mir den Kopf abgehauen. Dann hat er die Königstochter fortgetragen und vorgegeben, er sei es gewesen, der den Drachen getötet habe; und daß er gelogen hat, beweise ich mit den Zungen, dem Tuch und dem Halsband.« Und dann erzählte er, wie ihn seine Tiere durch eine wunderbare Wurzel geheilt hätten, und daß er ein Jahr lang mit ihnen herumgezogen und endlich wieder hierher gekommen wäre, wo er den Betrug des Marschalls durch die Erzählung des Wirtes erfahren hätte. Da fragte der König seine Tochter »ist es wahr, daß dieser den Drachen getötet hat?« Da antwortete sie »ja, es ist wahr; jetzt darf ich die Schandtat des Marschalls offenbaren, weil sie ohne mein Zutun an den Tag gekommen ist, denn er hat mir das Versprechen zu schweigen abgezwungen. Darum aber habe ich mir ausgehalten, daß erst in Jahr und Tag die Hochzeit sollte gefeiert werden.« Da ließ der König zwölf Ratsherren rufen, die sollten über den Marschall Urteil sprechen, und die urteilten, daß er müßte von vier Ochsen zerrissen werden. Also ward der Marschall gerichtet, der König aber übergab seine Tochter dem Jäger und ernannte ihn zu seinem Statthalter im ganzen Reich. Die Hochzeit ward mit großen Freuden gefeiert, und der junge König ließ seinen Vater und Pflegevater holen und überhäufte sie mit Schätzen. Den Wirt vergaß er auch nicht, und ließ ihn kommen und sprach zu ihm »sieht er, Herr Wirt, die Königstochter habe ich geheiratet, und sein Haus und Hof sind mein.« Sprach der Wirt »ja, das wäre nach dem Rechten.« Der junge König aber sagte »es soll nach Gnaden gehen: Haus und Hof soll er behalten, und die tausend Goldstücke schenke ich ihm noch dazu.«

Nun waren der junge König und die junge Königin guter Dinge und lebten vergnügt zusammen. Er zog oft hinaus auf die Jagd, weil das seine Freude war, und die treuen Tiere mußten ihn begleiten. Es lag aber in der Nähe ein Wald, von dem es hieß, er wäre nicht geheuer, und wäre einer erst darin, so käme er nicht leicht wieder heraus. Der junge König hatte aber große Lust, darin zu jagen, und ließ dem alten König keine Ruhe, bis er es ihm erlaubte. Nun ritt er mit einer großen Begleitung aus, und als er zu dem

Wald kam, sah er eine schneeweiße Hirschkuh darin und sprach zu seinen Leuten »haltet hier, bis ich zurückkomme, ich will das schöne Wild jagen,« und ritt ihm nach in den Wald hinein, und nur seine Tiere folgten ihm. Die Leute hielten und warteten bis Abend, aber er kam nicht wieder: da ritten sie heim und erzählten der jungen Königin »der junge König ist im Zauberwald einer weißen Hirschkuh nachgejagt, und ist nicht wiedergekommen.« Da war sie in großer Besorgnis um ihn. Er war aber dem schönen Wild immer nachgeritten, und konnte es niemals einholen; wenn er meinte, es wäre schußrecht, so sah er es gleich wieder in weiter Ferne dahinspringen, und endlich verschwand es ganz. Nun merkte er, daß er tief in den Wald hineingeraten war, nahm sein Horn und blies, aber er bekam keine Antwort, denn seine Leute konntens nicht hören. Und da auch die Nacht einbrach, sah er, daß er diesen Tag nicht heim kommen könnte, stieg ab, machte sich bei einem Baum ein Feuer an und wollte dabei übernachten. Als er bei dem Feuer saß, und seine Tiere sich auch neben ihn gelegt hatten, deuchte ihn, als hörte er eine menschliche Stimme: er schaute umher, konnte aber nichts bemerken. Bald darauf hörte er wieder ein Ächzen wie von oben her, da blickte er in die Höhe und sah ein altes Weib auf dem Baum sitzen, das jammerte in einem fort »hu, hu, hu, was mich friert!« Sprach er »steig herab und wärme dich, wenn dich friert.« Sie aber sagte »nein, deine Tiere beißen mich.« Antwortete er »sie tun dir nichts, altes Mütterchen, komm nur herunter.« Sie war aber eine Hexe und sprach »ich will dir eine Rute von dem Baum herabwerfen, wenn du sie damit auf den Rücken schlägst, tun sie mir nichts.« Da warf sie ihm ein Rütlein herab, und er schlug sie damit, alsbald lagen sie still und waren in Stein verwandelt. Und als die Hexe vor den Tieren sicher war, sprang sie herunter und rührte auch ihn mit einer Rute an und verwandelte ihn in Stein. Darauf lachte sie und schleppte ihn und die Tiere in einen Graben, wo schon mehr solcher Steine lagen.

Als aber der junge König gar nicht wiederkam, ward die Angst und Sorge der Königin immer größer. Nun trug sich zu, daß gerade in dieser Zeit der andere Bruder, der bei der Trennung gen Osten gewandelt war, in das Königreich kam. Er hatte einen Dienst gesucht und keinen gefunden, war dann herumgezogen hin und her, und hatte seine Tiere tanzen lassen. Da fiel ihm ein, er wollte einmal nach dem Messer sehen, das sie bei ihrer Trennung in einen Baumstamm gestoßen hatten, um zu erfahren, wie es seinem Bruder ginge. Wie er dahin kam, war seines Bruders Seite halb verrostet und halb war sie noch blank. Da erschrak er und dachte »meinem Bruder muß ein großes Unglück zugestoßen sein, doch kann ich ihn vielleicht noch retten, denn die Hälfte des Messers ist noch blank.« Er zog mit seinen Tieren gen Westen, und als er in das Stadttor kam, trat ihm die Wache entgegen und fragte, ob sie ihn bei seiner Gemahlin melden sollte: die junge Königin wäre schon seit ein paar Tagen in großer Angst über sein Ausbleiben und fürchtete, er wäre im Zauberwald umgekommen. Die Wache nämlich glaubte nicht anders, als er wäre der junge König selbst, so ähnlich sah er ihm, und hatte auch die wilden Tiere hinter sich laufen. Da merkte er, daß von seinem Bruder die Rede war, und dachte »es ist das beste, ich gebe mich für ihn aus, so kann ich ihn wohl leichter erretten.« Also ließ er sich von der Wache ins Schloß begleiten, und ward mit großen Freuden empfangen. Die junge Königin meinte nicht anders, als es wäre ihr Gemahl, und fragte ihn, warum er so lange ausgeblieben wäre. Er antwortete »ich hatte mich in einem Walde verirrt und konnte mich nicht eher wieder herausfinden.« Abends ward er in das königliche Bette gebracht, aber er legte ein zweischneidiges Schwert zwischen sich und die junge Königin: sie wußte nicht, was das heißen sollte, getraute aber nicht zu fragen.

Da blieb er ein paar Tage und erforschte derweil alles, wie es mit dem Zauberwald beschaffen war, endlich sprach er »ich muß noch einmal dort jagen.« Der König und die junge Königin wollten es ihm ausreden, aber er bestand darauf und zog mit großer Begleitung hinaus. Als er in den Wald gekommen war, erging es ihm wie seinem Bruder, er sah eine weiße Hirschkuh und sprach zu seinen Leuten »bleibt hier und wartet, bis ich wiederkomme, ich will das schöne Wild jagen,« ritt in den Wald hinein, und seine Tiere liefen ihm nach. Aber er konnte die Hirschkuh nicht einholen, und geriet so tief in den Wald, daß er darin übernachten mußte. Und als er ein Feuer angemacht hatte, hörte er über sich ächzen »hu, hu, hu, wie mich friert!« Da schaute er hinauf und es saß dieselbe Hexe oben im Baum. Sprach er »wenn dich friert, so komm herab, altes Mütterchen, und wärme dich.« Antwortete sie »nein, deine Tiere beißen mich.« Er aber sprach »sie tun dir nichts.« Da rief sie »ich will dir eine Rute hinabwerfen, wenn du sie damit schlägst, so tun sie mir nichts.« Wie der Jäger das hörte, traute er der Alten nicht und sprach »meine Tiere schlag ich nicht, komm du herunter, oder ich hol dich.« Da rief sie »was willst du wohl? du tust mir noch nichts.« Er aber antwortete »kommst du nicht, so schieß ich dich herunter.« Sprach sie »schieß nur zu, vor deinen Kugeln fürchte ich mich nicht.« Da legte er an und schoß nach ihr, aber die Hexe war fest gegen alle Bleikugeln, lachte, daß es gellte, und rief »du sollst mich noch nicht treffen.« Der Jäger wußte Bescheid, riß sich drei silberne Knöpfe vom Rock und lud sie in die Büchse, denn dagegen war ihre Kunst umsonst, und als er losdrückte, stürzte sie gleich mit Geschrei herab. Da stellte er den Fuß auf sie und sprach »alte Hexe, wenn du nicht gleich gestehst, wo mein Bruder ist, so pack ich dich auf mit beiden Händen und werfe dich ins Feuer.« Sie war in großer Angst, bat um Gnade und sagte »er liegt mit seinen Tieren versteinert in einem Graben.« Da zwang er sie, mit hinzugehen, drohte ihr und sprach »alte Meerkatze, jetzt machst du meinen Bruder und alle Geschöpfe, die hier liegen, lebendig, oder du kommst ins Feuer.« Sie nahm eine Rute und rührte die Steine an, da wurde sein Bruder mit den Tieren wieder lebendig, und viele andere, Kaufleute, Handwerker, Hirten, standen auf, dankten für ihre Befreiung und zogen heim. Die Zwillingsbrüder aber, als sie sich wiedersahen, küßten sich und freuten sich von Herzen. Dann griffen sie die Hexe, banden sie und legten sie ins Feuer, und als sie verbrannt war, da tat sich der Wald von selbst auf, und war licht und hell, und man konnte das königliche Schloß auf drei Stunden Wegs sehen.

Nun gingen die zwei Brüder zusammen nach Haus und erzählten einander auf dem Weg ihre Schicksale. Und als der jüngste sagte, er wäre an des Königs Statt Herr im ganzen Lande, sprach der andere »das hab ich wohl gemerkt, denn als ich in die Stadt kam und für dich angesehen ward, da geschah mir alle königliche Ehre: die junge Königin hielt mich für ihren Gemahl, und ich mußte an ihrer Seite essen und in deinem Bett schlafen.« Wie das der andere hörte, ward er so eifersüchtig und zornig, daß er sein Schwert zog und seinem Bruder den Kopf abschlug. Als dieser aber tot dalag, und er sein rotes Blut fließen sah, reute es ihn gewaltig: »mein Bruder hat mich erlöst,« rief er aus, »und ich habe ihn dafür getötet!« und jammerte laut. Da kam sein Hase und erbot sich, von der Lebenswurzel zu holen, sprang fort und brachte sie noch zu rechter Zeit: und der Tote ward wieder ins Leben gebracht und merkte gar nichts von der Wunde.

Darauf zogen sie weiter, und der jüngste sprach »du siehst aus wie ich, hast königliche Kleider an wie ich, und die Tiere folgen dir nach wie mir: wir wollen zu den entgegengesetzten Toren eingehen und von zwei Seiten zugleich beim alten König anlangen.« Also trennten sie sich, und bei dem alten König kam zu gleicher Zeit die Wache von dem einen und dem andern Tore und meldete, der junge König mit den Tieren wäre von der Jagd angelangt. Sprach der König »es ist nicht möglich, die Tore liegen eine Stunde weit auseinander.« Indem aber kamen von zwei Seiten die beiden Brüder in den Schloßhof hin ein und stiegen beide herauf. Da sprach der König zu seiner Tochter »sag an, welcher ist dein Gemahl? es sieht einer aus wie der andere, ich kanns nicht wissen.« Sie war da in großer Angst und konnte es nicht sagen, endlich fiel ihr das Halsband ein, das sie den Tieren gegeben hatte, suchte und fand an dem einen Löwen ihr goldenes Schlößchen: da rief sie vergnügt »der, dem dieser Löwe nachfolgt, der ist mein rechter Gemahl.« Da lachte der junge König und sagte »ja, das ist der rechte,« und sie setzten sich zusammen zu Tisch, aßen und tranken, und waren fröhlich. Abends, als der junge König zu Bett ging, sprach seine Frau »warum hast du die vorigen Nächte immer ein zweischneidiges Schwert in unser Bett gelegt, ich habe geglaubt, du wolltest mich totschlagen.« Da erkannte er, wie treu sein Bruder gewesen war.

61. Das Bürle.

Es war ein Dorf, darin saßen lauter reiche Bauern und nur ein armer, den nannten sie das Bürle (Bäuerlein). Er hatte nicht einmal eine Kuh und noch weniger Geld, eine zu kaufen: und er und seine Frau hätten so gern eine gehabt. Einmal sprach er zu ihr »hör, ich habe einen guten Gedanken, da ist unser Gevatter Schreiner, der soll uns ein Kalb aus Holz machen und braun anstreichen, daß es wie ein anderes aussieht, mit der Zeit wirds wohl groß und gibt eine Kuh.« Der Frau gefiel das auch, und der Gevatter Schreiner zimmerte und hobelte das Kalb zurecht, strich es an, wie sichs gehörte, und machte es so, daß es den Kopf herabsenkte, als fräße es.

Wie die Kühe des andern Morgens ausgetrieben wurden, rief das Bürle den Hirt herein und sprach »seht, da hab ich ein Kälbchen, aber es ist noch klein und muß noch getragen werden.« Der Hirt sagte »schon gut,« nahms in seinen Arm, trugs hinaus auf die Weide und stellte es ins Gras. Das Kälblein blieb da immer stehen wie eins, das frißt, und der Hirt sprach »das wird bald selber laufen, guck einer, was es schon frißt!« Abends, als er die Herde wieder heimtreiben wollte, sprach er zu dem Kalb »kannst du da stehen und dich satt fressen, so kannst du auch auf deinen vier Beinen gehen, ich mag dich nicht wieder auf dem Arm heimschleppen.« Das Bürle stand aber vor der Haustüre und wartete auf sein Kälbchen: als nun der Kuhhirt durchs Dorf trieb und das Kälbchen fehlte, fragte er danach. Der Hirt antwortete »das steht noch immer draußen und frißt: es wollte nicht aufhören und nicht mitgehen.« Bürle aber sprach »ei was, ich muß mein Vieh wiederhaben.« Da gingen sie zusammen nach der Wiese zurück, aber einer hatte das Kalb gestohlen, und es war fort. Sprach der Hirt »es wird sich wohl verlaufen haben.« Das Bürle aber sagte »mir nicht so!« und führte den Hirten vor den Schultheiß, der verdammte ihn für seine Nachlässigkeit, daß er dem Bürle für das entkommene Kalb mußte eine Kuh geben.

Nun hatte das Bürle und seine Frau die lang gewünschte Kuh; sie freuten sich von Herzen, hatten aber kein Futter, und konnten ihr nichts zu fressen geben, also mußte sie bald geschlachtet werden. Das Fleisch salzten sie ein, und das Bürle ging in die Stadt und wollte das Fell dort verkaufen, um für den Erlös ein neues Kälbchen zu bestellen. Unterwegs kam er an eine Mühle, da saß ein Rabe mit gebrochenen Flügeln, den nahm er aus Erbarmen auf und wickelte ihn in das Fell. Weil aber das Wetter so schlecht ward, und Wind und Regen stürmte, konnte er nicht weiter, kehrte in die Mühle ein und bat um Herberge. Die Müllerin war allein zu Haus und sprach zu dem Bürle »da leg dich auf die Streu,« und gab ihm ein Käsebrot. Das Bürle aß und legte sich nieder, sein Fell neben sich, und die Frau dachte »der ist müde und schläft.« Indem kam der Pfaff, die Frau Müllerin empfing ihn wohl und sprach »mein Mann ist aus, da wollen wir uns traktieren.« Bürle horchte auf, und wies von traktieren hörte, ärgerte es sich, daß es mit Käsebrot hätte vorlieb nehmen müssen. Da trug die Frau herbei und trug viererlei auf, Braten, Salat, Kuchen und Wein.

Wie sie sich nun setzten und essen wollten, klopfte es draußen. Sprach die Frau »ach Gott, das ist mein Mann!« Geschwind versteckte sie den Braten in die Ofenkachel, den Wein unters Kopfkissen, den Salat aufs Bett, den Kuchen unters Bett und den Pfaff in den Schrank auf dem Hausehrn. Danach machte sie dem Mann auf und sprach »gottlob, daß du wieder hier bist! Das ist ein Wetter, als wenn die Welt untergehen sollte!« Der Müller sahs Bürle auf dem Streu liegen und fragte »was will der Kerl da?« »Ach,« sagte die Frau, »der arme Schelm kam in dem Sturm und Regen und bat um ein Obdach, da hab ich ihm ein Käsebrot gegeben und ihm die Streu angewiesen.« Sprach der Mann »ich habe nichts dagegen, aber schaff mir bald etwas zu essen.« Die Frau sagte »ich habe aber nichts als Käsebrot.« »Ich bin mit allem zu frieden,« antwortete der Mann, »meinetwegen mit Käsebrot,« sah das Bürle an und rief »komm und iß noch einmal mit.« Bürle ließ sich das nicht zweimal sagen, stand auf und aß mit. Danach sah der Müller das Fell auf der Erde liegen, in dem der Rabe steckte, und fragte »was hast du da?« Antwortete das Bürle »da hab ich einen Wahrsager drin.« »Kann der mir auch wahrsagen?« sprach der Müller.

»Warum nicht?« antwortete das Bürle, »er sagt aber nur vier Dinge, und das fünfte behält er bei sich.« Der Müller war neugierig und sprach »laß ihn einmal wahrsagen.« Da drückte Bürle dem Raben auf den Kopf, daß er quakte und »krr krr« machte. Sprach der Müller »was hat er gesagt?« Bürle antwortete »erstens hat er gesagt, es steckte Wein unterm Kopfkissen.« »Das wäre des Kuckucks!« rief der Müller, ging hin und fand den Wein. »Nun weiter,« sprach der Müller. Das Bürle ließ den Raben wieder quaksen und sprach »zweitens, hat er gesagt, wäre Braten in der Ofenkachel.« »Das wäre des Kuckucks!« rief der Müller, ging hin und fand den Braten. Bürle ließ den Raben noch mehr weissagen und sprach »drittens, hat er gesagt, wäre Salat auf dem Bett.« »Das wäre des Kuckucks!« rief der Müller, ging hin und fand den Salat. Endlich drückte das Bürle den Raben noch einmal, daß er knurrte, und sprach »viertens, hat er gesagt, wäre Kuchen unterm Bett.« »Das wäre des Kuckucks!« rief der Müller, ging hin und fand den Kuchen.

Nun setzten sich die zwei zusammen an den Tisch, die Müllerin aber kriegte Todesängste, legte sich ins Bett und nahm alle Schlüssel zu sich. Der Müller hätte auch gern das fünfte gewußt, aber Bürle sprach »erst wollen wir die vier andern Dinge ruhig essen, denn das fünfte ist etwas Schlimmes.« So aßen sie, und danach ward gehandelt, wieviel der Müller für die fünfte Wahrsagung geben sollte, bis sie um dreihundert Taler einig wurden. Da drückte das Bürle dem Raben noch einmal an den Kopf, daß er laut quakte. Fragte der Müller »was hat er gesagt?« Antwortete das Bürle »er hat gesagt, draußen im Schrank auf dem Hausehrn, da steckte der Teufel.« Sprach der Müller »der Teufel muß hinaus,« und sperrte die Haustür auf, die Frau aber mußte den Schlüssel hergeben, und Bürle schloß den Schrank auf. Da lief der Pfaff, was er konnte, hinaus, und der Müller sprach »ich habe den schwarzen Kerl mit meinen Augen gesehen: es war richtig.« Bürle aber machte sich am andern Morgen in der Dämmerung mit den dreihundert Talern aus dem Staub.

Daheim tat sich das Bürle allgemach auf, baute ein hübsches Haus, und die Bauern sprachen »das Bürle ist gewiß gewesen, wo der goldene Schnee fällt und man das Geld mit Scheffeln heim trägt.« Da ward Bürle vor den Schultheiß gefordert, es sollte sagen, woher sein Reichtum käme. Antwortete es »ich habe mein Kuhfell in der Stadt für dreihundert Taler verkauft.« Als die Bauern das hörten, wollten sie auch den großen Vorteil genießen, liefen heim, schlugen all ihre Kühe tot und zogen die Felle ab, um sie in der Stadt mit dem großen Gewinn zu verkaufen. Der Schultheiß sprach »meine Magd muß aber vorangehen.« Als diese zum Kaufmann in die Stadt kam, gab er ihr nicht mehr als drei Taler für ein Fell; und als die übrigen kamen, gab er ihnen nicht einmal soviel und sprach »was soll ich mit all den Häuten anfangen?«

Nun ärgerten sich die Bauern, daß sie vom Bürle hinters Licht geführt waren, wollten Rache an ihm nehmen und verklagten es wegen des Betrugs bei dem Schultheiß. Das unschuldige Bürle ward einstimmig zum Tod verurteilt, und sollte in einem durchlöcherten Faß ins Wasser gerollt werden. Bürle ward hinausgeführt und ein Geistlicher gebracht, der ihm eine Seelenmesse lesen sollte. Die andern mußten sich alle entfernen, und wie das Bürle den Geistlichen anblickte, so erkannte es den Pfaffen, der bei der Frau Müllerin gewesen war. Sprach es zu ihm »ich hab Euch aus dem Schrank befreit, befreit mich aus dem Faß.« Nun trieb gerade der Schäfer mit einer Herde Schafe daher, von dem das Bürle wußte, daß er längst gerne Schultheiß geworden wäre, da schrie es aus allen Kräften »nein, ich tus nicht! und wenns die ganze Welt haben wollte, nein, ich tus nicht!« Der Schäfer, der das hörte, kam herbei und fragte »was hast du vor? was willst du nicht tun?« Bürle sprach »da wollen sie mich zum Schultheiß machen, wenn ich mich in das Faß setze, aber ich tus nicht.« Der Schäfer sagte »wenns weiter nichts ist, um Schultheiß zu werden, wollte ich mich gleich in das Faß setzen.« Bürle sprach »willst du dich hineinsetzen, so wirst du auch Schultheiß.« Der Schäfer wars zufrieden, setzte sich hinein, und das Bürle schlug den Deckel drauf; dann nahm es die Herde des Schäfers für sich und trieb sie fort. Der Pfaff aber ging zur Gemeinde und sagte, die Seelenmesse wäre gelesen. Da kamen sie und rollten das Faß nach dem Wasser hin. Als das Faß zu rollen anfing, rief der Schäfer »ich will ja gerne Schultheiß werden.« Sie glaubten nicht anders, als das Bürle schrie so, und sprachen »das meinen wir auch, aber erst sollst du dich da unten umsehen,« und rollten das Faß ins Wasser hinein.

Darauf gingen die Bauern heim, und wie sie ins Dorf kamen, so kam auch das Bürle daher, trieb eine Herde Schafe ruhig ein und war ganz zufrieden. Da erstaunten die Bauern und sprachen »Bürle, wo kommst du her? kommst du aus dem Wasser?« »Freilich,« antwortete das Bürle, »ich bin versunken tief, tief, bis ich endlich auf den Grund kam: ich stieß dem Faß den Boden aus und kroch hervor, da waren schöne Wiesen, auf denen viele Lämmer weideten, davon bracht ich mir die Herde mit.« Sprachen die Bauern »sind noch mehr da?« »O ja,« sagte das Bürle, »mehr, als ihr brauchen könnt.« Da verabredeten sich die Bauern, daß sie sich auch Schafe holen wollten, jeder eine Herde; der Schultheiß aber sagte »ich komme zuerst.« Nun gingen sie zusammen zum Wasser, da standen gerade am blauen Himmel kleine Flockwolken, die man Lämmerchen nennt, die spiegelten sich im Wasser ab, da riefen die Bauern »wir sehen schon die Schafe unten auf dem Grund.« Der Schulz drängte sich hervor und sagte »nun will ich zuerst hinunter und mich umsehen; wenns gut ist, will ich euch rufen.« Da sprang er hinein, »plump« klang es im Wasser. Sie meinten nicht anders, als er riefe ihnen zu »kommt!« und der ganze Haufe stürzte in einer Hast hinter ihm drein. Da war das Dorf ausgestorben, und Bürle als der einzige Erbe ward ein reicher Mann.

62. Die Bienenkönigin.

Zwei Königssöhne gingen einmal auf Abenteuer und gerieten in ein wildes, wüstes Leben, so daß sie gar nicht wieder nach Haus kamen. Der jüngste, welcher der Dummling hieß, machte sich auf und suchte seine Brüder: aber wie er sie endlich fand, verspotteten sie ihn, daß er mit seiner Einfalt sich durch die Welt schlagen wollte, und sie zwei könnten nicht durchkommen, und wären doch viel klüger. Sie zogen alle drei miteinander fort und kamen an einen Ameisenhaufen. Die zwei ältesten wollten ihn aufwühlen und sehen, wie die kleinen Ameisen in der Angst herumkröchen und ihre Eier forttrügen, aber der Dummling sagte »laßt die Tiere in Frieden, ich leids nicht, daß ihr sie stört.« Da gingen sie weiter und kamen an einen See, auf dem schwammen viele viele Enten. Die zwei Brüder wollten ein paar fangen und braten, aber der Dummling ließ es nicht zu und sprach »laßt die Tiere in Frieden, ich leids nicht, daß ihr sie tötet.« Endlich kamen sie an ein Bienennest, darin war so viel Honig, daß er am Stamm herunterlief. Die zwei wollten Feuer unter den Baum legen und die Bienen ersticken, damit sie den Honig wegnehmen könnten. Der Dummling hielt sie aber wieder ab und sprach »laßt die Tiere in Frieden, ich leids nicht, daß ihr sie verbrennt.« Endlich kamen die drei Brüder in ein Schloß, wo in den Ställen lauter steinerne Pferde standen, auch war kein Mensch zu sehen, und sie gingen durch alle Säle, bis sie vor eine Tür ganz am Ende kamen, davor hingen drei Schlösser; es war aber mitten in der Türe ein Lädlein, dadurch konnte man in die Stube sehen. Da sahen sie ein graues Männchen, das an einem Tisch saß. Sie riefen es an, einmal, zweimal, aber es hörte nicht: endlich riefen sie zum drittenmal, da stand es auf, öffnete die Schlösser und kam heraus. Es sprach aber kein Wort, sondern führte sie zu einem reich besetzten Tisch; und als sie gegessen und getrunken hatten, brachte es einen jeglichen in sein eigenes Schlafgemach. Am andern Morgen kam das graue Männchen zu dem ältesten, winkte und leitete ihn zu einer steinernen Tafel, darauf standen drei Aufgaben geschrieben, wodurch das Schloß erlöst werden könnte. Die erste war, in dem Wald unter dem Moos lagen die Perlen der Königstochter, tausend an der Zahl, die mußten aufgesucht werden, und wenn vor Sonnenuntergang noch eine einzige fehlte, so ward der, welcher gesucht hatte, zu Stein. Der älteste ging hin und suchte den ganzen Tag, als aber der Tag zu Ende war, hatte er erst hundert gefunden; es geschah, wie auf der Tafel stand, er ward in Stein verwandelt. Am folgenden Tag unternahm der zweite Bruder das Abenteuer; es ging ihm aber nicht viel besser als dem ältesten, er fand nicht mehr als zweihundert Perlen und ward zu Stein. Endlich kam auch an den Dummling die Reihe, der suchte im Moos, es war aber so schwer, die Perlen zu finden, und ging so langsam. Da setzte er sich auf einen Stein und weinte. Und wie er so saß, kam der Ameisenkönig, dem er einmal das Leben erhalten hatte, mit fünftausend Ameisen, und es währte gar nicht lange, so hatten die kleinen Tiere die Perlen miteinander gefunden und auf einen Haufen getragen. Die zweite Aufgabe aber war, den Schlüssel zu der Schlafkammer der Königstochter aus der See zu holen. Wie der Dummling zur See kam, schwammen die Enten, die er einmal gerettet hatte, heran, tauchten unter und holten den Schlüssel aus der Tiefe. Die dritte Aufgabe aber war die schwerste, aus den drei schlafenden Töchtern des Königs sollte die jüngste und die liebste herausgesucht werden. Sie glichen sich aber vollkommen, und waren durch nichts verschieden, als daß sie, bevor sie eingeschlafen waren, verschiedene Süßigkeiten gegessen hatten, die älteste ein Stück Zucker, die zweite ein wenig Sirup, die jüngste einen Löffel voll Honig. Da kam die Bienenkönigin von den Bienen, die der Dummling vor dem Feuer geschützt hatte, und versuchte den Mund von allen dreien, zuletzt blieb sie auf dem Mund sitzen, der Honig gegessen hatte, und so erkannte der Königssohn die rechte. Da war der Zauber vorbei, alles war aus dem Schlaf erlöst, und wer von Stein war, erhielt seine menschliche Gestalt wieder. Und der Dummling vermählte sich mit der jüngsten und liebsten, und ward König nach ihres Vaters Tod; seine zwei Brüder aber erhielten die beiden andern Schwestern.

63. Die drei Federn.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte drei Söhne, davon waren zwei klug und gescheit, aber der dritte sprach nicht viel, war einfältig und hieß nur der Dummling. Als der König alt und schwach ward und an sein Ende dachte, wußte er nicht, welcher von seinen Söhnen nach ihm das Reich erben sollte. Da sprach er zu ihnen »zieht aus, und wer mir den feinsten Teppich bringt, der soll nach meinem Tod König sein.« Und damit es keinen Streit unter ihnen gab, führte er sie vor sein Schloß, blies drei Federn in die Luft und sprach »wie die fliegen, so sollt ihr ziehen.« Die eine Feder flog nach Osten, die andere nach Westen, die dritte flog aber geradeaus, und flog nicht weit, sondern fiel bald zur Erde. Nun ging der eine Bruder rechts, der andere ging links, und sie lachten den Dummling aus, der bei der dritten Feder, da, wo sie niedergefallen war, bleiben mußte.

Der Dummling setzte sich nieder und war traurig. Da bemerkte er auf einmal, daß neben der Feder eine Falltüre lag. Er hob sie in die Höhe, fand eine Treppe und stieg hinab. Da kam er vor eine andere Türe, klopfte an und hörte, wie es inwendig rief

»Jungfer grün und klein,
Hutzelbein,
Hutzelbeins Hündchen,
Hutzel hin und her,
laß geschwind sehen, wer draußen wär.«

Die Türe tat sich auf, und er sah eine große dicke Itsche (Kröte) sitzen und rings um sie eine Menge kleiner Itschen. Die dicke Itsche fragte, was sein Begehren wäre. Er antwortete »ich hätte gerne den schönsten und feinsten Teppich.« Da rief sie eine junge und sprach

»Jungfer grün und klein,
Hutzelbein,
Hutzelbeins Hündchen,
Hutzel hin und her,
bring mir die große Schachtel her.«

Die junge Itsche holte die Schachtel, und die dicke Itsche machte sie auf und gab dem Dummling einen Teppich daraus, so schön und so fein, wie oben auf der Erde keiner konnte gewebt werden. Da dankte er ihr und stieg wieder hinauf.

Die beiden andern hatten aber ihren jüngsten Bruder für so albern gehalten, daß sie glaubten, er würde gar nichts finden und aufbringen. »Was sollen wir uns mit Suchen groß Mühe geben,« sprachen sie, nahmen dem ersten besten Schäfersweib, das ihnen begegnete, die groben Tücher vom Leib und trugen sie dem König heim. Zu derselben Zeit kam auch der

Dummling zurück und brachte seinen schönen Teppich, und als der König den sah, staunte er und sprach »wenn es dem Recht nach gehen soll, so gehört dem jüngsten das Königreich.« Aber die zwei andern ließen dem Vater keine Ruhe und sprachen, unmöglich könnte der Dummling, dem es in allen Dingen an Verstand fehlte, König werden, und baten ihn, er möchte eine neue Bedingung machen. Da sagte der Vater »der soll das Reich erben, der mir den schönsten Ring bringt,« führte die drei Brüder hinaus, und blies drei Federn in die Luft, denen sie nachgehen sollten. Die zwei ältesten zogen wieder nach Osten und Westen, und für den Dummling flog die Feder geradeaus und fiel neben der Erdtüre nieder. Da stieg er wieder hinab zu der dicken Itsche und sagte ihr, daß er den schönsten Ring brauchte. Sie ließ sich gleich ihre große Schachtel holen, und gab ihm daraus einen Ring, der glänzte von Edelsteinen und war so schön, daß ihn kein Goldschmied auf der Erde hätte machen können. Die zwei ältesten lachten über den Dummling, der einen goldenen Ring suchen wollte, gaben sich gar keine Mühe, sondern schlugen einem alten Wagenring die Nägel aus und brachten ihn dem König. Als aber der Dummling seinen goldenen Ring vorzeigte, so sprach der Vater abermals »ihm gehört das Reich.« Die zwei ältesten ließen nicht ab, den König zu quälen, bis er noch eine dritte Bedingung machte und den Ausspruch tat, der sollte das Reich haben, der die schönste Frau heimbrächte. Die drei Federn blies er nochmals in die Luft, und sie flogen wie die vorigemale.

Da ging der Dummling ohne weiteres hinab zu der dicken Itsche und sprach »ich soll die schönste Frau heimbringen.« »Ei,« antwortete die Itsche, »die schönste Frau! die ist nicht gleich zur Hand, aber du sollst sie doch haben.« Sie gab ihm eine ausgehöhlte gelbe Rübe mit sechs Mäuschen bespannt. Da sprach der Dummling ganz traurig »was soll ich damit anfangen?« Die Itsche antwortete »setze nur eine von meinen kleinen Itschen hinein.« Da griff er auf Geratewohl eine aus dem Kreis und setzte sie in die gelbe Kutsche, aber kaum saß sie darin, so ward sie zu einem wunderschönen Fräulein, die Rübe zur Kutsche, und die sechs Mäuschen zu Pferden. Da küßte er sie, jagte mit den Pferden davon und brachte sie zu dem König. Seine Brüder kamen nach, die hatten sich gar keine Mühe gegeben, eine schöne Frau zu suchen, sondern die ersten besten Bauernweiber mitgenommen. Als der König sie erblickte, sprach er »dem jüngsten gehört das Reich nach meinem Tod.« Aber die zwei ältesten betäubten die Ohren des Königs aufs neue mit ihrem Geschrei »wir könnens nicht zugeben, daß der Dummling König wird,« und verlangten, der sollte den Vorzug haben, dessen Frau durch einen Ring springen könnte, der da mitten in dem Saal hing. Sie dachten »die Bauernweiber können das wohl, die sind stark genug, aber das zarte Fräulein springt sich tot.« Der alte König gab das auch noch zu. Da sprangen die zwei Bauernweiber, sprangen auch durch den Ring, waren aber so plump, daß sie fielen und ihre groben Arme und Beine entzweibrachen. Darauf sprang das schöne Fräulein, das der Dummling mitgebracht hatte, und sprang so leicht hindurch wie ein Reh, und aller Widerspruch mußte aufhören. Also erhielt er die Krone und hat lange in Weisheit geherrscht.

64. Die goldene Gans.

Es war ein Mann, der hatte drei Söhne, davon hieß der jüngste der Dummling, und wurde verachtet und verspottet, und bei jeder Gelegenheit zurückgesetzt. Es geschah, daß der älteste in den Wald gehen wollte, Holz hauen, und eh er ging, gab ihm noch seine Mutter einen schönen feinen Eierkuchen und eine Flasche Wein mit, damit er nicht Hunger und Durst erlitte. Als er in den Wald kam, begegnete ihm ein altes graues Männlein, das bot ihm einen guten Tag und sprach »gib mir doch ein Stück Kuchen aus deiner Tasche, und laß mich einen Schluck von deinem Wein trinken, ich bin so hungrig und durstig.« Der kluge Sohn aber antwortete »geb ich dir meinen Kuchen und meinen Wein, so hab ich selber nichts, pack dich deiner Wege,« ließ das Männlein stehen und ging fort. Als er nun anfing, einen Baum zu behauen, dauerte es nicht lange, so hieb er fehl, und die Axt fuhr ihm in den Arm, daß er mußte heimgehen und sich verbinden lassen. Das war aber von dem grauen Männchen gekommen.

Darauf ging der zweite Sohn in den Wald, und die Mutter gab ihm, wie dem ältesten, einen Eierkuchen und eine Flasche Wein. Dem begegnete gleichfalls das alte graue Männchen und hielt um ein Stückchen Kuchen und einen Trunk Wein an. Aber der zweite Sohn sprach auch ganz verständig »was ich dir gebe, das geht mir selber ab, pack dich deiner Wege,« ließ das Männlein stehen und ging fort. Die Strafe blieb nicht aus, als er ein paar Hiebe am Baum getan, hieb er sich ins Bein, daß er mußte nach Haus getragen werden.

Da sagte der Dummling »Vater, laß mich einmal hinausgehen und Holz hauen.« Antwortete der Vater »deine Brüder haben sich Schaden dabei getan, laß dich davon, du verstehst nichts davon.« Der Dummling aber bat so lange, bis er endlich sagte »geh nur hin, durch Schaden wirst du klug werden.« Die Mutter gab ihm einen Kuchen, der war mit Wasser in der Asche gebacken, und dazu eine Flasche saures Bier. Als er in den Wald kam, begegnete ihm gleichfalls das alte graue Männchen, grüßte ihn und sprach »gib mir ein Stück von deinem Kuchen und einen Trunk aus deiner Flasche, ich bin so hungrig und durstig.« Antwortete der Dummling »ich habe aber nur Aschenkuchen und saueres Bier, wenn dir das recht ist, so wollen wir uns setzen und essen.« Da setzten sie sich, und als der Dummling seinen Aschenkuchen herausholte, so wars ein feiner Eierkuchen, und das sauere Bier war ein guter Wein. Nun aßen und tranken sie, und danach sprach das Männlein »weil du ein gutes Herz hast und von dem Deinigen gerne mitteilst, so will ich dir Glück bescheren. Dort steht ein alter Baum, den hau ab, so wirst du in den Wurzeln etwas finden.« Darauf nahm das Männlein Abschied.

Der Dummling ging hin und hieb den Baum um, und wie er fiel, saß in den Wurzeln eine Gans, die hatte Federn von reinem Gold. Er hob sie heraus, nahm sie mit sich und ging in ein Wirtshaus, da wollte er übernachten. Der Wirt hatte aber drei Töchter, die sahen die Gans, waren neugierig, was das für ein wunderlicher Vogel wäre, und hätten gar gern eine von seinen goldenen Federn gehabt. Die älteste dachte »es wird sich schon eine Gelegenheit finden, wo ich mir eine Feder ausziehen kann,« und als der Dummling einmal hinausgegangen war, faßte sie die Gans beim Flügel, aber Finger und Hand blieben ihr daran festhängen. Bald danach kam die zweite und hatte keinen andern Gedanken, als sich eine goldene Feder zu holen: kaum aber hatte sie ihre Schwester angerührt, so blieb sie festhängen. Endlich kam auch die dritte in gleicher Absicht: da schrieen die andern »bleib weg, ums Himmelswillen, bleib weg.« Aber sie begriff nicht, warum sie wegbleiben sollte, dachte »sind die dabei, so kann ich auch dabei sein,« und sprang herzu, und wie sie ihre Schwester angerührt hatte, so blieb sie an ihr hängen. So mußten sie die Nacht bei der Gans zubringen.

Am andern Morgen nahm der Dummling die Gans in den Arm, ging fort und bekümmerte sich nicht um die drei Mädchen, die daranhingen. Sie mußten immer hinter ihm drein laufen, links und rechts, wies ihm in die Beine kam. Mitten auf dem Felde begegnete ihnen der Pfarrer, und als er den Aufzug sah, sprach er »schämt euch, ihr garstigen Mädchen, was lauft ihr dem jungen Bursch durchs Feld nach, schickt sich das?« Damit faßte er die jüngste an die Hand und wollte sie zurückziehen; wie er sie aber anrührte, blieb er gleichfalls hängen und mußte selber hinterdrein laufen. Nicht lange, so kam der Küster daher, und sah den Herrn Pfarrer, der drei Mädchen auf dem Fuß folgte. Da verwunderte er sich und rief »ei, Herr Pfarrer, wohinaus so geschwind? vergeßt nicht, daß wir heute noch eine Kindtaufe haben,« lief auf ihn zu und faßte ihn am Ärmel, blieb aber auch festhängen. Wie die fünf so hintereinander hertrabten, kamen zwei Bauern mit ihren Hacken vom Feld: da rief der Pfarrer sie an und bat, sie möchten ihn und den Küster losmachen. Kaum aber hatten sie den Küster angerührt, so blieben sie hängen, und waren ihrer nun siebene, die dem Dummling mit der Gans nachliefen.

Er kam darauf in eine Stadt, da herrschte ein König, der hatte eine Tochter, die war so ernsthaft, daß sie niemand zum Lachen bringen konnte. Darum hatte er ein Gesetz gegeben, wer sie könnte zum Lachen bringen, der sollte sie heiraten. Der Dummling, als er das hörte, ging mit seiner Gans und ihrem Anhang vor die Königstochter, und als diese die sieben Menschen immer hintereinander herlaufen sah, fing sie überlaut an zu lachen und wollte gar nicht wieder aufhören. Da verlangte sie der Dummling zur Braut, aber dem König gefiel der Schwiegersohn nicht, er machte allerlei Einwendungen und sagte, er müßte ihm erst einen Mann bringen, der einen Keller voll Wein austrinken könnte. Der Dummling dachte an das graue Männchen, das könnte ihm wohl helfen, ging hinaus in den Wald, und auf der Stelle, wo er den Baum abgehauen hatte, sah er einen Mann sitzen, der machte ein ganz betrübtes Gesicht. Der Dummling fragte, was er sich so sehr zu Herzen nähme. Da antwortete er »ich habe so großen Durst, und kann ihn nicht löschen, das kalte Wasser vertrage ich nicht, ein Faß Wein habe ich zwar ausgeleert, aber was ist ein Tropfen auf einem heißen Stein?« »Da kann ich dir helfen,« sagte der Dummling, »komm nur mit mir, du sollst satt haben.« Er führte ihn darauf in des Königs Keller, und der Mann machte sich über die großen Fässer, trank und trank, daß ihm die Hüften weh taten, und ehe ein Tag herum war, hatte er den ganzen Keller ausgetrunken. Der Dummling verlangte abermals seine Braut, der König aber ärgerte sich, daß ein schlechter Bursch, den jedermann einen Dummling nannte, seine Tochter davontragen sollte, und machte neue Bedingungen: er müßte erst einen Mann schaffen, der einen Berg voll Brot aufessen könnte. Der Dummling besann sich nicht lange, sondern ging gleich hinaus in den Wald, da saß auf demselben Platz ein Mann, der schnürte sich den Leib mit einem Riemen zusammen, machte ein grämliches Gesicht und sagte »ich habe einen ganzen Backofen voll Raspelbrot gegessen, aber was hilft das, wenn man so großen Hunger hat wie ich: mein Magen bleibt leer, und ich muß mich nur zuschnüren, wenn ich nicht Hungers sterben soll.« Der Dummling war froh darüber und sprach »mach dich auf und geh mit mir, du sollst dich satt essen.« Er führte ihn an den Hof des Königs, der hatte alles Mehl aus dem ganzen Reich zusammenfahren und einen ungeheuern Berg davon backen lassen: der Mann aber aus dem Walde stellte sich davor, fing an zu essen, und in einem Tag war der ganze Berg verschwunden. Der Dummling forderte zum drittenmal seine Braut, der König aber suchte noch einmal Ausflucht und verlangte ein Schiff, das zu Land und zu Wasser fahren könnte: »sowie du aber damit angesegelt kommst,« sagte er, »so sollst du gleich meine Tochter zur Gemahlin haben.« Der Dummling ging geradeswegs in den Wald, da saß das alte graue Männchen, dem er seinen Kuchen gegeben hatte, und sagte »ich habe für dich getrunken und gegessen, ich will dir auch das Schiff geben; das alles tu ich, weil du barmherzig gegen mich gewesen bist.« Da gab er ihm das Schiff, das zu Land und zu Wasser fuhr, und als der König das sah, konnte er ihm seine Tochter nicht länger vorenthalten. Die Hochzeit ward gefeiert, nach des Königs Tod erbte der Dummling das Reich, und lebte lange Zeit vergnügt mit seiner Gemahlin.

65. Allerleirauh.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte eine Frau mit goldenen Haaren, und sie war so schön, daß sich ihresgleichen nicht mehr auf Erden fand. Es geschah, daß sie krank lag, und als sie fühlte, daß sie bald sterben würde, rief sie den König und sprach »wenn du nach meinem Tode dich wieder vermählen willst, so nimm keine, die nicht ebenso schön ist, als ich bin, und die nicht solche goldene Haare hat, wie ich habe; das mußt du mir versprechen.« Nachdem es ihr der König versprochen hatte, tat sie die Augen zu und starb.

Der König war lange Zeit nicht zu trösten und dachte nicht daran, eine zweite Frau zu nehmen. Endlich sprachen seine Räte »es geht nicht anders, der König muß sich wieder vermählen, damit wir eine Königin haben.« Nun wurden Boten weit und breit umhergeschickt, eine Braut zu suchen, die an Schönheit der verstorbenen Königin ganz gleichkäme. Es war aber keine in der ganzen Welt zu finden, und wenn man sie auch gefunden hätte, so war doch keine da, die solche goldene Haare gehabt hätte. Also kamen die Boten unverrichteter Sache wieder heim.

Nun hatte der König eine Tochter, die war gerade so schön wie ihre verstorbene Mutter, und hatte auch solche goldene Haare. Als sie herangewachsen war, sah sie der König einmal an und sah, daß sie in allem seiner verstorbenen Gemahlin ähnlich war, und fühlte plötzlich eine heftige Liebe zu ihr. Da sprach er zu seinen Räten »ich will meine Tochter heiraten, denn sie ist das Ebenbild meiner verstorbenen Frau, und sonst kann ich doch keine Braut finden, die ihr gleicht.« Als die Räte das hörten, erschraken sie und sprachen »Gott hat verboten, daß der Vater seine Tochter heirate, aus der Sünde kann nichts Gutes entspringen, und das Reich wird mit ins Verderben gezogen.« Die Tochter erschrak noch mehr, als sie den Entschluß ihres Vaters vernahm, hoffte aber, ihn von seinem Vorhaben noch abzubringen. Da sagte sie zu ihm »eh ich Euren Wunsch erfülle, muß ich erst drei Kleider haben, eins so golden wie die Sonne, eins so silbern wie der Mond, und eins so glänzend wie die Sterne; ferner verlange ich einen Mantel von tausenderlei Pelz und Rauhwerk zusammengesetzt, und ein jedes Tier in Eurem Reich muß ein Stück von seiner Haut dazu geben.« Sie dachte aber »das anzuschaffen ist ganz unmöglich, und ich bringe damit meinen Vater von seinen bösen Gedanken ab.« Der König ließ aber nicht ab, und die geschicktesten Jungfrauen in seinem Reiche mußten die drei Kleider weben, eins so golden wie die Sonne, eins so silbern wie der Mond, und eins so glänzend wie die Sterne; und seine Jäger mußten alle Tiere im ganzen Reiche auffangen und ihnen ein Stück von ihrer Haut abziehen; daraus ward ein Mantel von tausenderlei Rauhwerk gemacht. Endlich, als alles fertig war, ließ der König den Mantel herbeiholen, breitete ihn vor ihr aus und sprach »morgen soll die Hochzeit sein.«

Als nun die Königstochter sah, daß keine Hoffnung mehr war, ihres Vaters Herz umzuwenden, so faßte sie den Entschluß zu entfliehen. In der Nacht, während alles schlief, stand sie auf und nahm von ihren

Kostbarkeiten dreierlei, einen goldenen Ring, ein goldenes Spinnrädchen und ein goldenes Haspelchen; die drei Kleider von Sonne, Mond und Sternen tat sie in eine Nußschale, zog den Mantel von allerlei Rauhwerk an und machte sich Gesicht und Hände mit Ruß schwarz. Dann befahl sie sich Gott und ging fort, und ging die ganze Nacht, bis sie in einen großen Wald kam. Und weil sie müde war, setzte sie sich in einen hohlen Baum und schlief ein.

Die Sonne ging auf, und sie schlief fort und schlief noch immer, als es schon hoher Tag war. Da trug es sich zu, daß der König, dem dieser Wald gehörte, darin jagte. Als seine Hunde zu dem Baum kamen, schnupperten sie, liefen rings herum und bellten. Sprach der König zu den Jägern »seht doch, was dort für ein Wild sich versteckt hat.« Die Jäger folgten dem Befehl, und als sie wiederkamen, sprachen sie »in dem hohlen Baum liegt ein wunderliches Tier, wie wir noch niemals eins gesehen haben: an seiner Haut ist tausenderlei Pelz; es liegt aber und schläft.« Sprach der König »seht zu, ob ihrs lebendig fangen könnt, dann bindets auf den Wagen und nehmts mit.« Als die Jäger das Mädchen anfaßten, erwachte es voll Schrecken und rief ihnen zu »ich bin ein armes Kind, von Vater und Mutter verlassen, erbarmt euch mein und nehmt mich mit.« Da sprachen sie »Allerleirauh, du bist gut für die Küche, komm nur mit, da kannst du die Asche zusammenkehren.« Also setzten sie es auf den Wagen und fuhren heim in das königliche Schloß. Dort wiesen sie ihm ein Ställchen an unter der Treppe, wo kein Tageslicht hinkam, und sagten »Rauhtierchen, da kannst du wohnen und schlafen.« Dann ward es in die Küche geschickt, da trug es Holz und Wasser, schürte das Feuer, rupfte das Federvieh, belas das Gemüs, kehrte die Asche und tat alle schlechte Arbeit.

Da lebte Allerleirauh lange Zeit recht armselig. Ach, du schöne Königstochter, wie solls mit dir noch werden! Es geschah aber einmal, daß ein Fest im Schloß gefeiert ward, da sprach sie zum Koch »darf ich ein wenig hinaufgehen und zusehen? ich will mich außen vor die Türe stellen.« Antwortete der Koch »ja, geh nur hin, aber in einer halben Stunde mußt du wieder hier sein und die Asche zusammentragen.« Da nahm sie ihr Öllämpchen, ging in ihr Ställchen, zog den Pelzrock aus und wusch sich den Ruß von dem Gesicht und den Händen ab, so daß ihre volle Schönheit wieder an den Tag kam. Dann machte sie die Nuß auf und holte ihr Kleid hervor, das wie die Sonne glänzte. Und wie das geschehen war, ging sie hinauf zum Fest, und alle traten ihr aus dem Weg, denn niemand kannte sie, und meinten nicht anders, als daß es eine Königstochter wäre. Der König aber kam ihr entgegen, reichte ihr die Hand und tanzte mit ihr, und dachte in seinem Herzen »so schön haben meine Augen noch keine gesehen.« Als der Tanz zu Ende war, verneigte sie sich, und wie sich der König umsah, war sie verschwunden, und niemand wußte, wohin. Die Wächter, die vor dem Schlosse standen, wurden gerufen und ausgefragt, aber niemand hatte sie erblickt.

Sie war aber in ihr Ställchen gelaufen, hatte geschwind ihr Kleid ausgezogen, Gesicht und Hände schwarz gemacht und den Pelzmantel umgetan, und war wieder Allerleirauh. Als sie nun in die Küche kam und an ihre Arbeit gehen und die Asche zusammenkehren wollte, sprach der Koch »laß das gut sein bis morgen und koche mir da die Suppe für den König, ich will auch einmal ein bißchen oben zugucken: aber laß mir kein Haar hineinfallen, sonst kriegst du in Zukunft nichts mehr zu essen.« Da ging der Koch fort, und Allerleirauh kochte die Suppe für den König, und kochte eine Brotsuppe, so gut es konnte, und wie sie fertig war, holte es in dem Ställchen seinen goldenen Ring und legte ihn in die Schüssel, in welche die Suppe angerichtet ward. Als der Tanz zu Ende war, ließ sich der König die Suppe bringen und aß sie, und sie schmeckte ihm so gut, daß er meinte, niemals eine bessere Suppe gegessen zu haben. Wie er aber auf den Grund kam, sah er da einen goldenen Ring liegen und konnte nicht begreifen, wie er dahin geraten war. Da befahl er, der Koch sollte vor ihn kommen. Der Koch erschrak, wie er den Befehl hörte, und sprach zu Allerleirauh »gewiß hast du ein Haar in die Suppe fallen lassen; wenns wahr ist, so kriegst du Schläge.« Als er vor den König kam, fragte dieser, wer die Suppe gekocht hätte. Antwortete der Koch »ich habe sie gekocht.« Der König aber sprach »das ist nicht wahr, denn sie war auf andere Art und viel besser gekocht als sonst.« Antwortete er »ich muß es gestehen, daß ich sie nicht gekocht habe, sondern das Rauhtierchen.« Sprach der König »geh und laß es heraufkommen.«

Als Allerleirauh kam, fragte der König »wer bist du?« »Ich bin ein armes Kind, das keinen Vater und Mutter mehr hat.« Fragte er weiter »wozu bist du in meinem Schloß?« Antwortete es »ich bin zu nichts gut, als daß mir die Stiefeln um den Kopf geworfen werden.« Fragte er weiter »wo hast du den Ring her, der in der Suppe war?« Antwortete es »von dem Ring weiß ich nichts.« Also konnte der König nichts erfahren und mußte es wieder fortschicken.

Über eine Zeit war wieder ein Fest, da bat Allerleirauh den Koch wie vorigesmal um Erlaubnis, zusehen zu dürfen. Antwortete er »ja, aber komm in einer halben Stunde wieder und koch dem König die Brotsuppe, die er so gerne ißt.« Da lief es in sein Ställchen, wusch sich geschwind und nahm aus der Nuß das Kleid, das so silbern war wie der Mond, und tat es an. Dann ging es hinauf, und glich einer Königstochter: und der König trat ihr entgegen und freute sich, daß er sie wiedersah, und weil eben der Tanz anhub, so tanzten sie zusammen. Als aber der Tanz zu Ende war, verschwand sie wieder so schnell, daß der König nicht bemerken konnte, wo sie hinging. Sie sprang aber in ihr Ställchen, und machte sich wieder zum Rauhtierchen, und ging in die Küche, die Brotsuppe zu kochen. Als der Koch oben war, holte es das goldene Spinnrad und tat es in die Schüssel, so daß die Suppe darüber angerichtet wurde. Danach ward sie dem König gebracht, der aß sie, und sie schmeckte ihm so gut wie das vorigemal, und ließ den Koch kommen, der mußte auch diesmal gestehen, daß Allerleirauh die Suppe gekocht hätte. Allerleirauh kam da wieder vor den König, aber sie antwortete, daß sie nur dazu da wäre, daß ihr die Stiefeln an den Kopf geworfen würden und daß sie von dem goldenen Spinnrädchen gar nichts wüßte.

Als der König zum drittenmal ein Fest anstellte, da ging es nicht anders als die vorigemale. Der Koch sprach zwar »du bist eine Hexe, Rauhtierchen, und tust immer etwas in die Suppe, davon sie so gut wird, und dem König besser schmeckt, als was ich koche;« doch weil es so bat, so ließ er es auf die bestimmte Zeit hingehen. Nun zog es ein Kleid an, das wie die Sterne glänzte, und trat damit in den Saal. Der König tanzte wieder mit der schönen Jungfrau und meinte, daß sie noch niemals so schön gewesen wäre. Und während er tanzte, steckte er ihr, ohne daß sie es merkte, einen goldenen Ring an den Finger, und hatte befohlen, daß der Tanz recht lang währen sollte. Wie er zu Ende war, wollte er sie an den Händen festhalten, aber sie riß sich los und sprang so geschwind unter die Leute, daß sie vor seinen Augen verschwand. Sie lief, was sie konnte, in ihr Ställchen unter der Treppe, weil sie aber zu lange und über eine halbe Stunde geblieben war, so konnte sie das schöne Kleid nicht ausziehen, sondern warf nur den Mantel von Pelz darüber, und in der Eile machte sie sich auch nicht ganz rußig, sondern ein Finger blieb weiß. Allerleirauh lief nun in die Küche, kochte dem König die Brotsuppe und legte, wie der Koch fort war, den goldenen Haspel hinein. Der König, als er den Haspel auf dem Grunde fand, ließ Allerleirauh rufen: da erblickte er den weißen Finger und sah den Ring, den er im Tanze ihr angesteckt hatte. Da ergriff er sie an der Hand und hielt sie fest, und als sie sich losmachen und fortspringen wollte, tat sich der Pelzmantel ein wenig auf, und das Sternenkleid schimmerte hervor. Der König faßte den Mantel und riß ihn ab. Da kamen die goldenen Haare hervor und sie stand da in voller Pracht und konnte sich nicht länger verbergen. Und als sie Ruß und Asche aus ihrem Gesicht gewischt hatte, da war sie schöner, als man noch jemand auf Erden gesehen hatte. Der König aber sprach »du bist meine liebe Braut, und wir scheiden nimmermehr voneinander.« Darauf ward die Hochzeit gefeiert, und sie lebten vergnügt bis an ihren Tod.

66. Häsichenbraut.

Et was ene Frou mit ener Toachter in änen schöhnen Goarten mit Koal; dahin kam än Häsichen und froaß zo Wenterszit allen Koal. Da seit de Frou zur Toachter »gäh in den Goarten und jags Häsichen.« Seits Mäken zum Häsichen »schu! schu! du Häsichen, frißt noch allen Koal.« Seits Häsichen »kumm, Mäken, und sett dich uf min Haosenschwänzeken und kumm mit in min Haosenhüttchen.« Mäken well nech. Am annern Tog kummts Häsichen weder und frißt den Koal, do seit de Frou zur Toachter »gäh in den Goarten und jags Häsichen.« Seits Mäken zum Häsichen »schu! schu! du Häsichen, frißt noch allen Koal.« Seits Häsichen »kumm, Mäken, sett dich uf min Haosenschwänzeken und kumm mit mer in min Haosenhüttchen.« Mäken well nech. Am dretten Tog kummts Häsichen weder und frißt den Koal. Do seit de Frou zur Tochter »gäh in den Goarten und jags Häsichen.« Seits Mäken »schu! schu! du Häsichen, frißt noch allen Koal.« Seits Häsichen »kumm, Mäken, sett dich uf min Haosenschwänzeken und kumm mit mer in min Haosenhüttchen.« Mäken sätzt sich uf den Haosenschwänzeken, do brachts Häsichen weit raus in sin Hüttchen und seit »nu koach Grinkoal und Hersche (Hirse), ick well de Hochtidlüd beten.« Do kamen alle Hochtidlüd zusam’m. (Wer waren dann die Hochzeitsleute? das kann ich dir sagen, wie mirs ein anderer erzählt hat: das waren alle Hasen, und die Krähe war als Pfarrer dabei, die Brautleute zu trauen, und der Fuchs als Küster, und der Altar war unterm Regenbogen.)

Mäken aober was trurig, da se so alleene was. Kummts Häsichen und seit »tu uf, tu uf, de Hochtidlüd senn fresch (frisch, lustig).« De Braut seit nischt und wint. Häsichen gäht fort, Häsichen kummt weder und seit »tu uf, tu uf, de Hochtidlüd senn hongrig.« De Braut seit weder nischt und wint. Häsichen gäht fort, Häsichen kummt und seit »tu uf, tu uf, de Hochtidlüd waorten.« Do seit de Braut nischt und Häsichen gäht fort, aober se macht ene Puppen von Stroah met eren Kleedern, und gibt er eenen Röhrleppel, und set se an den Kessel med Hersche, und gäht zor Motter. Häsichen kummt noch ämahl und seit »tu uf, tu uf,« und macht uf und smet de Puppe an Kopp, daß er de Hube abfällt.

Do set Häsichen, daß sine Braut nech es, und gäht fort und es trurig.

67. Die zwölf Jäger.

Es war einmal ein Königssohn, der hatte eine Braut und hatte sie sehr lieb. Als er nun bei ihr saß und ganz vergnügt war, da kam die Nachricht, daß sein Vater todkrank läge und ihn noch vor seinem Ende zu sehen verlangte. Da sprach er zu seiner Liebsten »ich muß nun fort und muß dich verlassen, da geb ich dir einen Ring zu meinem Andenken. Wann ich König bin, komm ich wieder und hol dich heim.« Da ritt er fort, und als er bei seinem Vater anlangte, war dieser sterbenskrank und dem Tode nah. Er sprach zu ihm »liebster Sohn, ich habe dich vor meinem Ende noch einmal sehen wollen, versprich mir, nach meinem Willen dich zu verheiraten,« und nannte ihm eine gewisse Königstochter, die sollte seine Gemahlin werden. Der Sohn war so betrübt, daß er sich gar nicht bedachte, sondern sprach »ja, lieber Vater, was Euer Wille ist, soll geschehen,« und darauf schloß der König die Augen und starb.

Als nun der Sohn zum König ausgerufen und die Trauerzeit verflossen war, mußte er das Versprechen halten, das er seinem Vater gegeben hatte, und ließ um die Königstochter werben, und sie ward ihm auch zugesagt. Das hörte seine erste Braut und grämte sich über die Untreue so sehr, daß sie fast verging. Da sprach ihr Vater zu ihr »liebstes Kind, warum bist du so traurig? was du dir wünschest, das sollst du haben.« Sie bedachte sich einen Augenblick, dann sprach sie »lieber Vater, ich wünsche mir elf Mädchen, von Angesicht, Gestalt und Wuchs mir völlig gleich.« Sprach der König »wenns möglich ist, soll dein Wunsch erfüllt werden,« und ließ in seinem ganzen Reich so lange suchen, bis elf Jungfrauen gefunden waren, seiner Tochter von Angesicht, Gestalt und Wuchs völlig gleich.

Als sie zu der Königstochter kamen, ließ diese zwölf Jägerkleider machen, eins wie das andere, und die elf Jungfrauen mußten die Jägerkleider anziehen, und sie selber zog das zwölfte an. Darauf nahm sie Abschied von ihrem Vater und ritt mit ihnen fort und ritt an den Hof ihres ehemaligen Bräutigams, den sie so sehr liebte. Da fragte sie an, ob er Jäger brauchte, und ob er sie nicht alle zusammen in seinen Dienst nehmen wollte. Der König sah sie an und erkannte sie nicht; weil es aber so schöne Leute waren, sprach er ja, er wollte sie gerne nehmen; und da waren sie die zwölf Jäger des Königs.

Der König aber hatte einen Löwen, das war ein wunderliches Tier, denn er wußte alles Verborgene und Heimliche. Es trug sich zu, daß er eines Abends zum König sprach »du meinst, du hättest da zwölf Jäger?« »Ja,« sagte der König, »zwölf Jäger sinds.« Sprach der Löwe weiter »du irrst dich, das sind zwölf Mädchen.« Antwortete der König »das ist nimmermehr wahr, wie willst du mir das beweisen?« »O, laß nur Erbsen in dein Vorzimmer streuen,« antwortete der Löwe, »da wirst dus gleich sehen. Männer haben einen festen Tritt, wenn die über Erbsen hingehen, regt sich keine, aber Mädchen, die trippeln und trappeln und schlurfeln, und die Erbsen rollen.« Dem König gefiel der Rat wohl, und er ließ die Erbsen streuen.

Es war aber ein Diener des Königs, der war den Jägern gut, und wie er hörte, daß sie sollten auf die Probe gestellt werden, ging er hin und erzählte ihnen alles wieder und sprach »der Löwe will dem König weismachen, ihr wärt Mädchen.« Da dankte ihm die Königstochter und sprach hernach zu ihren Jungfrauen »tut euch Gewalt an und tretet fest auf die Erbsen.« Als nun der König am andern Morgen die zwölf Jäger zu sich rufen ließ, und sie ins Vorzimmer kamen, wo die Erbsen lagen, so traten sie so fest darauf und hatten einen so sichern starken Gang, daß auch nicht eine rollte oder sich bewegte. Da gingen sie wieder fort, und der König sprach zum Löwen »du hast mich belogen, sie gehen ja wie Männer.« Antwortete der Löwe »sie habens gewußt, daß sie sollten auf die Probe gestellt werden, und haben sich Gewalt angetan. Laß nur einmal zwölf Spinnräder ins Vorzimmer bringen, so werden sie herzukommen und werden sich daran freuen, und das tut kein Mann.« Dem König gefiel der Rat, und er ließ die Spinnräder ins Vorzimmer stellen.

Der Diener aber, ders redlich mit den Jägern meinte, ging hin und entdeckte ihnen den Anschlag. Da sprach die Königstochter, als sie allein waren, zu ihren elf Mädchen »tut euch Gewalt an und blickt euch nicht um nach den Spinnrädern.« Wie nun der König am andern Morgen seine zwölf Jäger rufen ließ, so kamen sie durch das Vorzimmer und sahen die Spinnräder gar nicht an. Da sprach der König wiederum zum Löwen »du hast mich belogen, es sind Männer, denn sie haben die Spinnräder nicht angesehen.« Der Löwe antwortete »sie habens gewußt, daß sie sollten auf die Probe gestellt werden, und haben sich Gewalt angetan.« Der König aber wollte dem Löwen nicht mehr glauben.

Die zwölf Jäger folgten dem König beständig zur Jagd, und er hatte sie je länger je lieber. Nun geschah es, daß, als sie einmal auf der Jagd waren, Nachricht kam, die Braut des Königs wäre im Anzug. Wie die rechte Braut das hörte, tats ihr so weh, daß es ihr fast das Herz abstieß, und sie ohnmächtig auf die Erde fiel. Der König meinte, seinem lieben Jäger sei etwas begegnet, lief hinzu und wollte ihm helfen, und zog ihm den Handschuh aus. Da erblickte er den Ring, den er seiner ersten Braut gegeben, und als er ihr in das Gesicht sah, erkannte er sie. Da ward sein Herz so gerührt, daß er sie küßte, und als sie die Augen aufschlug, sprach er »du bist mein und ich bin dein, und kein Mensch auf der Welt kann das ändern.« Zu der andern Braut aber schickte er einen Boten und ließ sie bitten, in ihr Reich zurückzukehren, denn er habe schon eine Gemahlin, und wer einen alten Schlüssel wiedergefunden habe, brauche den neuen nicht. Darauf ward die Hochzeit gefeiert, und der Löwe kam wieder in Gnade, weil er doch die Wahrheit gesagt hatte.

68. De Gaudeif un sien Meester.

Jan wull sien Sohn en Handwerk lehren loeten, do gonk Jan in de Kerke un beddet to ussen Herrgott, wat üm wull selig (zuträglich) wöre: do steit de Köster achter dat Altar und seg »dat Gaudeifen, dat Gaudeifen (gaudieben).« Do geit Jan wier to sien Sohn, he möst dat Gaudeifen lehren, dat hedde em usse Herrgott segt. Geit he met sienen Sohn und sögt sik enen Mann, de dat Gaudeifen kann. Do goht se ene ganze Tied, kummt in so'n graut Wold, do steit so'n klein Hüsken mot so'ne olle Frau derin; seg Jan »wiet ji nich enen Mann, de dat Gaudeifen kann?« »Dat känn ji hier wull lehren,« seg de Frau »mien Sohn is en Meester dervon.« Do kührt (spricht) he met den Sohn, of he dat Gaudeifen auk recht könne? De Gaudeifsmeester seg »ick willt juen Sohn wull lehren, dann kummt övern Johr wier, wann ji dann juen Sohn noch kennt, dann wil ick gar kien Lehrgeld hebben, un kenne ji em nig, dann müge ji mi twe hunnert Dahler giewen.«

De Vader geit wier noh Hues, un de Sohn lehret gut hexen und gaudeifen. Asse dat Johr um is, geit de Vader alle un grient, wu he dat anfangen will, dat he sienen Sohn kennt. Asse he der so geit un grient, do kümmt em so'n klein Männken in de Möte (entgegen), dat seg »Mann, wat grien ji? ji sind je so bedröft.« »O,« seg Jan, »ick hebbe mienen Sohn vör en Johr bi en Gaudeifsmeester vermet, do sede de mig, ick söll övert Johr wier kummen, un wann ick dann mienen Sohn nich kennde, dann söll ick em twe hunnert Dahler giewen, und wann ick em kennde, dann höf ick nix to giewen; nu sin ick so bange, dat ick em nig kenne, un ick weet nig, wo ick dat Geld her kriegen sall.« Do seg dat Männken, he söll en Körsken Braut met niemen, un gohen unner den Kamin stohen: »do up den Hahlbaum steit en Körfken, do kiekt en Vügelken uht, dat is jue Sohn.«

Do geit Jan hen un schmit en Körsken Schwatbraut vör den Korf, do kümmt dat Vügelken daruht un blickt der up. »Holla, mien Sohn, bist du hier?« seg de Vader. Do freude sick de Sohn, dat he sienen Vader sog; awerst de Lehrmeester seg »dat het ju de Düvel in giewen, wu könn ji sus juen Sohn kennen?« »Vader, loet us gohn,« sede de Junge.

Do will de Vader met sienen Sohn nach Hues hengohn, unnerweges kümmt der ne Kutske anföhren, do segd de Sohn to sienen Vader »ick will mie in enen grauten Windhund maken, dann künn ji viel Geld met mie verdienen.« Do röpt de Heer uht de Kutske »Mann, will ji den Hund verkaupen?« »Jau,« sede de Vader. »Wu viel Geld will ji den vör hebben?« »Dertig Dahler.« »Je, Mann, dat is je viel, men wegen dat et so'n eislicke rohren Ruen (gewaltig schöne Rüde) is, so will ick en behollen.« De Heer nimmt en in siene Kutske, asse de en lück (wenig) wegföhrt is, da sprinkt de Hund uht den Wagen dör de Glase, und do was he kien Windhund mehr und was wier bie sienen Vader.

Do goht sie tosamen noh Hues. Den annern Dag is in dat neigste Dorb Markt, do seg de Junge to sienen Vader »ick will mie nu in en schön Perd maken, dann verkaupet mie; averst wann ji mie verkaupet, do möt ji mi den

Taum uttrecken, süs kann ick kien Mensk wier weren.« Do treckt de Vader met dat Perd noh’t Markt, do kümmt de Gaudeifsmeester un köft dat Perd för hunnert Dahler, un de Vader verget un treckt em den Taum nig uht. Do treckt de Mann met das Perd noh Hues, un doet et in en Stall. Asse de Magd öwer de Dehle geit, do segt dat Perd »tüh mie den Taum uht, tüh mie den Taum uht.« Do steiht de Magd un lustert »je, kannst du kühren?« Geit hen un tüht em den Taum uht, do werd dat Perd en Lüning (Sperling), un flügt öwer de Döre, un de Hexenmeester auk en Lüning und flügt em noh. Do kümmt se bie ene (zusammen), un bietet sick, averst de Meester verspielt un mäk sick in’t Water un is en Fisk. Do werd de Junge auk en Fisk, un se bietet sick wier, dat de Meester verspielen mot. Do mäk sick de Meester in en Hohn, un de Junge werd en Voß und bitt den Meester den Kopp af; do is he storwen un liegt daut bes up düssen Dag.

69. Jorinde und Joringel.

Es war einmal ein altes Schloß mitten in einem großen dicken Wald, darinnen wohnte eine alte Frau ganz allein, das war eine Erzzauberin. Am Tage machte sie sich zur Katze oder zur Nachteule, des Abends aber wurde sie wieder ordentlich wie ein Mensch gestaltet. Sie konnte das Wild und die Vögel herbeilocken, und dann schlachtete sies, kochte und briet es. Wenn jemand auf hundert Schritte dem Schloß nahekam, so mußte er stille stehen und konnte sich nicht von der Stelle bewegen, bis sie ihn lossprach: wenn aber eine keusche Jungfrau in diesen Kreis kam, so verwandelte sie dieselbe in einen Vogel, und sperrte sie dann in einen Korb ein, und trug den Korb in eine Kammer des Schlosses. Sie hatte wohl siebentausend solcher Körbe mit so raren Vögeln im Schlosse.

Nun war einmal eine Jungfrau, die hieß Jorinde; sie war schöner als alle anderen Mädchen. Die und dann ein gar schöner Jüngling, namens Joringel, hatten sich zusammen versprochen. Sie waren in den Brauttagen und sie hatten ihr größtes Vergnügen eins am andern. Damit sie nun einsmalen vertraut zusammen reden könnten, gingen sie in den Wald spazieren.

»Hüte dich,« sagte Joringel, »daß du nicht so nahe ans Schloß kommst.« Es war ein schöner Abend, die Sonne schien zwischen den Stämmen der Bäume hell ins dunkle Grün des Waldes, und die Turteltaube sang kläglich auf den alten Maibuchen.

Jorinde weinte zuweilen, setzte sich hin im Sonnenschein und klagte; Joringel klagte auch. Sie waren so bestürzt, als wenn sie hätten sterben sollen: sie sahen sich um, waren irre und wußten nicht, wohin sie nach Hause gehen sollten. Noch halb stand die Sonne über dem Berg und halb war sie unter. Joringel sah durchs Gebüsch und sah die alte Mauer des Schlosses nah bei sich; er erschrak und wurde todbang. Jorinde sang

»mein Vöglein mit dem Ringlein rot
singt Leide, Leide, Leide:
es singt dem Täubelein seinen Tod,
singt Leide, Lei – zucküth, zicküth, zicküth.«

Joringel sah nach Jorinde. Jorinde war in eine Nachtigall verwandelt, die sang »zicküth, zicküth.« Eine Nachteule mit glühenden Augen flog dreimal um sie herum und schrie dreimal »schu, hu, hu, hu.« Joringel konnte sich nicht regen: er stand da wie ein Stein, konnte nicht weinen, nicht reden, nicht Hand noch Fuß regen. Nun war die Sonne unter: die Eule flog in einen Strauch, und gleich darauf kam eine alte krumme Frau aus diesem hervor, gelb und mager: große rote Augen, krumme Nase, die mit der Spitze ans Kinn reichte. Sie murmelte, fing die Nachtigall und trug sie auf der Hand fort. Joringel konnte nichts sagen, nicht von der Stelle kommen; die Nachtigall war fort. Endlich kam das Weib wieder und sagte mit dumpfer Stimme »grüß dich, Zachiel, wenns Möndel ins Körbel scheint, bind los, Zachiel, zu guter Stund.« Da wurde Joringel los. Er fiel vor dem Weib auf die Knie und bat, sie möchte ihm seine Jorinde wiedergeben, aber sie sagte, er sollte sie nie wiederhaben, und ging fort. Er rief, er weinte, er jammerte, aber alles umsonst. »Uu, was soll mir geschehen?« Joringel ging fort und kam endlich in ein fremdes Dorf: da hütete er die Schafe lange Zeit. Oft ging er rund um das Schloß herum, aber nicht zu nahe dabei. Endlich träumte er einmal des Nachts, er fände eine blutrote Blume, in deren Mitte eine schöne große Perle war. Die Blume brach er ab, ging damit zum Schlosse: alles, was er mit der Blume berührte, ward von der Zauberei frei: auch träumte er, er hätte seine Jorinde dadurch wiederbekommen. Des Morgens, als er erwachte, fing er an, durch Berg und Tal zu suchen, ob er eine solche Blume fände: er suchte bis an den neunten Tag, da fand er die blutrote Blume am Morgen früh. In der Mitte war ein großer Tautropfe, so groß wie die schönste Perle. Diese Blume trug er Tag und Nacht bis zum Schloß. Wie er auf hundert Schritt nahe bis zum Schloß kam, da ward er nicht fest, sondern ging fort bis ans Tor. Joringel freute sich hoch, berührte die Pforte mit der Blume, und sie sprang auf. Er ging hinein, durch den Hof, horchte, wo er die vielen Vögel vernähme: endlich hörte ers. Er ging und fand den Saal, darauf war die Zauberin und fütterte die Vögel in den siebentausend Körben. Wie sie den Joringel sah, ward sie bös, sehr bös, schalt, spie Gift und Galle gegen ihn aus, aber sie konnte auf zwei Schritte nicht an ihn kommen. Er kehrte sich nicht an sie und ging, besah die Körbe mit den Vögeln; da waren aber viele hundert Nachtigallen, wie sollte er nun seine Jorinde wiederfinden? Indem er so zusah, merkte er, daß die Alte heimlich ein Körbchen mit einem Vogel wegnahm und damit nach der Türe ging. Flugs sprang er hinzu, berührte das Körbchen mit der Blume und auch das alte Weib: nun konnte sie nichts mehr zaubern, und Jorinde stand da, hatte ihn um den Hals gefaßt, so schön, wie sie ehemals war. Da machte er auch alle die andern Vögel wieder zu Jungfrauen, und da ging er mit seiner Jorinde nach Hause, und sie lebten lange vergnügt zusammen.

70. Die drei Glückskinder.

Ein Vater ließ einmal seine drei Söhne vor sich kommen und schenkte dem ersten einen Hahn, dem zweiten eine Sense, dem dritten eine Katze. »Ich bin schon alt,« sagte er, »und mein Tod ist nah, da wollte ich euch vor meinem Ende noch versorgen.

Geld hab ich nicht, und was ich euch jetzt gebe, scheint wenig wert, es kommt aber bloß darauf an, daß ihr es verständig anwendet: sucht euch nur ein Land, wo dergleichen Dinge noch unbekannt sind, so ist euer Glück gemacht.« Nach dem Tode des Vaters ging der älteste mit seinem Hahn aus, wo er aber hinkam, war der Hahn schon bekannt: in den Städten sah er ihn schon von weitem auf den Türmen sitzen und sich mit dem Wind umdrehen, in den Dörfern hörte er mehr als einen krähen, und niemand wollte sich über das Tier wundern, so daß es nicht das Ansehen hatte, als würde er sein Glück damit machen. Endlich aber geriets ihm doch, daß er auf eine Insel kam, wo die Leute nichts von einem Hahn wußten, sogar ihre Zeit nicht einzuteilen verstanden. Sie wußten wohl, wenns Morgen oder Abend war, aber nachts, wenn sies nicht verschliefen, wußte sich keiner aus der Zeit herauszufinden. »Seht,« sprach er, »was für ein stolzes Tier, es hat eine rubinrote Krone auf dem Kopf, und trägt Sporn wie ein Ritter: es ruft euch des Nachts dreimal zu bestimmter Zeit an, und wenns das letztemal ruft, so geht die Sonne bald auf. Wenns aber bei hellem Tag ruft, so richtet euch darauf ein, dann gibts gewiß anderes Wetter.« Den Leuten gefiel das wohl, sie schliefen eine ganze Nacht nicht und hörten mit großer Freude, wie der Hahn um zwei, vier und sechs Uhr laut und vernehmlich die Zeit abrief. Sie fragten ihn, ob das Tier nicht feil wäre, und wieviel er dafür verlangte. »Etwa so viel, als ein Esel Gold trägt,« antwortete er. »Ein Spottgeld für ein so kostbares Tier,« riefen sie insgesamt und gaben ihm gerne, was er gefordert hatte.

Als er mit dem Reichtum heim kam, verwunderten sich seine Brüder, und der zweite sprach »so will ich mich doch aufmachen und sehen, ob ich meine Sense auch so gut losschlagen kann.« Es hatte aber nicht das Ansehen danach, denn überall begegneten ihm Bauern und hatten so gut eine Sense auf der Schulter als er. Doch zuletzt glückte es ihm auch auf einer Insel, wo die Leute nichts von einer Sense wußten. Wenn dort das Korn reif war, so fuhren sie Kanonen vor den Feldern auf, und schossens herunter. Das war nun ein ungewisses Ding, mancher schoß darüber hinaus, ein anderer traf statt des Halms die Ähren und schoß sie fort, dabei ging viel zugrund, und obendrein gabs einen lästerlichen Lärm. Da stellte sich der Mann hin und mähte es so still und so geschwind nieder, daß die Leute Maul und Nase vor Verwunderung aufsperrten. Sie waren willig, ihm dafür zu geben, was er verlangte, und er bekam ein Pferd, dem war Gold aufgeladen, soviel es tragen konnte.

Nun wollte der dritte Bruder seine Katze auch an den rechten Mann bringen. Es ging ihm wie den andern, solange er auf dem festen Lande blieb, war nichts auszurichten, es gab allerorten Katzen, und waren ihrer so viel, daß die neugebornen Jungen meist im Wasser ersäuft wurden. Endlich ließ er sich auf eine Insel überschiffen, und es traf sich glücklicherweise, daß dort noch niemals eine gesehen war und doch die Mäuse so überhand genommen hatten, daß sie auf den Tischen und Bänken tanzten, der Hausherr mochte daheim sein oder nicht. Die Leute jammerten gewaltig über die Plage, der König selbst wußte sich in seinem Schlosse nicht dagegen zu retten: in allen Ecken pfiffen Mäuse und zernagten, was sie mit ihren Zähnen nur packen konnten. Da fing nun die Katze ihre Jagd an und hatte bald ein paar Säle gereinigt, und die Leute baten den König, das Wundertier für sein Reich zu kaufen. Der König gab gerne, was gefordert wurde, das war ein mit Gold beladener Maulesel, und der dritte Bruder kam mit den allergrößten Schätzen heim.

Die Katze machte sich in dem königlichen Schlosse mit den Mäusen eine rechte Lust und biß so viele tot, daß sie nicht mehr zu zählen waren. Endlich ward ihr von der Arbeit heiß und sie bekam Durst: da blieb sie stehen, drehte den Kopf in die Höhe und schrie »miau, miau.« Der König samt allen seinen Leuten, als sie das seltsame Geschrei vernahmen, erschraken und liefen in ihrer Angst sämtlich zum Schloß hinaus. Unten hielt der König Rat, was zu tun das beste wäre; zuletzt ward beschlossen, einen Herold an die Katze abzuschicken und sie aufzufordern, das Schloß zu verlassen, oder zu gewärtigen, daß Gewalt gegen sie gebraucht würde. Die Räte sagten »lieber wollen wir uns von den Mäusen plagen lassen, an das Übel sind wir gewöhnt, als unser Leben einem solchen Untier preisgeben.« Ein Edelknabe mußte hinaufgehen und die Katze fragen, ob sie das Schloß gutwillig räumen wollte. Die Katze aber, deren Durst nur noch größer geworden war, antwortete bloß »miau, miau.« Der Edelknabe verstand »durchaus, durchaus nicht,« und überbrachte dem König die Antwort. »Nun,« sprachen die Räte, »soll sie der Gewalt weichen.« Es wurden Kanonen aufgeführt und das Haus in Brand geschossen. Als das Feuer in den Saal kam, wo die Katze saß, sprang sie glücklich zum Fenster hinaus; die Belagerer hörten aber nicht eher auf, als bis das ganze Schloß in Grund und Boden geschossen war.

71. Sechse kommen durch die ganze Welt.

Es war einmal ein Mann, der verstand allerlei Künste: er diente im Krieg, und hielt sich brav und tapfer, aber als der Krieg zu Ende war, bekam er den Abschied und drei Heller Zehrgeld auf den Weg. »Wart,« sprach er, »das laß ich mir nicht gefallen, finde ich die rechten Leute, so soll mir der König noch die Schätze des ganzen Landes herausgeben.« Da ging er voll Zorn in den Wald, und sah einen darin stehen, der hatte sechs Bäume ausgerupft, als wärens Kornhalme. Sprach er zu ihm »willst du mein Diener sein und mit mir ziehen?« »Ja,« antwortete er, »aber erst will ich meiner Mutter das Wellchen Holz heimbringen,« und nahm einen von den Bäumen und wickelte ihn um die fünf andern, hob die Welle auf die Schulter und trug sie fort. Dann kam er wieder und ging mit seinem Herrn, der sprach »wir zwei sollten wohl durch die ganze Welt kommen.« Und als sie ein Weilchen gegangen waren, fanden sie einen Jäger, der lag auf den Knien, hatte die Büchse angelegt und zielte. Sprach der Herr zu ihm »Jäger, was willst du schießen?« Er antwortete »zwei Meilen von hier sitzt eine Fliege auf dem Ast eines Eichbaums, der will ich das linke Auge herausschießen.« »O, geh mit mir,« sprach der Mann, »wenn wir drei zusammen sind, sollten wir wohl durch die ganze Welt kommen.« Der Jäger war bereit und ging mit ihm, und sie kamen zu sieben Windmühlen, deren Flügel trieben ganz hastig herum, und ging doch links und rechts kein Wind, und bewegte sich kein Blättchen. Da sprach der Mann »ich weiß nicht, was die Windmühle treibt, es regt sich ja kein Lüftchen,« und ging mit seinen Dienern weiter, und als sie zwei Meilen fortgegangen waren, sahen sie einen auf einem Baum sitzen, der hielt das eine Nasenloch zu und blies aus dem andern. »Mein, was treibst du da oben?« fragte der Mann. Er antwortete »zwei Meilen von hier stehen sieben Windmühlen, seht, die blase ich an, daß sie laufen.« »O, geh mit mir,« sprach der Mann, »wenn wir vier zusammen sind, sollten wir wohl durch die ganze Welt kommen.« Da stieg der Bläser herab und ging mit, und über eine Zeit sahen sie einen, der stand da auf einem Bein, und hatte das andere abgeschnallt und neben sich gelegt. Da sprach der Herr »du hast dirs ja bequem gemacht zum Ausruhen.« »Ich bin ein Laufer,« antwortete er, »und damit ich nicht gar zu schnell springe, habe ich mir das eine Bein abgeschnallt; wenn ich mit zwei Beinen laufe, so gehts geschwinder, als ein Vogel fliegt.« »O, geh mit mir, wenn wir fünf zusammen sind, sollten wir wohl durch die ganze Welt kommen.« Da ging er mit, und gar nicht lang, so begegneten sie einem, der hatte ein Hütchen auf, hatte es aber ganz auf dem einen Ohr sitzen. Da sprach der Herr zu ihm »manierlich! manierlich! häng deinen Hut doch nicht auf ein Ohr, du siehst ja aus wie ein Hans Narr.« »Ich darfs nicht tun,« sprach der andere, »denn setz ich meinen Hut gerad, so kommt ein gewaltiger Frost, und die Vögel unter dem Himmel erfrieren und fallen tot zur Erde.« »O, geh mit mir,« sprach der Herr, »wenn wir sechs zusammen sind, sollten wir wohl durch die ganze Welt kommen.«

Nun gingen die sechse in eine Stadt, wo der König hatte bekanntmachen lassen, wer mit seiner Tochter in die Wette laufen wollte und den Sieg davontrüge, der sollte ihr Gemahl werden; wer aber verlöre, müßte auch seinen Kopf hergeben. Da meldete sich der Mann und sprach »ich will aber meinen Diener für mich laufen lassen.« Der König antwortete »dann mußt du auch noch dessen Leben zum Pfand setzen, also daß sein und dein Kopf für den Sieghaften.« Als das verabredet und festgemacht war, schnallte der Mann dem Laufer das andere Bein an und sprach zu ihm »nun sei hurtig und hilf, daß wir siegen.« Es war aber bestimmt, daß, wer am ersten Wasser aus einem weit abgelegenen Brunnen brächte, der sollte Sieger sein. Nun bekam der Laufer einen Krug und die Königstochter auch einen, und sie fingen zu gleicher Zeit zu laufen an: aber in einem Augenblick, als die Königstochter erst eine kleine Strecke fort war, konnte den Laufer schon kein Zuschauer mehr sehen, und es war nicht anders, als wäre der Wind vorbeigesaust. In kurzer Zeit langte er bei dem Brunnen an, schöpfte den Krug voll Wasser und kehrte wieder um. Mitten aber auf dem Heimweg überkam ihn eine Müdigkeit, da setzte er den Krug hin, legte sich nieder und schlief ein. Er hatte aber einen Pferdeschädel, der da auf der Erde lag, zum Kopfkissen gemacht, damit er hart läge und bald wieder erwachte. Indessen war die Königstochter, die auch gut laufen konnte, so gut es ein gewöhnlicher Mensch vermag, bei dem Brunnen angelangt, und eilte mit ihrem Krug voll Wasser zurück; und als sie den Laufer da liegen und schlafen sah, war sie froh und sprach »der Feind ist in meine Hände gegeben,« leerte seinen Krug aus und sprang weiter. Nun wäre alles verloren gewesen, wenn nicht zu gutem Glück der Jäger mit seinen scharfen Augen oben auf dem Schloß gestanden und alles mit angesehen hätte. Da sprach er »die Königstochter soll doch gegen uns nicht aufkommen,« lud seine Büchse und schoß so geschickt, daß er dem Laufer den Pferdeschädel unter dem Kopf wegschoß, ohne ihm weh zu tun. Da erwachte der Laufer, sprang in die Höhe und sah, daß sein Krug leer und die Königstochter schon weit voraus war. Aber er verlor den Mut nicht, lief mit dem Krug wieder zum Brunnen zurück, schöpfte aufs neue Wasser und war noch zehn Minuten eher als die Königstochter daheim. »Seht ihr,« sprach er, »jetzt hab ich erst die Beine aufgehoben, vorher wars gar kein Laufen zu nennen.«

Den König aber kränkte es, und seine Tochter noch mehr, daß sie so ein gemeiner abgedankter Soldat davontragen sollte; sie ratschlagten miteinander, wie sie ihn samt seinen Gesellen los würden. Da sprach der König zu ihr »ich habe ein Mittel gefunden, laß dir nicht bang sein, sie sollen nicht wieder heim kommen.« Und sprach zu ihnen »ihr sollt euch nun zusammen lustig machen, essen und trinken,« und führte sie zu einer Stube, die hatte einen Boden von Eisen, und die Türen waren auch von Eisen, und die Fenster waren mit eisernen Stäben verwahrt. In der Stube war eine Tafel mit köstlichen Speisen besetzt, da sprach der König zu ihnen »geht hinein und laßts euch wohl sein.« Und wie sie darinnen waren, ließ er die Türe verschließen und verriegeln. Dann ließ er den Koch kommen und befahl ihm, ein Feuer so lang unter die Stube zu machen, bis das Eisen glühend würde. Das tat der Koch, und es fing an und ward den sechsen in der Stube, während sie an der Tafel saßen, ganz warm, und sie meinten, das käme vom Essen; als aber die Hitze immer größer ward und sie hinaus wollten, Türe und Fenster aber verschlossen fanden, da merkten sie, daß der König Böses im Sinne gehabt hatte und sie ersticken wollte. »Es soll ihm aber nicht gelingen,« sprach der mit dem Hütchen, »ich will einen Frost kommen lassen, vor dem sich das Feuer schämen und verkriechen soll.« Da setzte er sein Hütchen gerade, und alsobald fiel ein Frost, daß alle Hitze verschwand und die Speisen auf den Schüsseln anfingen zu frieren. Als nun ein paar Stunden herum waren, und der König glaubte, sie wären in der Hitze verschmachtet, ließ er die Türe öffnen und wollte selbst nach ihnen sehen. Aber wie die Türe aufging, standen sie alle sechs da, frisch und gesund, und sagten, es wäre ihnen lieb, daß sie heraus könnten, sich zu wärmen, denn bei der großen Kälte in der Stube frören die Speisen in den Schüsseln fest. Da ging der König voll Zorn hinab zu dem Koch, schalt ihn und fragte, warum er nicht getan hätte, was ihm wäre befohlen worden. Der Koch aber antwortete »es ist Glut genug da, seht nur selbst.« Da sah der König, daß ein gewaltiges Feuer unter der Eisenstube brannte, und merkte, daß er den sechsen auf diese Weise nichts anhaben könnte.

Nun sann der König aufs neue, wie er der bösen Gäste los würde, ließ den Meister kommen und sprach »willst du Gold nehmen, und dein Recht auf meine Tochter aufgeben, so sollst du haben, soviel du willst.« »O ja, Herr König,« antwortete er, »gebt mir soviel, als mein Diener tragen kann, so verlange ich Eure Tochter nicht.« Das war der König zufrieden, und jener sprach weiter »so will ich in vierzehn Tagen kommen und es holen.« Darauf rief er alle Schneider aus dem ganzen Reich herbei, die mußten vierzehn Tage lang sitzen und einen Sack nähen. Und als er fertig war, mußte der Starke, welcher Bäume ausrupfen konnte, den Sack auf die Schulter nehmen und mit ihm zu dem König gehen. Da sprach der König »was ist das für ein gewaltiger Kerl, der den hausgroßen Ballen Leinwand auf der Schulter trägt?« erschrak und dachte »was wird der für Gold wegschleppen!« Da hieß er eine Tonne Gold herbringen, die mußten sechzehn der stärksten Männer tragen, aber der Starke packte sie mit einer Hand, steckte sie in den Sack und sprach »warum bringt ihr nicht gleich mehr, das deckt ja kaum den Boden.« Da ließ der König nach und nach seinen ganzen Schatz herbeitragen, den schob der Starke in den Sack hinein, und der Sack ward davon noch nicht zur Hälfte voll. »Schafft mehr herbei,« rief er, »die paar Brocken füllen nicht.« Da mußten noch siebentausend Wagen mit Gold in dem ganzen Reich zusammengefahren werden: die schob der Starke samt den vorgespannten Ochsen in seinen Sack. »Ich wills nicht lange besehen,« sprach er, »und nehmen, was kommt, damit der Sack nur voll wird.« Wie alles darin stak, ging doch noch viel hinein, da sprach er »ich will dem Ding nur ein Ende machen, man bindet wohl einmal einen Sack zu, wenn er auch noch nicht voll ist.« Dann huckte er ihn auf den Rücken und ging mit seinen Gesellen fort.

Als der König nun sah, wie der einzige Mann des ganzen Landes Reichtum forttrug, ward er zornig und ließ seine Reiterei aufsitzen, die sollten den sechsen nachjagen, und hatten Befehl, dem Starken den Sack wieder abzunehmen. Zwei Regimenter holten sie bald ein und riefen ihnen zu »ihr seid Gefangene, legt den Sack mit dem Gold nieder, oder ihr werdet zusammengehauen.« »Was sagt ihr?« sprach der Bläser, »wir wären Gefangene? eher sollt ihr sämtlich in der Luft herumtanzen,« hielt das eine Nasenloch zu und blies mit dem andern die beiden Regimenter an, da fuhren sie auseinander und in die blaue Luft über alle Berge weg, der eine hierhin, der andere dorthin. Ein Feldwebel rief um Gnade, er hätte neun Wunden und wäre ein braver Kerl, der den Schimpf nicht verdiente. Da ließ der Bläser ein wenig nach, so daß er ohne Schaden wieder herabkam, dann sprach er zu ihm »nun geh heim zum König und sag, er sollte nur noch mehr Reiterei schicken, ich wollte sie alle in die Luft blasen.« Der König, als er den Bescheid vernahm, sprach »laßt die Kerle gehen, die haben etwas an sich.« Da brachten die sechs den Reichtum heim, teilten ihn unter sich und lebten vergnügt bis an ihr Ende.

72. Der Wolf und der Mensch.

Der Fuchs erzählte einmal dem Wolf von der Stärke des Menschen, kein Tier könnte ihm widerstehen, und sie müßten List gebrauchen, um sich vor ihm zu erhalten. Da antwortete der Wolf »wenn ich nur einmal einen Menschen zu sehen bekäme, ich wollte doch auf ihn losgehen.« »Dazu kann ich dir helfen,« sprach der Fuchs, »komm nur morgen früh zu mir, so will ich dir einen zeigen.« Der Wolf stellte sich frühzeitig ein, und der Fuchs brachte ihn hinaus auf den Weg, den der Jäger alle Tage ging. Zuerst kam ein alter abgedankter Soldat. »Ist das ein Mensch?« fragte der Wolf. »Nein,« antwortete der Fuchs, »das ist einer gewesen.« Danach kam ein kleiner Knabe, der zur Schule wollte. »Ist das ein Mensch?« »Nein, das will erst einer werden.« Endlich kam der Jäger, die Doppelflinte auf dem Rücken und den Hirschfänger an der Seite. Sprach der Fuchs zum Wolf »siehst du, dort kommt ein Mensch, auf den mußt du losgehen, ich aber will mich fort in meine Höhle machen.« Der Wolf ging nun auf den Menschen los, der Jäger, als er ihn erblickte, sprach »es ist schade, daß ich keine Kugel geladen habe,« legte an und schoß dem Wolf das Schrot ins Gesicht. Der Wolf verzog das Gesicht gewaltig, doch ließ er sich nicht schrecken und ging vorwärts: da gab ihm der Jäger die zweite Ladung. Der Wolf verbiß den Schmerz und rückte dem Jäger zu Leibe: da zog dieser seinen blanken Hirschfänger und gab ihm links und rechts ein paar Hiebe, daß er, über und über blutend, mit Geheul zu dem Fuchs zurücklief. »Nun, Bruder Wolf,« sprach der Fuchs, »wie bist du mit dem Menschen fertig worden?« »Ach,« antwortete der Wolf, »so hab ich mir die Stärke des Menschen nicht vorgestellt, erst nahm er einen Stock von der Schulter und blies hinein, da flog mir etwas ins Gesicht, das hat mich ganz entsetzlich gekitzelt: danach pustete er noch einmal in den Stock, da flog mirs um die Nase wie Blitz und Hagelwetter, und wie ich ganz nah war, da zog er eine blanke Rippe aus dem Leib, damit hat er so auf mich losgeschlagen, daß ich beinah tot wäre liegen geblieben.« »Siehst du,« sprach der Fuchs, »was du für ein Prahlhans bist: du wirfst das Beil so weit, daß dus nicht wieder holen kannst.«

73. Der Wolf und der Fuchs.

Der Wolf hatte den Fuchs bei sich, und was der Wolf wollte, das mußte der Fuchs tun, weil er der schwächste war, und der Fuchs wäre gerne des Herrn los gewesen. Es trug sich zu, daß sie beide durch den Wald gingen, da sprach der Wolf »Rotfuchs, schaff mir was zu fressen, oder ich fresse dich selber auf.« Da antwortete der Fuchs »ich weiß einen Bauernhof, wo ein paar junge Lämmlein sind, hast du Lust, so wollen wir eins holen.« Dem Wolf war das recht, sie gingen hin, und der Fuchs stahl das Lämmlein, brachte es dem Wolf und machte sich fort. Da fraß es der Wolf auf, war aber damit noch nicht zufrieden, sondern wollte das andere dazu haben und ging, es zu holen. Weil er es aber so ungeschickt machte, ward es die Mutter vom Lämmlein gewahr und fing an entsetzlich zu schreien und zu bläen, daß die Bauern herbeigelaufen kamen. Da fanden sie den Wolf und schlugen ihn so erbärmlich, daß er hinkend und heulend bei dem Fuchs ankam. »Du hast mich schön angeführt,« sprach er, »ich wollte das andere Lamm holen, da haben mich die Bauern erwischt und haben mich weich geschlagen.« Der Fuchs antwortete »warum bist du so ein Nimmersatt.«

Am andern Tag gingen sie wieder ins Feld, sprach der gierige Wolf abermals »Rotfuchs, schaff mir was zu fressen, oder ich fresse dich selber auf.« Da antwortete der Fuchs »ich weiß ein Bauernhaus, da backt die Frau heut abend Pfannkuchen, wir wollen uns davon holen.« Sie gingen hin, und der Fuchs schlich ums Haus herum, guckte und schnupperte so lange, bis er ausfindig machte, wo die Schüssel stand, zog dann sechs Pfannkuchen herab und brachte sie dem Wolf. »Da hast du zu fressen,« sprach er zu ihm und ging seiner Wege. Der Wolf hatte die Pfannkuchen in einem Augenblick hinuntergeschluckt und sprach »sie schmecken nach mehr,« ging hin und riß geradezu die ganze Schüssel herunter, daß sie in Stücke zersprang. Da gabs einen gewaltigen Lärm, daß die Frau herauskam, und als sie den Wolf sah, rief sie die Leute, die eilten herbei und schlugen ihn, was Zeug wollte halten, daß er mit zwei lahmen Beinen laut heulend zum Fuchs in den Wald hinauskam. »Was hast du mich garstig angeführt!« rief er, »die Bauern haben mich erwischt und mir die Haut gegerbt.« Der Fuchs aber antwortete »warum bist du so ein Nimmersatt.«

Am dritten Tag, als sie beisammen draußen waren und der Wolf mit Mühe nur forthinkte, sprach er doch wieder »Rotfuchs, schaff mir was zu fressen, oder ich fresse dich selber auf.« Der Fuchs antwortete »ich weiß einen Mann, der hat geschlachtet, und das gesalzene Fleisch liegt in einem Faß im Keller, das wollen wir holen.« Sprach der Wolf »aber ich will gleich mitgehen, damit du mir hilfst, wenn ich nicht fort kann.« »Meinetwegen,« sprach der Fuchs, und zeigte ihm die Schliche und Wege, auf welchen sie endlich in den Keller gelangten. Da war nun Fleisch im Überfluß, und der Wolf machte sich gleich daran und dachte »bis ich aufhöre, hats Zeit.« Der Fuchs ließ sichs auch gut schmecken, blickte überall herum, lief aber oft zu dem Loch, durch welches sie gekommen waren, und versuchte, ob sein Leib noch schmal genug wäre, durchzuschlüpfen. Sprach der Wolf »lieber Fuchs, sag mir, warum rennst du so hin und her, und springst hinaus und herein?« »Ich muß doch sehen, ob niemand kommt,« antwortete der Listige, »friß nur nicht zuviel.« Da sagte der Wolf »ich gehe nicht eher fort, als bis das Faß leer ist.« Indem kam der Bauer, der den Lärm von des Fuchses Sprüngen gehört hatte, in den Keller. Der Fuchs, wie er ihn sah, war mit einem Satz zum Loch draußen: der Wolf wollte nach, aber er hatte sich so dick gefressen, daß er nicht mehr durch konnte, sondern stecken blieb. Da kam der Bauer mit einem Knüppel und schlug ihn tot. Der Fuchs aber sprang in den Wald und war froh, daß er den alten Nimmersatt los war.

74. Der Fuchs und die Frau Gevatterin.

Die Wölfin brachte ein Junges zur Welt und ließ den Fuchs zu Gevatter einladen. »Er ist doch nahe mit uns verwandt,« sprach sie, »hat einen guten Verstand und viel Geschicklichkeit, er kann mein Söhnlein unterrichten und ihm in der Welt forthelfen.« Der Fuchs erschien auch ganz ehrbar und sprach »liebwerte Frau Gevatterin, ich danke Euch für die Ehre, die Ihr mir erzeigt, ich will mich aber auch so halten, daß Ihr Eure Freude daran haben sollt.« Bei dem Fest ließ er sichs schmecken und machte sich ganz lustig, hernach sagte er »liebe Frau Gevatterin, es ist unsere Pflicht, für das Kindlein zu sorgen, Ihr müßt gute Nahrung haben, damit es auch zu Kräften kommt. Ich weiß einen Schafstall, woraus wir leicht ein gutes Stück holen können.« Der Wölfin gefiel das Liedlein, und sie ging mit dem Fuchs hinaus nach dem Bauernhof. Er zeigte ihr den Stall aus der Ferne und sprach »dort werdet Ihr ungesehen hineinkriechen können, ich will mich derweil auf der anderen Seite umsehen, ob ich etwa ein Hühnlein erwische.« Er ging aber nicht hin, sondern ließ sich am Eingang des Waldes nieder, streckte die Beine und ruhte sich. Die Wölfin kroch in den Stall, da lag ein Hund und machte Lärm, so daß die Bauern gelaufen kamen, die Frau Gevatterin ertappten und eine scharfe Lauge von ungebrannter Asche über ihr Fell gossen. Endlich entkam sie doch und schleppte sich hinaus: da lag der Fuchs, tat ganz kläglich und sprach »ach, liebe Frau Gevatterin, wie ist mirs schlimm ergangen! die Bauern haben mich überfallen und mir alle Glieder zerschlagen, wenn Ihr nicht wollt, daß ich auf dem Platz liegen bleiben und verschmachten soll, so müßt Ihr mich forttragen.« Die Wölfin konnte selbst nur langsam fort, doch hatte sie große Sorge für den Fuchs, daß sie ihn auf ihren Rücken nahm, und den ganz gesunden und heilen Gevatter langsam bis zu ihrem Haus trug. Da rief er ihr zu »lebt wohl, liebe Frau Gevatterin, und laßt Euch den Braten wohl bekommen,« lachte sie gewaltig aus und sprang fort.

75. Der Fuchs und die Katze.

Es trug sich zu, daß die Katze in einem Walde dem Herrn Fuchs begegnete, und weil sie dachte »er ist gescheit und wohl erfahren, und gilt viel in der Welt,« so sprach sie ihm freundlich zu. »Guten Tag, lieber Herr Fuchs, wie gehts? wie stehts? wie schlagt Ihr Euch durch in dieser teuren Zeit?« Der Fuchs, alles Hochmutes voll, betrachtete die Katze von Kopf bis zu Füßen und wußte lange nicht, ob er eine Antwort geben sollte. Endlich sprach er »o du armseliger Bartputzer, du buntscheckiger Narr, du Hungerleider und Mäusejäger, was kommt dir in den Sinn? du unterstehst dich zu fragen, wie mirs gehe? was hast du gelernt? wieviel Künste verstehst du?« »Ich verstehe nur eine einzige,« antwortete bescheidentlich die Katze. »Was ist das für eine Kunst?« fragte der Fuchs. »Wenn die Hunde hinter mir her sind, so kann ich auf einen Baum springen und mich retten.« »Ist das alles?« sagte der Fuchs, »ich bin Herr über hundert Künste und habe überdies noch einen Sack voll Liste. Du jammerst mich, komm mit mir, ich will dich lehren, wie man den Hunden entgeht.« Indem kam ein Jäger mit vier Hunden daher. Die Katze sprang behend auf einen Baum und setzte sich in den Gipfel, wo Äste und Laubwerk sie völlig verbargen. »Bindet den Sack auf, Herr Fuchs, bindet den Sack auf,« rief ihm die Katze zu, aber die Hunde hatten ihn schon gepackt und hielten ihn fest. »Ei, Herr Fuchs,« rief die Katze, »Ihr bleibt mit Euren hundert Künsten stecken. Hättet Ihr heraufkriechen können wie ich, so wärs nicht um Euer Leben geschehen.«

76. Die Nelke.

Es war eine Königin, die hatte unser Herrgott verschlossen, daß sie keine Kinder gebar. Da ging sie alle Morgen in den Garten und bat zu Gott im Himmel, er möchte ihr einen Sohn oder eine Tochter bescheren. Da kam ein Engel vom Himmel und sprach »gib dich zufrieden, du sollst einen Sohn haben mit wünschlichen Gedanken, denn was er sich wünscht auf der Welt, das wird er erhalten.« Sie ging zum König und sagte ihm die fröhliche Botschaft, und als die Zeit herum war, gebar sie einen Sohn, und der König war in großer Freude.

Nun ging sie alle Morgen mit dem Kind in den Tiergarten, und wusch sich da bei einem klaren Brunnen. Es geschah einstmals, als das Kind schon ein wenig älter war, daß es ihr auf dem Schoß lag und sie entschlief. Da kam der alte Koch, der wußte, daß das Kind wünschliche Gedanken hatte, und raubte es, und nahm ein Huhn und zerriß es, und tropfte ihr das Blut auf die Schürze und das Kleid. Da trug er das Kind fort an einen verborgenen Ort, wo es eine Amme tränken mußte, und lief zum König und klagte die Königin an, sie habe ihr Kind von den wilden Tieren rauben lassen. Und als der König das Blut an der Schürze sah, glaubte er es und geriet in einen solchen Zorn, daß er einen tiefen Turm bauen ließ, in den weder Sonne noch Mond schien, und ließ seine Gemahlin hineinsetzen und vermauern; da sollte sie sieben Jahre sitzen, ohne Essen und Trinken, und sollte verschmachten. Aber Gott schickte zwei Engel vom Himmel in Gestalt von weißen Tauben, die mußten täglich zweimal zu ihr fliegen und ihr das Essen bringen, bis die sieben Jahre herum waren.

Der Koch aber dachte bei sich »hat das Kind wünschliche Gedanken und ich bin hier, so könnte es mich leicht ins Unglück stürzen.« Da machte er sich vom Schloß weg und ging zu dem Knaben, der war schon so groß, daß er sprechen konnte, und sagte zu ihm »wünsche dir ein schönes Schloß mit einem Garten, und was dazu gehört.« Und kaum waren die Worte aus dem Munde des Knaben, so stand alles da, was er gewünscht hatte. Über eine Zeit sprach der Koch zu ihm »es ist nicht gut, daß du so allein bist, wünsche dir eine schöne Jungfrau zur Gesellschaft.« Da wünschte sie der Königssohn herbei, und sie stand gleich vor ihm, und war so schön, wie sie kein Maler malen konnte. Nun spielten die beiden zusammen und hatten sich von Herzen lieb, und der alte Koch ging auf die Jagd wie ein vornehmer Mann. Es kam ihm aber der Gedanke, der Königssohn könnte einmal wünschen, bei seinem Vater zu sein, und ihn damit in große Not bringen. Da ging er hinaus, nahm das Mädchen beiseit und sprach »diese Nacht, wenn der Knabe schläft, so geh an sein Bett und stoß ihm das Messer ins Herz, und bring mir Herz und Zunge von ihm; und wenn du das nicht tust, so sollst du dein Leben verlieren.« Darauf ging er fort, und als er am andern Tag wiederkam, so hatte sie es nicht getan und sprach »was soll ich ein unschuldiges Blut ums Leben bringen, das noch niemand beleidigt hat?« Sprach der Koch wieder »wo du es nicht tust, so kostet dichs selbst dein Leben.« Als er weggegangen war, ließ sie sich eine kleine Hirschkuh herbeiholen und ließ sie schlachten, und nahm Herz und Zunge, und legte sie auf einen Teller, und als sie den Alten kommen sah, sprach sie zu dem Knaben »leg dich ins Bett und zieh die Decke über dich.«

Da trat der Bösewicht herein und sprach »wo ist Herz und Zunge von dem Knaben?« Das Mädchen reichte ihm den Teller, aber der Königssohn warf die Decke ab und sprach »du alter Sünder, warum hast du mich töten wollen? nun will ich dir dein Urteil sprechen. Du sollst ein schwarzer Pudelhund werden und eine goldene Kette um den Hals haben, und sollst glühende Kohlen fressen, daß dir die Lohe zum Hals herausschlägt.« Und wie er die Worte ausgesprochen hatte, so war der Alte in einen Pudelhund verwandelt, und hatte eine goldene Kette um den Hals, und die Köche mußten lebendige Kohlen heraufbringen, die fraß er, daß ihm die Lohe aus dem Hals herausschlug. Nun blieb der Königssohn noch eine kleine Zeit da und dachte an seine Mutter, und ob sie noch am Leben wäre. Endlich sprach er zu dem Mädchen »ich will heim in mein Vaterland, willst du mit mir gehen, so will ich dich ernähren.« »Ach,« antwortete sie, »der Weg ist so weit, und was soll ich in einem fremden Lande machen, wo ich unbekannt bin.« Weil es also ihr Wille nicht recht war, und sie doch voneinander nicht lassen wollten, wünschte er sie zu einer schönen Nelke und steckte sie bei sich.

Da zog er fort, und der Pudelhund mußte mitlaufen, und zog in sein Vaterland. Nun ging er zu dem Turm, wo seine Mutter darinsaß, und weil der Turm so hoch war, wünschte er eine Leiter herbei, die bis obenhin reichte. Da stieg er hinauf und sah hinein und rief »herzliebste Mutter, Frau Königin, seid Ihr noch am Leben, oder seid Ihr tot?« Sie antwortete »ich habe ja eben gegessen und bin noch satt,« und meinte, die Engel wären da. Sprach er »ich bin Euer lieber Sohn, den die wilden Tiere Euch sollen vom Schoß geraubt haben: aber ich bin noch am Leben und will Euch bald erretten.« Nun stieg er herab und ging zu seinem Herrn Vater, und ließ sich anmelden als ein fremder Jäger, ob er könnte Dienste bei ihm haben. Antwortete der König ja, wenn er gelernt wäre und ihm Wildbret schaffen könnte, sollte er herkommen; es hatte sich aber auf der ganzen Grenze und Gegend niemals Wild aufgehalten. Da sprach der Jäger, er wollte ihm so viel Wild schaffen, als er nur auf der königlichen Tafel brauchen könnte. Dann hieß er die Jägerei zusammenkommen, sie sollten alle mit ihm hinaus in den Wald gehen. Da gingen sie mit, und draußen hieß er sie einen großen Kreis schließen, der an einem Ende offen blieb, und dann stellte er sich hinein und fing an zu wünschen. Alsbald kamen zweihundert und etliche Stück Wildbret in den Kreis gelaufen, und die Jäger mußten es schießen. Da ward alles auf sechzig Bauernwagen geladen und dem König heim gefahren; da konnte er einmal seine Tafel mit Wildbret zieren, nachdem er lange Jahre keins gehabt hatte.

Nun empfand der König große Freude darüber und bestellte, es sollte des andern Tags seine ganze Hofhaltung bei ihm speisen, und machte ein großes Gastmahl. Wie sie alle beisammen waren, sprach er zu dem Jäger »weil du so geschickt bist, so sollst du neben mir sitzen.« Er antwortete »Herr König, Ew. Majestät halte zu Gnaden, ich bin ein schlechter Jägerbursch.« Der König aber bestand darauf und sagte »du sollst dich neben mich setzen,« bis er es tat. Wie er da saß, dachte er an seine liebste Frau Mutter, und wünschte, daß nur einer von des Königs ersten Dienern von ihr anfinge und fragte, wie es wohl der Frau Königin im Turm ginge, ob sie wohl noch am Leben wäre oder verschmachtet. Kaum hatte er es gewünscht, so fing auch schon der Marschall an und sprach »königliche Majestät, wir leben hier in Freuden, wie geht es wohl der Frau Königin im Turm, ob sie wohl noch am Leben oder verschmachtet ist?« Aber der König antwortete »sie hat mir meinen lieben Sohn von den wilden Tieren zerreißen lassen, davon will ich nichts hören.« Da stand der Jäger auf und sprach »gnädigster Herr Vater, sie ist noch am Leben, und ich bin ihr Sohn, und die wilden Tiere haben ihn nicht geraubt, sondern der Bösewicht, der alte Koch, hat es getan, der hat mich, als sie eingeschlafen war, von ihrem Schoß weggenommen und ihre Schürze mit dem Blut eines Huhns betropft.« Darauf nahm er den Hund mit dem goldenen Halsband und sprach »das ist der Bösewicht,« und ließ glühende Kohlen bringen, die mußte er angesichts aller fressen, daß ihm die Lohe aus dem Hals schlug. Darauf fragte er den König, ob er ihn in seiner wahren Gestalt sehen wollte, und wünschte ihn wieder zum Koch, da stand er alsbald mit der weißen Schürze und dem Messer an der Seite. Der König, wie er ihn sah, ward zornig und befahl, daß er in den tiefsten Kerker sollte geworfen werden. Darauf sprach der Jäger weiter »Herr Vater, wollt Ihr auch das Mädchen sehen, das mich so zärtlich aufgezogen hat und mich hernach ums Leben bringen sollte, es aber nicht getan hat, obgleich sein eigenes Leben auf dem Spiel stand?« Antwortete der König »ja, ich will sie gerne sehen.« Sprach der Sohn »gnädigster Herr Vater, ich will sie Euch zeigen in Gestalt einer schönen Blume.« Und griff in die Tasche und holte die Nelke, und stellte sie auf die königliche Tafel und sie war so schön, wie der König nie eine gesehen hatte. Darauf sprach der Sohn »nun will ich sie auch in ihrer wahren Gestalt zeigen,« und wünschte sie zu einer Jungfrau; da stand sie da und war so schön, daß kein Maler sie hätte schöner malen können.

Der König aber schickte zwei Kammerfrauen und zwei Diener hinab in den Turm, die sollten die Frau Königin holen und an die königliche Tafel bringen. Als sie aber dahin geführt ward, aß sie nichts mehr und sagte »der gnädige barmherzige Gott, der mich im Turm erhalten hat, wird mich bald erlösen.« Da lebte sie noch drei Tage und starb dann selig; und als sie begraben ward, da folgten ihr die zwei weißen Tauben nach, die ihr das Essen in den Turm gebracht hatten und Engel vom Himmel waren, und setzten sich auf ihr Grab. Der alte König ließ den Koch in vier Stücke zerreißen, aber der Gram zehrte an seinem Herzen, und er starb bald. Der Sohn heiratete die schöne Jungfrau, die er als Blume in der Tasche mitgebracht hatte, und ob sie noch leben, das steht bei Gott.

77. Das kluge Gretel.

Es war eine Köchin, die hieß Gretel, die trug Schuhe mit roten Absätzen, und wenn sie damit ausging, so drehte sie sich hin und her, war ganz fröhlich und dachte »du bist doch ein schönes Mädel.« Und wenn sie nach Hause kam, so trank sie aus Fröhlichkeit einen Schluck Wein, und weil der Wein auch Lust zum Essen macht, so versuchte sie das Beste, was sie kochte, so lang, bis sie satt war, und sprach »die Köchin muß wissen, wies Essen schmeckt.«

Es trug sich zu, daß der Herr einmal zu ihr sagte »Gretel, heut abend kommt ein Gast, richte mir zwei Hühner fein wohl zu.« »Wills schon machen, Herr,« antwortete Gretel. Nun stachs die Hühner ab, brühte sie, rupfte sie, steckte sie an den Spieß, und brachte sie, wies gegen Abend ging, zum Feuer, damit sie braten sollten. Die Hühner fingen an braun und gar zu werden, aber der Gast war noch nicht gekommen. Da rief Gretel dem Herrn »kommt der Gast nicht, so muß ich die Hühner vom Feuer tun, ist aber Jammer und Schade, wenn sie nicht bald gegessen werden, wo sie am besten im Saft sind.« Sprach der Herr »so will ich nur selbst laufen und den Gast holen.« Als der Herr den Rücken gekehrt hatte, legte Gretel den Spieß mit den Hühnern beiseite und dachte »so lange da beim Feuer stehen macht schwitzen und durstig, wer weiß, wann die kommen! derweil spring ich in den Keller und tue einen Schluck.« Lief hinab, setzte einen Krug an, sprach »Gott gesegnes dir, Gretel,« und tat einen guten Zug. »Der Wein hängt aneinander,« sprachs weiter, »und ist nicht gut abbrechen,« und tat noch einen ernsthaften Zug. Nun ging es und stellte die Hühner wieder übers Feuer, strich sie mit Butter und trieb den Spieß lustig herum. Weil aber der Braten so gut roch, dachte Gretel »es könnte etwas fehlen, versucht muß er werden!« schleckte mit dem Finger und sprach »ei, was sind die Hühner so gut! ist ja Sünd und Schand, daß man sie nicht gleich ißt!« Lief zum Fenster, ob der Herr mit dem Gast noch nicht käm, aber es sah niemand: stellte sich wieder zu den Hühnern, dachte »der eine Flügel verbrennt, besser ists, ich eß ihn weg.« Also schnitt es ihn ab und aß ihn auf, und er schmeckte ihm, und wie es damit fertig war, dachte es »der andere muß auch herab, sonst merkt der Herr, daß etwas fehlt.« Wie die zwei Flügel verzehrt waren, ging es wieder und schaute nach dem Herrn und sah ihn nicht. »Wer weiß,« fiel ihm ein, »sie kommen wohl gar nicht und sind wo eingekehrt.« Da sprachs »hei, Gretel, sei guter Dinge, das eine ist doch angegriffen, tu noch einen frischen Trunk und iß es vollends auf, wenns all ist, hast du Ruhe: warum soll die gute Gottesgabe umkommen?« Also lief es noch einmal in den Keller, tat einen ehrbaren Trunk, und aß das eine Huhn in aller Freudigkeit auf. Wie das eine Huhn hinunter war und der Herr noch immer nicht kam, sah Gretel das andere an und sprach »wo das eine ist, muß das andere auch sein, die zwei gehören zusammen: was dem einen recht ist, das ist dem andern billig; ich glaube, wenn ich noch einen Trunk tue, so sollte mirs nicht schaden.« Also tat es noch einen herzhaften Trunk, und ließ das zweite Huhn wieder zum andern laufen.

Wie es so im besten Essen war, kam der Herr dahergegangen und rief »eil dich, Gretel, der Gast kommt gleich nach.« »Ja, Herr, wills schon zurichten,« antwortete Gretel. Der Herr sah indessen, ob der Tisch wohl gedeckt war, nahm das große Messer, womit er die Hühner zerschneiden wollte, und wetzte es auf dem Gang. Indem kam der Gast, klopfte sittig und höflich an der Haustüre. Gretl lief und schaute, wer da war, und als es den Gast sah, hielt es den Finger an den Mund und sprach »still! still! macht geschwind, daß Ihr wieder fortkommt, wenn Euch mein Herr erwischt, so seid Ihr unglücklich; er hat Euch zwar zum Nachtessen eingeladen, aber er hat nichts anders im Sinn, als Euch die beiden Ohren abzuschneiden. Hört nur, wie er das Messer dazu wetzt.« Der Gast hörte das Wetzen und eilte, was er konnte, die Stiegen wieder hinab. Gretel war nicht faul, lief schreiend zu dem Herrn und rief »da habt Ihr einen schönen Gast eingeladen!« »Ei, warum, Gretel? was meinst du damit?« »Ja,« sagte es, »der hat mir beide Hühner, die ich eben auftragen wollte, von der Schüssel genommen und ist damit fortgelaufen.« »Das ist feine Weise!« sprach der Herr, und ward ihm leid um die schönen Hühner, »wenn er mir dann wenigstens das eine gelassen hätte, damit mir was zu essen geblieben wäre.« Er rief ihm nach, er sollte bleiben, aber der Gast tat, als hörte er es nicht. Da lief er hinter ihm her, das Messer noch immer in der Hand, und schrie »nur eins! nur eins!« und meinte, der Gast sollte ihm nur ein Huhn lassen und nicht alle beide nehmen: der Gast aber meinte nicht anders, als er sollte eins von seinen Ohren hergeben, und lief, als wenn Feuer unter ihm brennte, damit er sie beide heim brächte.

78. Der alte Großvater und der Enkel.

Es war einmal ein steinalter Mann, dem waren die Augen trüb geworden, die Ohren taub, und die Knie zitterten ihm. Wenn er nun bei Tische saß und den Löffel kaum halten konnte, schüttete er Suppe auf das Tischtuch, und es floß ihm auch etwas wieder aus dem Mund. Sein Sohn und dessen Frau ekelten sich davor, und deswegen mußte sich der alte Großvater endlich hinter den Ofen in die Ecke setzen, und sie gaben ihm sein Essen in ein irdenes Schüsselchen und noch dazu nicht einmal satt; da sah er betrübt nach dem Tisch, und die Augen wurden ihm naß. Einmal auch konnten seine zitterigen Hände das Schüsselchen nicht festhalten, es fiel zur Erde und zerbrach. Die junge Frau schalt, er sagte aber nichts und seufzte nur. Da kaufte sie ihm ein hölzernes Schüsselchen für ein paar Heller, daraus mußte er nun essen. Wie sie da so sitzen, so trägt der kleine Enkel von vier Jahren auf der Erde kleine Brettlein zusammen. »Was machst du da?« fragte der Vater. »Ich mache ein Tröglein,« antwortete das Kind, »daraus sollen Vater und Mutter essen, wenn ich groß bin.« Da sahen sich Mann und Frau eine Weile an, fingen endlich an zu weinen, holten alsofort den alten Großvater an den Tisch und ließen ihn von nun an immer mitessen, sagten auch nichts, wenn er ein wenig verschüttete.

79. Die Wassernixe.

Ein Brüderchen und ein Schwesterchen spielten an einem Brunnen, und wie sie so spielten, plumpten sie beide hinein. Da war unten eine Wassernixe, die sprach »jezt habe ich euch, jetzt sollt ihr mir brav arbeiten,« und führte sie mit sich fort. Dem Mädchen gab sie verwirrten garstigen Flachs zu spinnen, und es mußte Wasser in ein hohles Faß schleppen, der Junge aber sollte einen Baum mit einer stumpfen Axt hauen, und nichts zu essen bekamen sie als steinharte Klöße. Da wurden zuletzt die Kinder so ungeduldig, daß sie warteten, bis eines Sonntags die Nixe in der Kirche war, da entflohen sie. Und als die Kirche vorbei war, sah die Nixe, daß die Vögel ausgeflogen waren, und setzte ihnen mit großen Sprüngen nach. Die Kinder erblickten sie aber von weitem, und das Mädchen warf eine Bürste hinter sich, das gab einen großen Bürstenberg mit tausend und tausend Stacheln, über den die Nixe mit großer Müh klettern mußte; endlich aber kam sie doch hinüber. Wie das die Kinder sahen, warf der Knabe einen Kamm hinter sich, das gab einen großen Kammberg mit tausendmal tausend Zinken, aber die Nixe wußte sich daran festzuhalten und kam zuletzt doch drüber. Da warf das Mädchen einen Spiegel hinterwärts, welches einen Spiegelberg gab, der war so glatt, so glatt, daß sie unmöglich darüber konnte. Da dachte sie »ich will geschwind nach Haus gehen und meine Axt holen und den Spiegelberg entzweihauen.« Bis sie aber wiederkam und das Glas aufgehauen hatte, waren die Kinder längst weit entflohen, und die Wassernixe mußte sich wieder in ihren Brunnen trollen.

80. Von dem Tode des Hühnchens.

Auf eine Zeit ging das Hühnchen mit dem Hähnchen in den Nußberg, und sie machten miteinander aus, wer einen Nußkern fände, sollte ihn mit dem andern teilen. Nun fand das Hühnchen eine große große Nuß, sagte aber nichts davon und wollte den Kern allein essen. Der Kern war aber so dick, daß es ihn nicht hinunterschlucken konnte und er ihm im Hals stecken blieb, daß ihm angst wurde, es müßte ersticken. Da schrie das Hühnchen »Hähnchen, ich bitte dich lauf, was du kannst, und hol mir Wasser, sonst erstick ich.« Das Hähnchen lief, was es konnte, zum Brunnen und sprach »Born, du sollst mir Wasser geben; das Hühnchen liegt auf dem Nußberg, hat einen großen Nußkern geschluckt und will ersticken.« Der Brunnen antwortete »lauf erst hin zur Braut und laß dir rote Seide geben.« Das Hähnchen lief zur Braut »Braut, du sollst mir rote Seide geben: rote Seide will ich dem Brunnen geben, der Brunnen soll mir Wasser geben, das Wasser will ich dem Hühnchen bringen, das liegt auf dem Nußberg, hat einen großen Nußkern geschluckt und will daran ersticken.« Die Braut antwortete »lauf erst und hol mir mein Kränzlein, das blieb an einer Weide hängen.« Da lief das Hähnchen zur Weide und zog das Kränzlein von dem Ast und brachte es der Braut, und die Braut gab ihm rote Seide dafür, die brachte es dem Brunnen, der gab ihm Wasser dafür. Da brachte das Hähnchen das Wasser zum Hühnchen, wie es aber hinkam, war dieweil das Hühnchen erstickt, und lag da tot und regte sich nicht. Da ward das Hähnchen so traurig, daß es laut schrie, und kamen alle Tiere und beklagten das Hühnchen; und sechs Mäuse bauten einen kleinen Wagen, das Hühnchen darin zum Grabe zu fahren; und als der Wagen fertig war, spannten sie sich davor, und das Hähnchen fuhr. Auf dem Wege aber kam der Fuchs »wo willst du hin, Hähnchen?« »Ich will mein Hühnchen begraben.« »Darf ich mitfahren?«

»Ja, aber setz dich hinten auf den Wagen,
vorn können's meine Pferdchen nicht vertragen.«

Da setzte sich der Fuchs hintenauf, dann der Wolf, der Bär, der Hirsch, der Löwe und alle Tiere in dem Wald. So ging die Fahrt fort, da kamen sie an einen Bach. »Wie sollen wir nun hinüber?« sagte das Hähnchen. Da lag ein Strohhalm am Bach, der sagte »ich will mich quer darüberlegen, so könnt ihr über mich fahren.« Wie aber die sechs Mäuse auf die Brücke kamen, rutschte der Strohhalm aus und fiel ins Wasser, und die sechs Mäuse fielen alle hinein und ertranken. Da ging die Not von neuem an, und kam eine Kohle und sagte »ich bin groß genug, ich will mich darüberlegen, und ihr sollt über mich fahren.« Die Kohle legte sich auch an das Wasser, aber sie berührte es unglücklicherweise ein wenig, da zischte sie, verlöschte und war tot. Wie das ein Stein sah, erbarmte er sich und wollte dem Hähnchen helfen, und legte sich über das Wasser. Da zog nun das Hähnchen den

Wagen selber, wie es ihn aber bald drüben hatte, und war mit dem toten Hühnchen auf dem Land und wollte die andern, die hintenauf saßen, auch heranziehen, da waren ihrer zuviel geworden, und der Wagen fiel zurück, und alles fiel miteinander in das Wasser und ertrank. Da war das Hähnchen noch allein mit dem toten Hühnchen, und grub ihm ein Grab und legte es hinein, und machte einen Hügel darüber, auf den setzte es sich und grämte sich so lang, bis es auch starb; und da war alles tot.

81. Bruder Lustig.

Es war einmal ein großer Krieg, und als der Krieg zu Ende war, bekamen viele Soldaten ihren Abschied. Nun bekam der Bruder Lustig auch seinen Abschied und sonst nichts als ein kleines Laibchen Kommißbrot und vier Kreuzer an Geld; damit zog er fort. Der heilige Petrus aber hatte sich als ein armer Bettler an den Weg gesetzt, und wie der Bruder Lustig daherkam, bat er ihn um ein Almosen. Er antwortete »lieber Bettelmann, was soll ich dir geben? ich bin Soldat gewesen und habe meinen Abschied bekommen, und habe sonst nichts als das kleine Kommißbrot und vier Kreuzer Geld, wenn das all ist, muß ich betteln, so gut wie du. Doch geben will ich dir was.« Darauf teilte er den Laib in vier Teile und gab davon dem Apostel einen und auch einen Kreuzer. Der heilige Petrus bedankte sich, ging weiter und setzte sich in einer andern Gestalt wieder als Bettelmann dem Soldaten an den Weg, und als er zu ihm kam, bat er ihn, wie das vorigemal, um eine Gabe. Der Bruder Lustig sprach wie vorher und gab ihm wieder ein Viertel von dem Brot und einen Kreuzer. Der heilige Petrus bedankte sich und ging weiter, setzte sich aber zum drittenmal in einer andern Gestalt als ein Bettler an den Weg und sprach den Bruder Lustig an. Der Bruder Lustig gab ihm auch das dritte Viertel Brot und den dritten Kreuzer. Der heilige Petrus bedankte sich, und der Bruder Lustig ging weiter und hatte nicht mehr als ein Viertel Brot und einen Kreuzer. Damit ging er in ein Wirtshaus, aß das Brot und ließ sich für den Kreuzer Bier dazu geben. Als er fertig war, zog er weiter, und da ging ihm der heilige Petrus gleichfalls in der Gestalt eines verabschiedeten Soldaten entgegen und redete ihn an »guten Tag, Kamerad, kannst du mir nicht ein Stück Brot geben und einen Kreuzer zu einem Trunk?« »Wo soll ichs hernehmen,« antwortete der Bruder Lustig, »ich habe meinen Abschied und sonst nichts als einen Laib Kommißbrot und vier Kreuzer an Geld bekommen. Drei Bettler sind mir auf der Landstraße begegnet, davon hab ich jedem ein Viertel von meinem Brot und einen Kreuzer Geld gegeben. Das letzte Viertel habe ich im Wirtshaus gegessen und für den letzten Kreuzer dazu getrunken. Jetzt bin ich leer, und wenn du auch nichts mehr hast, so können wir miteinander betteln gehen.« »Nein,« antwortete der heilige Petrus, »das wird just nicht nötig sein: ich verstehe mich ein wenig auf die Doktorei, und damit will ich mir schon so viel verdienen, als ich brauche.« »Ja,« sagte der Bruder Lustig, »davon verstehe ich nichts, also muß ich allein betteln gehen.« »Nun komm nur mit,« sprach der heilige Petrus, »wenn ich was verdiene, sollst du die Hälfte davon haben.« »Das ist mir wohl recht,« sagte der Bruder Lustig. Also zogen sie miteinander fort.

Nun kamen sie an ein Bauernhaus und hörten darin gewaltig jammern und schreien, da gingen sie hinein, so lag der Mann darin auf den Tod krank und war nah am Verscheiden, und die Frau heulte und weinte ganz laut. »Laßt Euer Heulen und Weinen,« sprach der heilige Petrus, »ich will den Mann wieder gesund machen,« nahm eine Salbe aus der Tasche und heilte den Kranken augenblicklich, so daß er aufstehen konnte und ganz gesund war. Sprachen Mann und Frau in großer Freude »wie können wir Euch lohnen? was sollen wir Euch geben?« Der heilige Petrus aber wollte nichts nehmen, und je mehr ihn die Bauersleute baten, desto mehr weigerte er sich. Der Bruder Lustig aber stieß den heiligen Petrus an und sagte »so nimm doch was, wir brauchens ja.« Endlich brachte die Bäuerin ein Lamm und sprach zu dem heiligen Petrus, das müßte er annehmen, aber er wollte es nicht. Da stieß ihn der Bruder Lustig in die Seite und sprach »nimms doch, dummer Teufel, wir brauchens ja.« Da sagte der heilige Petrus endlich »ja, das Lamm will ich nehmen, aber ich trags nicht: wenn dus willst, so mußt du es tragen.« »Das hat keine Not,« sprach der Bruder Lustig, »das will ich schon tragen,« und nahms auf die Schulter. Nun gingen sie fort und kamen in einen Wald, da war das Lamm dem Bruder Lustig schwer geworden, er aber war hungrig, also sprach er zu dem heiligen Petrus »schau, da ist ein schöner Platz, da könnten wir das Lamm kochen und verzehren.« »Mir ists recht,« antwortete der heilige Petrus, »doch kann ich mit der Kocherei nicht umgehen: willst du kochen, so hast du da einen Kessel, ich will derweil auf- und abgehen, bis es gar ist. Du mußt aber nicht eher zu essen anfangen, als bis ich wieder zurück bin; ich will schon zu rechter Zeit kommen.« »Geh nur,« sagte Bruder Lustig, »ich verstehe mich aufs Kochen, ich wills schon machen.« Da ging der heilige Petrus fort, und der Bruder Lustig schlachtete das Lamm, machte Feuer an, warf das Fleisch in den Kessel und kochte. Das Lamm war aber schon gar und der Apostel immer noch nicht zurück, da nahm es der Bruder Lustig aus dem Kessel, zerschnitt es und fand das Herz.

»Das soll das Beste sein,« sprach er und versuchte es, zuletzt aber aß er es ganz auf. Endlich kam der heilige Petrus zurück und sprach »du kannst das ganze Lamm allein essen, ich will nur das Herz davon, das gib mir.« Da nahm Bruder Lustig Messer und Gabel, tat, als suchte er eifrig in dem Lammfleisch herum, konnte aber das Herz nicht finden; endlich sagte er kurzweg »es ist keins da.« »Nun, wo solls denn sein?« sagte der Apostel. »Das weiß ich nicht,« antwortete der Bruder Lustig, »aber schau, was sind wir alle beide für Narren, suchen das Herz vom Lamm, und fällt keinem von uns ein, ein Lamm hat ja kein Herz!« »Ei,« sprach der heilige Petrus, »das ist was ganz Neues, jedes Tier hat ja ein Herz, warum sollt ein Lamm kein Herz haben?« »Nein, gewißlich, Bruder, ein Lamm hat kein Herz, denk nur recht nach, so wird dirs einfallen, es hat im Ernst keins.« »Nun, es ist schon gut,« sagte der heilige Petrus, »ist kein Herz da, so brauch ich auch nichts vom Lamm, du kannsts allein essen.« »Was ich halt nicht aufessen kann, das nehm ich mit in meinem Ranzen,« sprach der Bruder Lustig, aß das halbe Lamm und steckte das übrige in seinen Ranzen.

Sie gingen weiter, da machte der heilige Petrus, daß ein großes Wasser quer über den Weg floß und sie hindurch mußten. Sprach der heilige Petrus »geh du nur voran.« »Nein,« antwortete der Bruder Lustig, »geh du voran,« und dachte »wenn dem das Wasser zu tief ist, so bleib ich zurück.« Da schritt der heilige Petrus hindurch, und das Wasser ging ihm nur bis ans Knie. Nun wollte Bruder Lustig auch hindurch, aber das Wasser wurde größer und stieg ihm an den Hals. Da rief er »Bruder, hilf mir.« Sagte der heilige Petrus »willst du auch gestehen, daß du das Herz von dem Lamm gegessen hast?« »Nein,« antwortete er, »ich hab es nicht gegessen.« Da ward das Wasser noch größer und stieg ihm bis an den Mund, »hilf mir, Bruder,« rief der Soldat. Sprach der heilige Petrus noch einmal »willst du auch gestehen, daß du das Herz vom Lamm gegessen hast?« »Nein,« antwortete er, »ich hab es nicht gegessen.« Der heilige Petrus wollte ihn doch nicht ertrinken lassen, ließ das Wasser wieder fallen und half ihm hinüber.

Nun zogen sie weiter, und kamen in ein Reich, da hörten sie, daß die Königstochter todkrank läge. »Hallo, Bruder,« sprach der Soldat zum heiligen Petrus, »da ist ein Fang für uns, wenn wir die gesund machen, so ist uns auf ewige Zeiten geholfen.« Da war ihm der heilige Petrus nicht geschwind genug, »nun, heb die Beine auf, Bruderherz,« sprach er zu ihm, »daß wir noch zu rechter Zeit hinkommen.« Der heilige Petrus ging aber immer langsamer, wie auch der Bruder Lustig ihn trieb und schob, bis sie endlich hörten, die Königstochter wäre gestorben. »Da haben wirs,« sprach der Bruder Lustig, »das kommt von deinem schläfrigen Gang.« »Sei nur still,« antwortete der heilige Petrus, »ich kann noch mehr als Kranke gesund machen, ich kann auch Tote wieder ins Leben erwecken.« »Nun, wenn das ist,« sagte der Bruder Lustig, »so laß ich mirs gefallen, das halbe Königreich mußt du uns aber zum wenigsten damit verdienen.« Darauf gingen sie in das königliche Schloß, wo alles in großer Trauer war: der heilige Petrus aber sagte zu dem König, er wolle die Tochter wieder lebendig machen. Da ward er zu ihr geführt, und dann sprach er »bringt mir einen Kessel mit Wasser,« und wie der gebracht war, hieß er jedermann hinausgehen, und nur der Bruder Lustig durfte bei ihm bleiben. Darauf schnitt er alle Glieder der Toten los und warf sie ins Wasser, machte Feuer unter den Kessel und ließ sie kochen. Und wie alles Fleisch von den Knochen herabgefallen war, nahm er das schöne weiße Gebein heraus und legte es auf eine Tafel, und reihte und legte es nach seiner natürlichen Ordnung zusammen. Als das geschehen war, trat er davor und sprach dreimal »im Namen der allerheiligsten Dreifaltigkeit, Tote, steh auf.« Und beim drittenmal erhob sich die Königstochter lebendig, gesund und schön. Nun war der König darüber in großer Freude und sprach zum heiligen Petrus »begehre deinen Lohn, und wenns mein halbes Königreich wäre, so will ich dirs geben.« Der heilige Petrus aber antwortete »ich verlange nichts dafür.« »O, du Hans Narr!« dachte der Bruder Lustig bei sich, stieß seinen Kameraden in die Seite und sprach »sei doch nicht so dumm, wenn du nichts willst, so brauch ich doch was.« Der heilige Petrus aber wollte nichts; doch weil der König sah, daß der andere gerne was wollte, ließ er ihm vom Schatzmeister seinen Ranzen mit Gold anfüllen.

Sie zogen darauf weiter, und wie sie in einen Wald kamen, sprach der heilige Petrus zum Bruder Lustig »jetzt wollen wir das Gold teilen.« »Ja,« antwortete er, »das wollen wir tun.« Da teilte der heilige Petrus das Gold, und teilte es in drei Teile. Dachte der Bruder Lustig »was er wieder für einen

Sparren im Kopf hat! macht drei Teile, und unser sind zwei.« Der heilige Petrus aber sprach »nun habe ich genau geteilt, ein Teil für mich, ein Teil für dich, und ein Teil für den, der das Herz vom Lamm gegessen hat.« »O, das hab ich gegessen,« antwortete der Bruder Lustig und strich geschwind das Gold ein, »das kannst du mir glauben.« »Wie kann das wahr sein,« sprach der heilige Petrus, »ein Lamm hat ja kein Herz.« »Ei, was, Bruder, wo denkst du hin! ein Lamm hat ja ein Herz, so gut wie jedes Tier, warum sollte das allein keins haben?« »Nun, es ist schon gut,« sagte der heilige Petrus, »behalt das Gold allein, aber ich bleibe nicht mehr bei dir und will meinen Weg allein gehen.« »Wie du willst, Bruderherz,« antwortete der Soldat, »leb wohl.«

Da ging der heilige Petrus eine andere Straße, Bruder Lustig aber dachte »es ist gut, daß er abtrabt, es ist doch ein wunderlicher Heiliger.« Nun hatte er zwar Geld genug, wußte aber nicht mit umzugehen, vertats, verschenkts, und wie eine Zeit herum war, hatte er wieder nichts. Da kam er in ein Land, wo er hörte, daß die Königstochter gestorben wäre. »Holla!« dachte er, »das kann gut werden, die will ich wieder lebendig machen und mirs bezahlen lassen, daß es eine Art hat.« Ging also zum König und bot ihm an, die Tote wieder zu erwecken. Nun hatte der König gehört, daß ein abgedankter Soldat herumziehe und die Gestorbenen wieder lebendig mache, und dachte, der Bruder Lustig wäre dieser Mann, doch weil er kein Vertrauen zu ihm hatte, fragte er erst seine Räte, die sagten aber, er könnte es wagen, da seine Tochter doch tot wäre. Nun ließ sich der Bruder Lustig Wasser im Kessel bringen, hieß jedermann hinausgehen, schnitt die Glieder ab, warf sie ins Wasser und machte Feuer darunter, gerade wie er es beim heiligen Petrus gesehen hatte. Das Wasser fing an zu kochen, und das Fleisch fiel herab, da nahm er das Gebein heraus und tat es auf die Tafel; er wußte aber nicht, in welcher Ordnung es liegen mußte, und legte alles verkehrt durcheinander. Dann stellte er sich davor und sprach »im Namen der allerheiligsten Dreifaltigkeit, Tote, steh auf,« und sprachs dreimal, aber die Gebeine rührten sich nicht. Da sprach er es noch dreimal, aber gleichfalls umsonst. »Du Blitzmädel, steh auf,« rief er, »steh auf, oder es geht dir nicht gut.« Wie er das gesprochen, kam der heilige Petrus auf einmal in seiner vorigen Gestalt, als verabschiedeter Soldat, durchs Fenster hereingegangen und sprach »du gottloser Mensch, was treibst du da, wie kann die Tote auferstehen, da du ihr Gebein so untereinander geworfen hast?« »Bruderherz, ich habs gemacht, so gut ich konnte,« antwortete er. »Diesmal will ich dir aus der Not helfen, aber das sag ich dir, wo du noch einmal so etwas unternimmst, so bist du unglücklich, auch darfst du von dem König nicht das Geringste dafür begehren oder annehmen.« Darauf legte der heilige Petrus die Gebeine in ihre rechte Ordnung, sprach dreimal zu ihr »im Namen der allerheiligsten Dreifaltigkeit, Tote, steh auf,« und die Königstochter stand auf, war gesund und schön wie vorher. Nun ging der heilige Petrus wieder durchs Fenster hinaus: der Bruder Lustig war froh, daß es so gut abgelaufen war, ärgerte sich aber doch, daß er nichts dafür nehmen sollte. »Ich möchte nur wissen,« dachte er, »was der für Mucken im Kopf hat, denn was er mit der einen

Hand gibt, das nimmt er mit der andern: da ist kein Verstand drin.« Nun bot der König dem Bruder Lustig an, was er haben wollte, er durfte aber nichts nehmen, doch brachte er es durch Anspielung und Listigkeit dahin, daß ihm der König seinen Ranzen mit Gold füllen ließ, und damit zog er ab. Als er hinauskam, stand vor dem Tor der heilige Petrus und sprach »schau, was du für ein Mensch bist, habe ich dir nicht verboten, etwas zu nehmen, und nun hast du den Ranzen doch voll Gold.« »Was kann ich dafür,« antwortete Bruder Lustig, »wenn mirs hineingesteckt wird.« »Das sag ich dir, daß du nicht zum zweitenmal solche Dinge unternimmst, sonst soll es dir schlimm ergehen.« »Ei, Bruder, sorg doch nicht, jetzt hab ich Gold, was soll ich mich da mit dem Knochenwaschen abgeben.« »Ja,« sprach der heilige Petrus, »das Gold wird lang dauern! Damit du aber hernach nicht wieder auf unerlaubten Wegen gehst, so will ich deinem Ranzen die Kraft geben, daß alles, was du dir hineinwünschest, auch darin sein soll. Leb wohl, du siehst mich nun nicht wieder.« »Gott befohlen,« sprach der Bruder Lustig und dachte »ich bin froh, daß du fortgehst, du wunderlicher Kauz, ich will dir wohl nicht nachgehen.« An die Wunderkraft aber, die seinem Ranzen verliehen war, dachte er nicht weiter.

Bruder Lustig zog mit seinem Gold umher, und vertats und verfumfeits wie das erstemal. Als er nun nichts mehr als vier Kreuzer hatte, kam er an einem Wirtshaus vorbei und dachte »das Geld muß fort,« und ließ sich für drei Kreuzer Wein und einen Kreuzer Brot geben. Wie er da saß und trank, kam ihm der Geruch von gebratenen Gänsen in die Nase. Bruder Lustig schaute und guckte, und sah, daß der Wirt zwei Gänse in der Ofenröhre stehen hatte. Da fiel ihm ein, daß ihm sein Kamerad gesagt hatte, was er sich in seinen Ranzen wünschte, das sollte darin sein. »Holla, das mußt du mit den Gänsen versuchen!« Also ging er hinaus, und vor der Türe sprach er »so wünsch ich die zwei gebratenen Gänse aus der Ofenröhre in meinen Ranzen.« Wie er das gesagt hatte, schnallte er ihn auf und schaute hinein, da lagen sie beide darin. »Ach, so ists recht,« sprach er, »nun bin ich ein gemachter Kerl,« ging fort auf eine Wiese und holte den Braten hervor. Wie er so im besten Essen war, kamen zwei Handwerksburschen daher und sahen die eine Gans, die noch nicht angerührt war, mit hungrigen Augen an. Dachte der Bruder Lustig »mit einer hast du genug,« rief die zwei Burschen herbei und sprach »da nehmt die Gans und verzehrt sie auf meine Gesundheit.« Sie bedankten sich, gingen damit ins Wirtshaus, ließen sich eine Halbe Wein und ein Brot geben, packten die geschenkte Gans aus und fingen an zu essen. Die Wirtin sah zu und sprach zu ihrem Mann »die zwei essen eine Gans, sieh doch nach, obs nicht eine von unsern aus der Ofenröhre ist.« Der Wirt lief hin, da war die Ofenröhre leer: »was, ihr Diebsgesindel, so wohlfeil wollt ihr Gänse essen! gleich bezahlt, oder ich will euch mit grünem Haselsaft waschen.« Die zwei sprachen »wir sind keine Diebe, ein abgedankter Soldat hat uns die Gans draußen auf der Wiese geschenkt.« »Ihr sollt mir keine Nase drehen, der Soldat ist hier gewesen, aber als ein ehrlicher Kerl zur Tür hinausgegangen, auf den hab ich acht gehabt: ihr seid die Diebe und sollt bezahlen.« Da sie aber nicht bezahlen konnten, nahm er den Stock und prügelte sie zur Türe hinaus.

Bruder Lustig ging seiner Wege und kam an einen Ort, da stand ein prächtiges Schloß und nicht weit davon ein schlechtes Wirtshaus. Er ging in das Wirtshaus und bat um ein Nachtlager, aber der Wirt wies ihn ab und sprach »es ist kein Platz mehr da, das Haus ist voll vornehmer Gäste.« »Das nimmt mich wunder,« sprach der Bruder Lustig, »daß sie zu Euch kommen und nicht in das prächtige Schloß gehen.« »Ja,« antwortete der Wirt, »es hat was an sich, dort eine Nacht zu liegen, wers noch versucht hat, ist nicht lebendig wieder herausgekommen.« »Wenns andere versucht haben,« sagte der Bruder Lustig, »will ichs auch versuchen.« »Das laßt nur bleiben,« sprach der Wirt, »es geht Euch an den Hals.« »Es wird nicht gleich an den Hals gehen,« sagte der Bruder Lustig, »gebt mir nur die Schlüssel und brav Essen und Trinken mit.« Nun gab ihm der Wirt die Schlüssel und Essen und Trinken, und damit ging der Bruder Lustig ins Schloß, ließ sichs gut schmecken, und als er endlich schläfrig wurde, legte er sich auf die Erde, denn es war kein Bett da. Er schlief auch bald ein, in der Nacht aber wurde er von einem großen Lärm aufgeweckt, und wie er sich ermunterte, sah er neun häßliche Teufel in dem Zimmer, die hatten einen Kreis um ihn gemacht und tanzten um ihn herum. Sprach der Bruder Lustig »nun tanzt, solang ihr wollt, aber komm mir keiner zu nah.« Die Teufel aber drangen immer näher auf ihn ein und traten ihm mit ihren garstigen Füßen fast ins Gesicht. »Habt Ruh, ihr Teufelsgespenster,« sprach er, aber sie triebens immer ärger. Da ward der Bruder Lustig bös und rief »holla, ich will bald Ruhe stiften!« kriegte ein Stuhlbein und schlug mitten hinein. Aber neun Teufel gegen einen Soldaten war doch zuviel, und wenn er auf den vordern zuschlug, so packten ihn die andern hinten bei den Haaren und rissen ihn erbärmlich. »Teufelspack,« rief er, »jetzt wird mirs zu arg: wartet aber! Alle neune in meinen Ranzen hinein!« husch, steckten sie darin, und nun schnallte er ihn zu und warf ihn in eine Ecke. Da wars auf einmal still, und Bruder Lustig legte sich wieder hin und schlief bis an den hellen Morgen. Nun kamen der Wirt und der Edelmann, dem das Schloß gehörte, und wollten sehen, wie es ihm ergangen wäre; als sie ihn gesund und munter erblickten, erstaunten sie und fragten »haben Euch denn die Geister nichts getan?« »Warum nicht gar,« antwortete Bruder Lustig, »ich habe sie alle neune in meinem Ranzen. Ihr könnt Euer Schloß wieder ganz ruhig bewohnen, es wird von nun an keiner mehr darin umgehen!« Da dankte ihm der Edelmann, beschenkte ihn reichlich und bat ihn, in seinen Diensten zu bleiben, er wollte ihn auf sein Lebtag versorgen. »Nein,« antwortete er, »ich bin an das Herumwandern gewöhnt, ich will weiterziehen.« Da ging der Bruder Lustig fort, trat in eine Schmiede und legte den Ranzen, worin die neun Teufel waren, auf den Amboß, und bat den Schmied und seine Gesellen zuzuschlagen. Die schlugen mit ihren großen Hämmern aus allen Kräften zu, daß die Teufel ein erbärmliches Gekreisch erhoben. Wie er danach den Ranzen aufmachte, waren achte tot, einer aber, der in einer Falte gesessen hatte, war noch lebendig, schlüpfte heraus und fuhr wieder in die Hölle.

Darauf zog der Bruder Lustig noch lange in der Welt herum, und wers wüßte, könnte viel davon erzählen. Endlich aber wurde er alt und dachte an sein Ende, da ging er zu einem Einsiedler, der als ein frommer Mann bekannt war, und sprach zu ihm »ich bin das Wandern müde und will nun trachten, in das Himmelreich zu kommen.« Der Einsiedler antwortete »es gibt zwei Wege, der eine ist breit und angenehm und führt zur Hölle, der andere ist eng und rauh und führt zum Himmel.« »Da müßt ich ein Narr sein,« dachte der Bruder Lustig, »wenn ich den engen und rauhen Weg gehen sollte.« Machte sich auf und ging den breiten und angenehmen Weg, und kam endlich zu einem großen schwarzen Tor, und das war das Tor der Hölle. Bruder Lustig klopfte an, und der Torwächter guckte, wer da wäre. Wie er aber den Bruder Lustig sah, erschrak er, denn er war gerade der neunte Teufel, der mit in dem Ranzen gesteckt hatte und mit einem blauen Auge davongekommen war. Darum schob er den Riegel geschwind wieder vor, lief zum Obersten der Teufel und sprach »draußen ist ein Kerl mit einem Ranzen und will herein, aber laßt Ihn beileibe nicht herein, er wünscht sonst die ganze Hölle in seinen Ranzen. Er hat mich einmal garstig darin hämmern lassen.« Also ward dem Bruder Lustig hinausgerufen, er sollte wieder abgehen, er käme nicht herein. »Wenn sie mich da nicht wollen,« dachte er, »will ich sehen, ob ich im Himmel ein Unterkommen finde, irgendwo muß ich doch bleiben.« Kehrte also um und zog weiter, bis er vor das Himmelstor kam, wo er auch anklopfte. Der heilige Petrus saß gerade dabei als Torwächter: Der Bruder Lustig erkannte ihn gleich und dachte »hier findest du einen alten Freund, da wirds besser gehen.« Aber der heilige Petrus sprach »ich glaube gar, du willst in den Himmel?« »Laß mich doch ein, Bruder, ich muß doch wo einkehren; hätten sie mich in der Hölle aufgenommen, so wär ich nicht hierher gegangen.« »Nein,« sagte der heilige Petrus, »du kommst nicht herein.« »Nun, willst du mich nicht einlassen, so nimm auch deinen Ranzen wieder: dann will ich gar nichts von dir haben,« sprach der Bruder Lustig. »So gib ihn her,« sagte der heilige Petrus. Da reichte er den Ranzen durchs Gitter in den Himmel hinein, und der heilige Petrus nahm ihn und hing ihn neben seinen Sessel auf. Da sprach der Bruder Lustig »nun wünsch ich mich selbst in meinen Ranzen hinein.« Husch, war er darin, und saß nun im Himmel, und der heilige Petrus mußte ihn darin lassen.

82. De Spielhansl.

Is is emohl e Mon gewön, der hot ninx us (als) g’spielt, und do hobend’n d’Leut nur in Spielhansl g’hoaßen, und wal (weil) er gor nit afg’hört zen spieln, so hot er san (sein) Haus und ullss (alles) vespielt. Hietzt (jetzt), nette (eben) in lötzten Tog, eh’s iahm (ihm) d’Schuldne schon s’ Haus hobend wögnehme willn, is unse Herrgout un de halli Pedrus kemme und hobend g’sogt, er sull’s übe d’Nacht g’holte (bei sich behalten). Oft (da) hot de Spielhansl g’sogt »wögn meine kints do bleibn döi Nocht; ober i kong eng koan Bött und ninx z’össn (zu essen) gebn.« Oft hot unse Herrgout g’sogt, er sulls ne (nur) g’holten, und söi willetn ian (ihnen) selbe wos z’össn kaffen; dos is in Spielhansl recht g’wön. Oft hot iahm de halli Pedrus drei Grouschn gebn, un er sull zen Böcke (Bäcker) gehn und e Brod huhln. Hietzt is hullt (halt) de Spielhansl gonge, wie er aber ze den Haus kemme is, wou die onnen Spiellumpn drin g’wön sand, döi iahm ullss og’wunge hobnd, do hobn’s n g’ruefft und hobend g’schrien »Hansl, geh ahne (herein).« »Jo,« hot er g’sogt, »willt’s me die drei Grouschn a non og’winge.« Döi hobnd’n obe (aber) nit ausg’lossn. Hietzt is e hullt anhi (hinein) und oft hot e die drei Grouschn a non vespielt. De halli Pedrus und unse Herrgout hobnd ollewall (immer) g’wort’t, und wie er ian z’long nit kemme is, sand’s iahm intgögn gonge. De Spielhansl obe, wie er kemme is, hot ton, us wenn iahm’s Geld in ne Locken (Lacken) g’folln war, und hot ollewall drin herumkrobbelt: obe unse Herrgout hots schon g’wißt, daß e’s vespielt hot. Oft hot iahm de halli Pedrus non mohl drei Grouschn gebn. Hietzt hot e sie obe nimme veführn losse und hot ian s’ Brod brocht. Oft hot’n unse Herrgout g’frogt, wou e koan’n Wein nit hot, do hot e g’sogt »u, Herr, d’Fasse sand alli laar.« Oft hot unse Herrgout g’sogt, er sull ner in Költe (Keller) ohi (hinab) gehn, »is is non de böst Wein int.« Er hots long nit glaubn willn, obe af d’löst hot er g’sagt »i will ohi gehn, ober i woaß’s, daß koane int is.« Wie er obe’s Fassl onzapft hot, se is de böst Wein ausse g’runne. Hietzt hot er ian in Wein brocht, und döi zwoa sand übe d’Nocht do blieb’n. In onnen Tog, in de Früe, hot unse Herrgout zen Spielhansl g’sogt, er sull sie (sich) drei Gnodn ausbittn. Er hot g’moant, er wird sie ‘n Himmel ausbittn, obe de Spielhansl hot bettn um e Kortn, mit der er ulls g’wingt; um Würfl, mit den er a ullss g’wingt, und um en Bam (Baum), wo ulls Oubst draf wochst, und wonn oane (einer) affi steigt, daß er nimme ohe kon (herab kann), bis er iahm’s schofft (befiehlt). Hietzt hot iahm unse Herrgout ullss gebn, wos er velangt hot, un is mit’n hallin Pedrus wiede fuert (fort).

Hietzt hot hullt de Spielhansl erst recht zen spieln ong’fongt, und hätt bold d’ halbeti Welt zomg’wunge. Oft hot de halli Pedrus ze’n unse Herrgoutn g’sogt »Herr, dos Ding tuet koan guet, er g’winget af d’löst non (noch) d’ganzi Welt; me müeßn iahm in (den) Toid schickn.« Hietzt habends iahm in Toid g’schickt. Wie de Toid kemme is, is de Spielhansl nette be’n Spieltisch g’sössn; oft hot de Toid g’sogt »Hansl, kimm e Bissl ausse.« De Spielhansl obe hot g’sogt »wort nur e Bissl, bis dos G’spiel aus is, und steig dewall e weng af’n Bam do affi und brouck uns e wengerl wos o, daß me afn Wög wos z’noschn hobn.« Hiezt is hullt de Toid affi g’stiegn, und wie e wiede hot ohi wille, hot i nit kinne, und de Spielhansl hot’n sieben Johr droubn lossn, und dewall is koan Mensch nit g’storbn.

Oft hot de halli Pedrus zen unsen Herrgoutn g’sogt »Herr, dos Ding tuet koan guet, is sterbet jo koan Mensch mehr; mir müeßn schon selbe kemme.« Hietzt sand’s hullt selbe kemme, und do hot iahm unse Herrgout g’schofft, daß er in Toid ohe lossn sull. Oft is er obe glei gonge und hot zen Toid g’sogt »geh ohe,« und der hot’n glei g’numme und hot’n okragelt (erwürgt). Oft sands mit enonne fuert und sand in d’ onneri Welt kemme, do is hullt man (mein) Spielhansl zen Himmeltoir gonge und hot onkloupft. »Wer is draußt?« »De Spielhansl.« »Ach, den brauche me nit, geh ne wiede fuert.« Oft is e zen Fegfuirtoir gonge und hot wiede kloupft. »Wer is draußt?« »De Spielhansl.« »Ach is is e so (ohne das) Jomme und Noit g’nue be’n uns, mir willn nit spieln; geh ne wiede fuert.« Oft is e zehn Hüllntoir gonge, und do hoben’s n anhi lossn, is is obe niamd dehoambt g’wön, us de olti Luzifar und krumpn Tuifln (die g’rodn hobn af de Welt z’toan g’hot), und oft hot e si glei ine (nieder) g’sötzt und hot wiede zen spieln ong’fongt. Hietzt hot obe de Luzifar ninx g’hot, us sani krumpn Tuifln: döi hot iahm de Spielhans og’wunge, wall e mit sann Kortn ulls hot g’winge müeßn. Hietzt ist e mit sann krumpn Tuifln fuert, und oft sand’s af Hoihefuert (nach Hohenfuert), und hobnd d’ Houpfnstange ausg’rissn und san demit zen Himmel affi und hobnd zen wägn ong’fognt; und hietzt hot de Himmel schon krocht (gekracht). Oft hot de halli Pedrus wiede g’sogt »Herr, dos Ding tuet koan guet, mir müßn ne anhe (herein) lossn, sunst werfet er uns in Himml ohi (hinab).« Hietzt hobnd’s n’ hullt anhi lossen. Obe de Spielhansl hot glei wiede zen spieln ong’fongt, und do ist glei e Lärm und e Getös won (worden), daß me san oagns Wort nit verstondn hot. Oft hat de halli Pedrus wiede g’sogt »Herr, dos Ding tuet koan guet, mir müeßn ne ohi werfen, er machet uns sunst in gonzn Himml rewellisch.« Hietzt sands hullt her und hobnd’n ohe g’worfn, und da hot sie san Seel z’toalt (hat sich seine Seele zerteilt) und is in d’onnen Spiellumpn g’fohrn, döi non (noch) bis date lebnd.

83. Hans im Glück.

Hans hatte sieben Jahre bei seinem Herrn gedient, da sprach er zu ihm »Herr, meine Zeit ist herum, nun wollte ich gerne wieder heim zu meiner Mutter, gebt mir meinen Lohn.« Der Herr antwortete »du hast mir treu und ehrlich gedient, wie der Dienst war, so soll der Lohn sein,« und gab ihm ein Stück Gold, das so groß als Hansens Kopf war. Hans zog ein Tüchlein aus der Tasche, wickelte den Klumpen hinein, setzte ihn auf die Schulter und machte sich auf den Weg nach Haus. Wie er so dahinging und immer ein Bein vor das andere setzte, kam ihm ein Reiter in die Augen, der frisch und fröhlich auf einem muntern Pferd vorbeitrabte. »Ach,« sprach Hans ganz laut, »was ist das Reiten ein schönes Ding! da sitzt einer wie auf einem Stuhl, stößt sich an keinen Stein, spart die Schuh, und kommt fort, er weiß nicht wie.« Der Reiter, der das gehört hatte, hielt an und rief »ei, Hans, warum laufst du auch zu Fuß?« »Ich muß ja wohl,« antwortete er, »da habe ich einen Klumpen heim zu tragen: es ist zwar Gold, aber ich kann den Kopf dabei nicht gerad halten, auch drückt mirs auf die Schulter.« »Weißt du was,« sagte der Reiter, »wir wollen tauschen: ich gebe dir mein Pferd, und du gibst mir deinen Klumpen.« »Von Herzen gern,« sprach Hans, »aber ich sage Euch, Ihr müßt Euch damit schleppen.« Der Reiter stieg ab, nahm das Gold und half dem Hans hinauf, gab ihm die Zügel fest in die Hände und sprach »wenns nun recht geschwind soll gehen, so mußt du mit der Zunge schnalzen und hopp hopp rufen.«

Hans war seelenfroh, als er auf dem Pferde saß und so frank und frei dahinritt. Über ein Weilchen fiels ihm ein, es sollte noch schneller gehen, und fing an mit der Zunge zu schnalzen und hopp hopp zu rufen. Das Pferd setzte sich in starken Trab, und ehe sichs Hans versah, war er abgeworfen und lag in einem Graben, der die Äcker von der Landstraße trennte. Das Pferd wäre auch durchgegangen, wenn es nicht ein Bauer aufgehalten hätte, der des Weges kam und eine Kuh vor sich hertrieb. Hans suchte seine Glieder zusammen und machte sich wieder auf die Beine. Er war aber verdrießlich und sprach zu dem Bauer »es ist ein schlechter Spaß, das Reiten, zumal, wenn man auf so eine Mähre gerät, wie diese, die stößt und einen herabwirft, daß man den Hals brechen kann; ich setze mich nun und nimmermehr wieder auf. Da lob ich mir Eure Kuh, da kann einer mit Gemächlichkeit hinterhergehen, und hat obendrein seine Milch, Butter und Käse jeden Tag gewiß. Was gäb ich darum, wenn ich so eine Kuh hätte!« »Nun,« sprach der Bauer, »geschieht Euch so ein großer Gefallen, so will ich Euch wohl die Kuh für das Pferd vertauschen.« Hans willigte mit tausend Freuden ein: der Bauer schwang sich aufs Pferd und ritt eilig davon.

Hans trieb seine Kuh ruhig vor sich her und bedachte den glücklichen Handel. »Hab ich nur ein Stück Brot, und daran wird mirs noch nicht fehlen, so kann ich, sooft mirs beliebt, Butter und Käse dazu essen; hab ich Durst, so melk ich meine Kuh und trinke Milch. Herz, was verlangst du mehr?« Als er zu einem Wirtshaus kam, machte er halt, aß in der großen Freude alles, was er bei sich hatte, sein Mittags-und Abendbrot, rein auf, und ließ sich für seine letzten paar Heller ein halbes Glas Bier einschenken. Dann trieb er seine Kuh weiter, immer nach dem Dorfe seiner Mutter zu. Die Hitze ward drückender, je näher der Mittag kam, und Hans befand sich in einer Heide, die wohl noch eine Stunde dauerte. Da ward es ihm ganz heiß, so daß ihm vor Durst die Zunge am Gaumen klebte. »Dem Ding ist zu helfen,« dachte Hans, »jetzt will Ich meine Kuh melken und mich an der Milch laben.« Er band sie an einen dürren Baum, und da er keinen Eimer hatte, so stellte er seine Ledermütze unter, aber wie er sich auch bemühte, es kam kein Tropfen Milch zum Vorschein. Und weil er sich ungeschickt dabei anstellte, so gab ihm das ungeduldige Tier endlich mit einem der Hinterfüße einen solchen Schlag vor den Kopf, daß er zu Boden taumelte und eine Zeitlang sich gar nicht besinnen konnte, wo er war. Glücklicherweise kam gerade ein Metzger des Weges, der auf einem Schubkarren ein junges Schwein liegen hatte. »Was sind das für Streiche!« rief er und half dem guten Hans auf. Hans erzählte, was vorgefallen war. Der Metzger reichte ihm seine Flasche und sprach »da trinkt einmal und erholt Euch. Die Kuh will wohl keine Milch geben, das ist ein altes Tier, das höchstens noch zum Ziehen taugt oder zum Schlachten.« »Ei, ei,« sprach Hans und strich sich die Haare über den Kopf, »wer hätte das gedacht! es ist freilich gut, wenn man so ein Tier ins Haus abschlachten kann, was gibts für Fleisch! aber ich mache mir aus dem Kuhfleisch nicht viel, es ist mir nicht saftig genug. Ja, wer so ein junges Schwein hätte! das schmeckt anders, dabei noch die Würste.« »Hört, Hans,« sprach da der Metzger, »Euch zuliebe will ich tauschen und will Euch das Schwein für die Kuh lassen.« »Gott lohn Euch Eure Freundschaft,« sprach Hans, übergab ihm die Kuh, ließ sich das Schweinchen vom Karren losmachen und den Strick, woran es gebunden war, in die Hand geben.

Hans zog weiter und überdachte, wie ihm doch alles nach Wunsch ginge, begegnete ihm ja eine Verdrießlichkeit, so würde sie doch gleich wieder gutgemacht. Es gesellte sich danach ein Bursch zu ihm, der trug eine schöne weiße Gans unter dem Arm. Sie boten einander die Zeit, und Hans fing an, von seinem Glück zu erzählen, und wie er immer so vorteilhaft getauscht hätte. Der Bursch erzählte ihm, daß er die Gans zu einem Kindtaufschmaus brächte. »Hebt einmal,« fuhr er fort und packte sie bei den Flügeln, »wie schwer sie ist, die ist aber auch acht Wochen lang genudelt worden. Wer in den Braten beißt, muß sich das Fett von beiden Seiten abwischen.« »Ja,« sprach Hans, und wog sie mit der einen Hand, »die hat ihr Gewicht, aber mein Schwein ist auch keine Sau.« Indessen sah sich der Bursch nach allen Seiten ganz bedenklich um, schüttelte auch wohl mit dem Kopf. »Hört,« fing er darauf an, »mit Eurem Schweine mags nicht ganz richtig sein. In dem Dorfe, durch das ich gekommen bin, ist eben dem Schulzen eins aus dem Stall gestohlen worden. Ich fürchte, ich fürchte, Ihr habts da in der Hand. Sie haben Leute ausgeschickt, und es wäre ein schlimmer Handel, wenn sie Euch mit dem Schwein erwischten: das Geringste ist, daß Ihr ins finstere Loch gesteckt werdet.« Dem guten Hans ward bang, »ach Gott,« sprach er, »helft mir aus der Not, Ihr wißt hier herum bessern Bescheid, nehmt mein

Schwein da und laßt mir Eure Gans.« »Ich muß schon etwas aufs Spiel setzen,« antwortete der Bursche, »aber ich will doch nicht schuld sein, daß Ihr ins Unglück geratet.« Er nahm also das Seil in die Hand und trieb das Schwein schnell auf einen Seiten weg fort: der gute Hans aber ging, seiner Sorgen entledigt, mit der Gans unter dem Arme der Heimat zu. »Wenn ichs recht überlege,« sprach er mit sich selbst, »habe ich noch Vorteil bei dem Tausch: erstlich den guten Braten, hernach die Menge von Fett, die herausträufeln wird, das gibt Gänsefettbrot auf ein Vierteljahr, und endlich die schönen weißen Federn, die laß ich mir in mein Kopfkissen stopfen, und darauf will ich wohl ungewiegt einschlafen. Was wird meine Mutter eine Freude haben!«

Als er durch das letzte Dorf gekommen war, stand da ein Scherenschleifer mit seinem Karren, sein Rad schnurrte, und er sang dazu.

»ich schleife die Schere und drehe geschwind,
und hänge mein Mäntelchen nach dem Wind.«

Hans blieb stehen und sah ihm zu; endlich redete er ihn an und sprach »Euch gehts wohl, weil Ihr so lustig bei Eurem Schleifen seid.« »Ja,« antwortete der Scherenschleifer, »das Handwerk hat einen güldenen Boden. Ein rechter Schleifer ist ein Mann, der, sooft er in die Tasche greift, auch Geld darin findet. Aber wo habt Ihr die schöne Gans gekauft?« »Die hab ich nicht gekauft, sondern für mein Schwein eingetauscht.« »Und das Schwein?« »Das hab ich für eine Kuh gekriegt.« »Und die Kuh?« »Die hab ich für ein Pferd bekommen.« »Und das Pferd?« »Dafür hab ich einen Klumpen Gold, so groß als mein Kopf, gegeben.« »Und das Gold?« »Ei, das war mein Lohn für sieben Jahre Dienst.« »Ihr habt Euch jederzeit zu helfen gewußt,« sprach der Schleifer, »könnt Ihrs nun dahin bringen, daß Ihr das Geld in der Tasche springen hört, wenn Ihr aufsteht, so habt Ihr Euer Glück gemacht.« »Wie soll ich das anfangen?« sprach Hans. »Ihr müßt ein Schleifer werden wie ich; dazu gehört eigentlich nichts als ein Wetzstein, das andere findet sich schon von selbst. Da hab ich einen, der ist zwar ein wenig schadhaft, dafür sollt Ihr mir aber auch weiter nichts als Eure Gans geben; wollt Ihr das?« »Wie könnt Ihr noch fragen,« antwortete Hans, »ich werde ja zum glücklichsten Menschen auf Erden; habe ich Geld, sooft ich in die Tasche greife, was brauche ich da länger zu sorgen?« reichte ihm die Gans hin, und nahm den Wetzstein in Empfang. »Nun,« sprach der Schleifer und hob einen gewöhnlichen schweren Feldstein, der neben ihm lag, auf, »da habt Ihr noch einen tüchtigen Stein dazu, auf dem sichs gut schlagen läßt und Ihr Eure alten Nägel gerade klopfen könnt. Nehmt ihn und hebt ihn ordentlich auf.«

Hans lud den Stein auf und ging mit vergnügtem Herzen weiter; seine Augen leuchteten vor Freude, »ich muß in einer Glückshaut geboren sein,« rief er aus »alles, was ich wünsche, trifft mir ein, wie einem Sonntagskind.« Indessen, weil er seit Tagesanbruch auf den Beinen gewesen war, begann er müde zu werden; auch plagte ihn der Hunger, da er allen Vorrat auf einmal in der Freude über die erhandelte Kuh aufgezehrt hatte. Er konnte endlich nur mit Mühe weitergehen und mußte jeden Augenblick halt machen; dabei drückten ihn die Steine ganz erbärmlich. Da konnte er sich des Gedankens nicht erwehren, wie gut es wäre, wenn er sie gerade jetzt nicht zu tragen brauchte. Wie eine Schnecke kam er zu einem Feldbrunnen geschlichen, wollte da ruhen und sich mit einem frischen Trunk laben: damit er aber die Steine im Niedersitzen nicht beschädigte, legte er sie bedächtig neben sich auf den Rand des Brunnens. Darauf setzte er sich nieder und wollte sich zum Trinken bücken, da versah ers, stieß ein klein wenig an, und beide Steine plumpten hinab. Hans, als er sie mit seinen Augen in die Tiefe hatte versinken sehen, sprang vor Freuden auf, kniete dann nieder und dankte Gott mit Tränen in den Augen, daß er ihm auch diese Gnade noch erwiesen und ihn auf eine so gute Art, und ohne daß er sich einen Vorwurf zu machen brauchte, von den schweren Steinen befreit hätte, die ihm allein noch hinderlich gewesen wären. »So glücklich wie ich,« rief er aus, »gibt es keinen Menschen unter der Sonne.« Mit leichtem Herzen und frei von aller Last sprang er nun fort, bis er daheim bei seiner Mutter war.

84. Hans heiratet.

Es war einmal ein junger Bauer, der hieß Hans, dem wollte sein Vetter gern eine reiche Frau werben. Da setzte er den Hans hinter den Ofen und ließ ihn gut einheizen. Dann holte er einen Topf Milch und eine gute Menge Weißbrot, gab ihm einen neugemünzten glänzenden Heller in die Hand und sprach »Hans, den Heller da halt fest, und das Weißbrot, das brocke in die Milch, und bleib da sitzen, und geh mir nicht von der Stelle, bis ich wiederkomme.« »Ja,« sprach der Hans, »das will ich alles ausrichten.« Nun zog der Werber ein paar alte verplackte Hosen an, ging ins andere Dorf zu einer reichen Bauerntochter und sprach »wollt Ihr nicht meinen Vetter Hans heiraten? Ihr kriegt einen wackern und gescheiten Mann, der Euch gefallen wird.« Fragte der geizige Vater »wie siehts aus mit seinem Vermögen? hat er auch was einzubrocken?« »Lieber Freund,« antwortete der Werber, »mein junger Vetter sitzt warm, hat einen guten schönen Pfennig in der Hand, und hat wohl einzubrocken. Er sollte auch nicht weniger Placken (wie man die Güter nannte) zählen als ich,« und schlug sich dabei auf seine geplackte Hose. »Wollt Ihr Euch die Mühe nehmen, mit mir hinzugehen, soll Euch zur Stunde gezeigt werden, daß alles so ist, wie ich sage.« Da woll te der Geizhals die gute Gelegenheit nicht fahren lassen und sprach »wenn dem so ist, so habe ich weiter nichts gegen die Heirat.« Nun ward die Hochzeit an dem bestimmten Tag gefeiert, und als die junge Frau ins Feld gehen und die Güter des Bräutigams sehen wollte, zog Hans erst sein sonntägliches Kleid aus und seinen verplackten Kittel an und sprach »ich könnte mir das gute Kleid verunehren.« Da gingen sie zusammen ins Feld, und wo sich auf dem Weg der Weinstock abzeichnete, oder Äcker und Wiesen abgeteilt waren, deutete Hans mit dem Finger und schlug dann an einen großen oder kleinen Placken seines Kittels und sprach »der Placken ist mein und jener auch, mein Schatz, schauet nur danach,« und wollte damit sagen, die Frau sollte nicht in das weite Feld gaffen, sondern auf sein Kleid schauen, das wäre sein eigen.

»Bist du auch auf der Hochzeit gewesen?« »Jawohl bin ich darauf gewesen, und in vollem Staat. Mein Kopfputz war von Schnee, da kam die Sonne, und er ist mir abgeschmolzen; mein Kleid war von Spinneweb, da kam ich durch Dornen, die rissen mir es ab; meine Pantoffel waren von Glas, da stieß ich an einen Stein, da sagten sie klink! und sprangen entzwei.«

85. Die Goldkinder.

Es war ein armer Mann und eine arme Frau, die hatten nichts als eine kleine Hütte und nährten sich vom Fischfang, und es ging bei ihnen von Hand zu Mund. Es geschah aber, als der Mann eines Tages beim Wasser saß und sein Netz auswarf, daß er einen Fisch herauszog, der ganz golden war. Und als er den Fisch voll Verwunderung betrachtete, hub dieser an zu reden und sprach »hör, Fischer, wirfst du mich wieder hinab ins Wasser, so mach ich deine kleine Hütte zu einem prächtigen Schloß.« Da antwortete der Fischer »was hilft mir ein Schloß, wenn ich nichts zu essen habe?« Sprach der Goldfisch weiter »auch dafür soll gesorgt sein, es wird ein Schrank im Schloß sein, wenn du den aufschließest, so stehen Schüsseln darin mit den schönsten Speisen, soviel du dir wünschest.« »Wenn das ist,« sprach der Mann, »so kann ich dir wohl den Gefallen tun.« »Ja,« sagte der Fisch, »es ist aber die Bedingung dabei, daß du keinem Menschen auf der Welt, wer es auch immer sein mag, entdeckst, woher dein Glück gekommen ist; sprichst du ein einziges Wort, so ist alles vorbei.«

Nun warf der Mann den wunderbaren Fisch wieder ins Wasser und ging heim. Wo aber sonst seine Hütte gestanden hatte, da stand jetzt ein großes Schloß. Da machte er ein paar Augen, trat hinein und sah seine Frau, mit schönen Kleidern geputzt, in einer prächtigen Stube sitzen. Sie war ganz vergnügt und sprach »Mann, wie ist das auf einmal gekommen? das gefällt mir wohl.« »Ja,« sagte der Mann, »es gefällt mir auch, aber es hungert mich auch gewaltig, gibt mir erst was zu essen.« Sprach die Frau »ich habe nichts und weiß in dem neuen Haus nichts zu finden.« »Das hat keine Not,« sagte der Mann, »dort sehe ich einen großen Schrank, den schließ einmal auf.« Wie sie den Schrank aufschloß, stand da Kuchen, Fleisch, Obst, Wein, und lachte einen ordentlich an. Da rief die Frau voll Freude »Herz, was begehrst du nun?« und sie setzten sich nieder, aßen und tranken zusammen. Wie sie satt waren, fragte die Frau »aber, Mann, wo kommt all dieser Reichtum her?« »Ach,« antwortete er, »frage mich nicht darum, ich darf dirs nicht sagen, wenn ichs jemand entdecke, so ist unser Glück wieder dahin.« »Gut,« sprach sie »wenn ichs nicht wissen soll, so begehr ichs auch nicht zu wissen.« Das war aber ihr Ernst nicht, es ließ ihr keine Ruhe Tag und Nacht, und sie quälte und stachelte den Mann so lang, bis er in der Ungeduld heraussagte, es käme alles von einem wunderbaren goldenen Fisch, den er gefangen und dafür wieder in Freiheit gelassen hätte. Und wies heraus war, da verschwand alsbald das schöne Schloß mit dem Schrank, und sie saßen wieder in der alten Fischerhütte.

Der Mann mußte von vornen anfangen, seinem Gewerbe nachgehen und fischen. Das Glück wollte es aber, daß er den goldenen Fisch noch einmal herauszog. »Hör,« sprach der Fisch, »wenn du mich wieder ins Wasser wirfst, so will ich dir noch einmal das Schloß mit dem Schrank voll Gesottenem und Gebratenem zurückgeben; nur halt dich fest und verrat beileibe nicht, von wem dus hast, sonst gehts wieder verloren.« »Ich will mich schon hüten,« antwortete der Fischer und warf den Fisch in sein Wasser hinab. Daheim war nun alles wieder in voriger Herrlichkeit, und die Frau war in einer Freude über das Glück; aber die Neugierde ließ ihr doch keine Ruhe, daß sie nach ein paar Tagen wieder zu fragen anhub, wie es zugegangen wäre, und wie er es angefangen habe. Der Mann schwieg eine Zeitlang still dazu, endlich aber machte sie ihn so ärgerlich, daß er herausplatzte und das Geheimnis verriet. In dem Augenblick verschwand das Schloß, und sie saßen wieder in der alten Hütte. »Nun hast dus,« sagte der Mann, »jetzt können wir wieder am Hungertuch nagen.« »Ach,« sprach die Frau »ich will den Reichtum lieber nicht, wenn ich nicht weiß, von wem er kommt; sonst habe ich doch keine Ruhe.«

Der Mann ging wieder fischen, und über eine Zeit, so wars nicht anders, er holte den Goldfisch zum drittenmal heraus. »Hör,« sprach der Fisch, »ich sehe wohl, ich soll immer wieder in deine Hände fallen, nimm mich mit nach Haus und zerschneid mich in sechs Stücke, zwei davon gib deiner Frau zu essen, zwei deinem Pferd, und zwei leg in die Erde, so wirst du Segen davon haben.« Der Mann nahm den Fisch mit nach Haus und tat, wie er ihm gesagt hatte. Es geschah aber, daß aus den zwei Stücken, die in die Erde gelegt waren, zwei goldene Lilien aufwuchsen, und daß das Pferd zwei goldene Füllen bekam, und des Fischers Frau zwei Kinder gebar, die ganz golden waren.

Die Kinder wuchsen heran, wurden groß und schön, und die Lilien und Pferde wuchsen mit ihnen. Da sprachen sie »Vater, wir wollen uns auf unsere goldenen Rosse setzen und in die Welt ausziehen.« Er aber antwortete betrübt »wie will ichs aushalten, wenn ihr fortzieht und ich nicht weiß, wies euch geht?« Da sagten sie »die zwei goldenen Lilien bleiben hier, daran könnt ihr sehen, wies uns geht: sind sie frisch, so sind wir gesund; sind sie welk, so sind wir krank; fallen sie um, so sind wir tot.« Sie ritten fort und kamen in ein Wirtshaus, darin waren viele Leute, und als sie die zwei Goldkinder erblickten, fingen sie an zu lachen und zu spotten. Wie der eine das Gespött hörte, so schämte er sich, wollte nicht in die Welt, kehrte um und kam wieder heim zu seinem Vater. Der andere aber ritt fort und gelangte zu einem großen Wald. Und als er hineinreiten wollte, sprachen die Leute »es geht nicht, daß Ihr durchreitet, der Wald ist voll Räuber, die werden übel mit Euch umgehen, und gar, wenn sie sehen, daß Ihr golden seid und Euer Pferd auch, so werden sie Euch totschlagen.« Er aber ließ sich nicht schrecken und sprach »ich muß und soll hindurch.« Da nahm er Bärenfelle und überzog sich und sein Pferd damit, daß nichts mehr vom Gold zu sehen war, und ritt getrost in den Wald hinein. Als er ein wenig fortgeritten war, so hörte er es in den Gebüschen rauschen und vernahm Stimmen, die miteinander sprachen. Von der einen Seite riefs »da ist einer,« von der andern aber »laß ihn laufen, das ist ein Bärenhäuter, und arm und kahl wie eine Kirchenmaus, was sollen wir mit ihm anfangen!« So ritt das Goldkind glücklich durch den Wald, und geschah ihm kein Leid.

Eines Tages kam er in ein Dorf, darin sah er ein Mädchen, das war so schön, daß er nicht glaubte, es könnte ein schöneres auf der Welt sein. Und weil er eine so große Liebe zu ihm empfand, so ging er zu ihm und sagte »ich habe dich von ganzem Herzen lieb, willst du meine Frau werden?« Er gefiel aber auch dem Mädchen so sehr, daß es einwilligte und sprach »ja, ich will deine Frau werden und dir treu sein mein lebelang.« Nun hielten sie Hochzeit zusammen, und als sie eben in der größten Freude waren, kam der Vater der Braut heim, und als er sah, daß seine Tochter Hochzeit machte, verwunderte er sich und sprach »wo ist der Bräutigam?« Sie zeigten ihm das Goldkind, das hatte aber noch seine Bärenfelle um. Da sprach der Vater zornig »nimmermehr soll ein Bärenhäuter meine Tochter haben,« und wollte ihn ermorden. Da bat ihn die Braut, was sie konnte, und sprach »er ist einmal mein Mann, und ich habe ihn von Herzen lieb,« bis er sich endlich besänftigen ließ. Doch aber kams ihm nicht aus den Gedanken, so daß er am andern Morgen früh aufstand und seiner Tochter Mann sehen wollte, ob er ein gemeiner und verlumpter Bettler wäre. Wie er aber hinblickte, sah er einen herrlichen, goldenen Mann im Bette, und die abgeworfenen Bärenfelle lagen auf der Erde. Da ging er zurück und dachte »wie gut ists, daß ich meinen Zorn bändigte, ich hätte eine große Missetat begangen.«

Dem Goldkind aber träumte, er zöge hinaus auf die Jagd nach einem prächtigen Hirsch, und als er am Morgen erwachte, sprach er zu seiner Braut »ich will hinaus auf die Jagd.« Ihr war angst, und sie bat ihn dazubleiben und sagte »leicht kann dir ein großes Unglück begegnen,« aber er antwortete »ich soll und muß fort.« Da stand er auf und zog hinaus in den Wald, und gar nicht lange, so hielt auch ein stolzer Hirsch vor ihm, ganz nach seinem Traume. Er legte an und wollte ihn schießen, aber der Hirsch sprang fort. Da jagte er ihm nach, über Graben und durch Gebüsche, und ward nicht müde den ganzen Tag; am Abend aber verschwand der Hirsch vor seinen Augen. Und als das Goldkind sich umsah, so stand er vor einem kleinen Haus, darin saß eine Hexe. Er klopfte an, und ein Mütterchen kam heraus und fragte »was wollt Ihr so spät noch mitten in dem großen Wald?« Er sprach »habt Ihr keinen Hirsch gesehen?« »Ja,« antwortete sie, »den Hirsch kenn ich wohl,« und ein Hündlein, das mit ihr aus dem Haus gekommen war, bellte dabei den Mann heftig an. »Willst du schweigen, du böse Kröte,« sprach er, »sonst schieß ich dich tot.« Da rief die Hexe zornig »was, mein Hündchen willst du töten!« und verwandelte ihn alsbald, daß er dalag wie ein Stein, und seine Braut erwartete ihn umsonst und dachte »es ist gewiß eingetroffen, was mir so angst machte und so schwer auf dem Herzen lag.«

Daheim aber stand der andere Bruder bei den Goldlilien, als plötzlich eine davon umfiel. »Ach Gott,« sprach er »meinem Bruder ist ein großes Unglück zugestoßen, ich muß fort, ob ich ihn vielleicht errette.« Da sagte der Vater »bleib hier, wenn ich auch dich verliere, was soll ich anfangen?« Er aber antwortete »ich soll und muß fort.« Da setzte er sich auf sein goldenes Pferd und ritt fort und kam in den großen Wald, wo sein Bruder lag und Stein war. Die alte Hexe kam aus ihrem Haus, rief ihn an und wollte ihn auch berücken, aber er näherte sich nicht, sondern sprach »ich schieße dich nieder, wenn du meinen Bruder nicht wieder lebendig machst.« Sie rührte, so ungerne sies auch tat, den Stein mit dem Finger an, und alsbald erhielt er sein menschliches Leben zurück. Die beiden Goldkinder aber freuten sich, als sie sich wiedersahen, küßten und herzten sich, und ritten zusammen fort aus dem Wald, der eine zu seiner Braut, der andere heim zu seinem Vater. Da sprach der Vater »ich wußte wohl, daß du deinen Bruder erlöst hattest, denn die goldene Lilie ist auf einmal wieder aufgestanden und hat fortgeblüht.« Nun lebten sie vergnügt, und es ging ihnen wohl bis an ihr Ende.

86. Der Fuchs und die Gänse.

Der Fuchs kam einmal auf eine Wiese, wo eine Herde schöner fetter Gänse saß, da lachte er und sprach »ich komme ja wie gerufen, ihr sitzt hübsch beisammen, so kann ich eine nach der andern auffressen.« Die Gänse gackerten vor Schrecken, sprangen auf, fingen an zu jammern und kläglich um ihr Leben zu bitten. Der Fuchs aber wollte auf nichts hören und sprach »da ist keine Gnade, ihr müßt sterben.« Endlich nahm sich eine das Herz und sagte »sollen wir armen Gänse doch einmal unser jung frisch Leben lassen, so erzeige uns die einzige Gnade und erlaub uns noch ein Gebet, damit wir nicht in unsern Sünden sterben: hernach wollen wir uns auch in eine Reihe stellen, damit du dir immer die fetteste aussuchen kannst.« »Ja,« sagte der Fuchs, »das ist billig, und ist eine fromme Bitte: betet, ich will so lange warten.« Also fing die erste ein recht langes Gebet an, immer »ga! ga!« und weil sie gar nicht aufhören wollte, wartete die zweite nicht, bis die Reihe an sie kam, sondern fing auch an »ga! ga!« Die dritte und vierte folgte ihr, und bald gackerten sie alle zusammen. (Und wenn sie ausgebetet haben, soll das Märchen weitererzählt werden, sie beten aber alleweile noch immer fort.)

87. Der Arme und der Reiche.

Vor alten Zeiten, als der liebe Gott noch selber auf Erden unter den Menschen wandelte, trug es sich zu, daß er eines Abends müde war und ihn die Nacht überfiel, bevor er zu einer Herberge kommen konnte. Nun standen auf dem Weg vor ihm zwei Häuser einander gegenüber, das eine groß und schön, das andere klein und ärmlich anzusehen, und gehörte das große einem reichen, das kleine einem armen Manne. Da dachte unser Herrgott »dem Reichen werde ich nicht beschwerlich fallen: bei ihm will ich übernachten.« Der Reiche, als er an seine Türe klopfen hörte, machte das Fenster auf und fragte den Fremdling, was er suche. Der Herr antwortete »ich bitte um ein Nachtlager.« Der Reiche guckte den Wandersmann von Haupt bis zu den Füßen an, und weil der liebe Gott schlichte Kleider trug und nicht aussah wie einer, der viel Geld in der Tasche hat, schüttelte er mit dem Kopf und sprach »ich kann Euch nicht aufnehmen, meine Kammern liegen voll Krauter und Samen, und sollte ich einen jeden beherbergen, der an meine Tür klopft, so könnte ich selber den Bettelstab in die Hand nehmen. Sucht Euch anderswo ein Auskommen.« Schlug damit sein Fenster zu und ließ den lieben Gott stehen. Also kehrte ihm der liebe Gott den Rücken und ging hinüber zu dem kleinen Haus. Kaum hatte er angeklopft, so klinkte der Arme schon sein Türchen auf und bat den Wandersmann einzutreten. »Bleibt die Nacht über bei mir,« sagte er, »es ist schon finster, und heute könnt Ihr doch nicht weiterkommen.« Das gefiel dem lieben Gott, und er trat zu ihm ein. Die Frau des Armen reichte ihm die Hand, hieß ihn willkommen und sagte, er möchte sichs bequem machen und vorlieb nehmen, sie hätten nicht viel, aber was es wäre, gäben sie von Herzen gerne. Dann setzte sie Kartoffeln ans Feuer, und derweil sie kochten, melkte sie ihre Ziege, damit sie ein wenig Milch dazu hätten. Und als der Tisch gedeckt war, setzte sich der liebe Gott nieder und aß mit ihnen, und schmeckte ihm die schlechte Kost gut, denn es waren vergnügte Gesichter dabei. Nachdem sie gegessen hatten und Schlafenszeit war, rief die Frau heimlich ihren Mann und sprach »hör, lieber Mann, wir wollen uns heute nacht eine Streu machen, damit der arme Wanderer sich in unser Bett legen und ausruhen kann: er ist den ganzen Tag über gegangen, da wird einer müde.« »Von Herzen gern,« antwortete er, »ich wills ihm anbieten,« ging zu dem lieben Gott und bat ihn, wenns ihm recht wäre, möchte er sich in ihr Bett legen und seine Glieder ordentlich ausruhen. Der liebe Gott wollte den beiden Alten ihr Lager nicht nehmen, aber sie ließen nicht ab, bis er es endlich tat und sich in ihr Bett legte: sich selbst aber machten sie eine Streu auf die Erde. Am andern Morgen standen sie vor Tag schon auf und kochten dem Gast ein Frühstück, so gut sie es hatten. Als nun die Sonne durchs Fensterlein schien und der liebe Gott aufgestanden war, aß er wieder mit ihnen und wollte dann seines Weges ziehen. Als er in der Türe stand, kehrte er sich um und sprach »weil ihr so mitleidig und fromm seid, so wünscht euch dreierlei, das will ich euch erfüllen.« Da sagte der Arme »was soll ich mir sonst wünschen als die ewige Seligkeit, und daß wir zwei, solang wir leben, gesund dabei bleiben und unser notdürftiges tägliches Brot haben; fürs dritte weiß ich mir nichts zu wünschen.« Der liebe Gott sprach »willst du dir nicht ein neues Haus für das alte wünschen?« »O ja,« sagte der Mann, »wenn ich das auch noch erhalten kann, so war mirs wohl lieb.« Da erfüllte der Herr ihre Wünsche, verwandelte ihr altes Haus in ein neues, gab ihnen nochmals seinen Segen und zog weiter.

Es war schon voller Tag, als der Reiche aufstand. Er legte sich ins Fenster und sah gegenüber ein neues reinliches Haus mit roten Ziegeln, wo sonst eine alte Hütte gestanden hatte. Da machte er große Augen, rief seine Frau herbei und sprach »sag mir, was ist geschehen? Gestern abend stand noch die alte elende Hütte, und heute steht da ein schönes neues Haus. Lauf hinüber und höre, wie das gekommen ist.« Die Frau ging und fragte den Armen aus: er erzählte ihr »gestern abend kam ein Wanderer, der suchte Nachtherberge, und heute morgen beim Abschied hat er uns drei Wünsche gewährt, die ewige Seligkeit, Gesundheit in diesem Leben und das notdürftige tägliche Brot dazu, und zuletzt noch statt unserer alten Hütte ein schönes neues Haus.« Die Frau des Reichen lief eilig zurück und erzählte ihrem Manne, wie alles gekommen war. Der Mann sprach »ich möchte mich zerreißen und zerschlagen: hätte ich das nur gewußt! der Fremde ist zuvor hier gewesen und hat bei uns übernachten wollen, ich habe ihn aber abgewiesen.« »Eil dich,« sprach die Frau, »und setze dich auf dein Pferd, so kannst du den Mann noch einholen, und dann mußt du dir auch drei Wünsche gewähren lassen.«

Der Reiche befolgte den guten Rat, jagte mit seinem Pferd davon und holte den lieben Gott noch ein. Er redete fein und lieblich und bat, er möchts nicht übelnehmen, daß er nicht gleich wäre eingelassen worden, er hätte den Schlüssel zur Haustüre gesucht, derweil wäre er weggegangen: wenn er des Weges zurückkäme, müßte er bei ihm einkehren. »Ja,« sprach der liebe Gott, »wenn ich einmal zurückkomme, will ich es tun.« Da fragte der Reiche, ob er nicht auch drei Wünsche tun dürfte wie sein Nachbar. Ja, sagte der liebe Gott, das dürfte er wohl, es wäre aber nicht gut für ihn, und er sollte sich lieber nichts wünschen. Der Reiche meinte, er wollte sich schon etwas aussuchen, das zu seinem Glück gereiche, wenn er nur wüßte, daß es erfüllt würde. Sprach der liebe Gott »reit heim, und drei Wünsche, die du tust, die sollen in Erfüllung gehen.«

Nun hatte der Reiche, was er verlangte, ritt heimwärts und fing an nachzusinnen, was er sich wünschen sollte. Wie er sich so bedachte und die Zügel fallen ließ, fing das Pferd an zu springen, so daß er immerfort in seinen Gedanken gestört wurde und sie gar nicht zusammenbringen konnte. Er klopfte ihm an den Hals und sagte »sei ruhig, Liese,« aber das Pferd machte aufs neue Männerchen. Da ward er zuletzt ärgerlich und rief ganz ungeduldig »so wollt ich, daß du den Hals zerbrächst!« Wie er das Wort ausgesprochen hatte, plump, fiel er auf die Erde, und lag das Pferd tot und regte sich nicht mehr; damit war der erste Wunsch erfüllt. Weil er aber von Natur geizig war, wollte er das Sattelzeug nicht im Stich lassen, Schnitts ab, hings auf seinen Rücken, und mußte nun zu Fuß gehen. »Du hast noch zwei Wünsche übrig,« dachte er und tröstete sich damit. Wie er nun langsam durch den Sand dahinging und zu Mittag die Sonne heiß brannte, wards ihm so warm und verdrießlich zumut: der Sattel drückte ihn auf den Rücken, auch war ihm noch immer nicht eingefallen, was er sich wünschen sollte. »Wenn ich mir auch alle Reiche und Schätze der Welt wünsche,« sprach er zu sich selbst, »so fällt mir hernach noch allerlei ein, dieses und jenes, das weiß ich im voraus; ich wills aber so einrichten, daß mir gar nichts mehr übrig zu wünschen bleibt.« Dann seufzte er und sprach »ja, wenn ich der bayerische Bauer wäre, der auch drei Wünsche frei hatte, der wußte sich zu helfen, der wünschte sich zuerst recht viel Bier, und zweitens so viel Bier, als er trinken könnte, und drittens noch ein Faß Bier dazu.« Manchmal meinte er, jetzt hätte er es gefunden, aber hernach schiens ihm doch noch zu wenig. Da kam ihm so in die Gedanken, was es seine Frau jetzt gut hätte, die säße daheim in einer kühlen Stube und ließe sichs wohl schmecken. Das ärgerte ihn ordentlich, und ohne daß ers wußte, sprach er so hin »ich wollte, die säße daheim auf dem Sattel und könnte nicht herunter, statt daß ich ihn da auf meinem Rücken schleppe.« Und wie das letzte Wort aus seinem Munde kam, so war der Sattel von seinem Rücken verschwunden, und er merkte, daß sein zweiter Wunsch auch in Erfüllung gegangen war. Da ward ihm erst recht heiß, er fing an zu laufen und wollte sich daheim ganz einsam in seine Kammer hinsetzen und auf etwas Großes für den letzten Wunsch sinnen. Wie er aber ankommt und die Stubentür aufmacht, sitzt da seine Frau mittendrin auf dem Sattel und kann nicht herunter, jammert und schreit. Da sprach er »gib dich zufrieden, ich will dir alle Reichtümer der Welt herbeiwünschen, nur bleib da sitzen.« Sie schalt ihn aber einen Schafskopf und sprach »was helfen mir alle Reichtümer der Welt, wenn ich auf dem Sattel sitze; du hast mich daraufgewünscht, du mußt mir auch wieder herunterhelfen.« Er mochte wollen oder nicht, er mußte den dritten Wunsch tun, daß sie vom Sattel ledig wäre und heruntersteigen könnte; und der Wunsch ward alsbald erfüllt. Also hatte er nichts davon als Ärger, Mühe, Scheltworte und ein verlornes Pferd: die Armen aber lebten vergnügt, still und fromm bis an ihr seliges Ende.

88. Das singende springende Löweneckerchen.

Es war einmal ein Mann, der hatte eine große Reise vor, und beim Abschied fragte er seine drei Töchter, was er ihnen mitbringen sollte. Da wollte die älteste Perlen, die zweite wollte Diamanten, die dritte aber sprach »lieber Vater, ich wünsche mir ein singendes springendes Löweneckerchen (Lerche).« Der Vater sagte »ja, wenn ich es kriegen kann, sollst du es haben,« küßte alle drei und zog fort. Als nun die Zeit kam, daß er wieder auf dem Heimweg war, so hatte er Perlen und Diamanten für die zwei ältesten gekauft, aber das singende springende Löweneckerchen für die jüngste hatte er umsonst allerorten gesucht, und das tat ihm leid, denn sie war sein liebstes Kind. Da führte ihn der Weg durch einen Wald, und mitten darin war ein prächtiges Schloß, und nah am Schloß stand ein Baum, ganz oben auf der Spitze des Baumes aber sah er ein Löweneckerchen singen und springen. »Ei, du kommst mir gerade recht,« sagte er ganz vergnügt und rief seinem Diener, er sollte hinaufsteigen und das Tierchen fangen. Wie er aber zu dem Baum trat, sprang ein Löwe darunter auf, schüttelte sich und brüllte, daß das Laub an den Bäumen zitterte. »Wer mir mein singendes springendes Löweneckerchen stehlen will,« rief er, »den fresse ich auf.« Da sagte der Mann »ich habe nicht gewußt, daß der Vogel dir gehört: ich will mein Unrecht wieder gutmachen und mich mit schwerem Golde loskaufen, laß mir nur das Leben.« Der Löwe sprach »dich kann nichts retten, als wenn du mir zu eigen versprichst, was dir daheim zuerst begegnet; willst du das aber tun, so schenke ich dir das Leben und den Vogel für deine Tochter obendrein.« Der Mann aber weigerte sich und sprach »das könnte meine jüngste Tochter sein, die hat mich am liebsten und läuft mir immer entgegen, wenn ich nach Haus komme.« Dem Diener aber war angst und er sagte »muß Euch denn gerade Eure Tochter begegnen, es könnte ja auch eine Katze oder ein Hund sein.« Da ließ sich der Mann überreden, nahm das singende springende Löweneckerchen und versprach dem Löwen zu eigen, was ihm daheim zuerst begegnen würde.

Wie er daheim anlangte und in sein Haus eintrat, war das erste, was ihm begegnete, niemand anders als seine jüngste, liebste Tochter; die kam gelaufen, küßte und herzte ihn, und als sie sah, daß er ein singendes springendes Löweneckerchen mitgebracht hatte, war sie außer sich vor Freude. Der Vater aber konnte sich nicht freuen, sondern fing an zu weinen und sagte »mein liebstes Kind, den kleinen Vogel habe ich teuer gekauft, ich habe dich dafür einem wilden Löwen versprechen müssen, und wenn er dich hat, wird er dich zerreißen und fressen,« und erzählte ihr da alles, wie es zugegangen war, und bat sie, nicht hinzugehen, es möchte auch kommen, was da wollte. Sie tröstete ihn aber und sprach »liebster Vater, was Ihr versprochen habt, muß auch gehalten werden: ich will hingehen und will den Löwen schon besänftigen, daß ich wieder gesund zu Euch komme.« Am andern Morgen ließ sie sich den Weg zeigen, nahm Abschied und ging getrost in den Wald hinein. Der Löwe aber war ein verzauberter Königssohn, und war bei Tag ein Löwe, und mit ihm wurden alle seine Leute Löwen, in der Nacht aber hatten sie ihre natürliche menschliche Gestalt. Bei ihrer Ankunft ward sie freundlich empfangen und in das Schloß geführt. Als die Nacht kam, war er ein schöner Mann, und die Hochzeit ward mit Pracht gefeiert. Sie lebten vergnügt miteinander, wachten in der Nacht und schliefen am Tag. Zu einer Zeit kam er und sagte »morgen ist ein Fest in deines Vaters Haus, weil deine älteste Schwester sich verheiratet, und wenn du Lust hast hinzugehen, so sollen dich meine Löwen hinführen.« Da sagte sie ja, sie möchte gern ihren Vater wiedersehen, fuhr hin und ward von den Löwen begleitet. Da war große Freude, als sie ankam, denn sie hatten alle geglaubt, sie wäre von dem Löwen zerrissen worden und schon lange nicht mehr am Leben. Sie erzählte aber, was sie für einen schönen Mann hätte, und wie gut es ihr ginge, und blieb bei ihnen, solang die Hochzeit dauerte, dann fuhr sie wieder zurück in den Wald. Wie die zweite Tochter heiratete und sie wieder zur Hochzeit eingeladen war, sprach sie zum Löwen »diesmal will ich nicht allein sein, du mußt mitgehen.« Der Löwe aber sagte, das wäre zu gefährlich für ihn, denn wenn dort der Strahl eines brennenden Lichts ihn berührte, so würde er in eine Taube verwandelt und müßte sieben Jahre lang mit den Tauben fliegen. »Ach,« sagte sie, »geh nur mit mir: ich will dich schon hüten und vor allem Licht bewahren.« Also zogen sie zusammen und nahmen auch ihr kleines Kind mit. Sie ließ dort einen Saal mauern, so stark und dick, daß kein Strahl durchdringen konnte, darin sollt er sitzen, wann die Hochzeitslichter angesteckt würden. Die Tür aber war von frischem Holz gemacht, das sprang und bekam einen kleinen Ritz, den kein Mensch bemerkte. Nun ward die Hochzeit mit Pracht gefeiert, wie aber der Zug aus der Kirche zurückkam mit den vielen Fackeln und Lichtern an dem Saal vorbei, da fiel ein haarbreiter Strahl auf den Königssohn, und wie dieser Strahl ihn berührt hatte, in dem Augenblick war er auch verwandelt, und als sie hineinkam und ihn suchte, sah sie ihn nicht, aber es saß da eine weiße Taube. Die Taube sprach zu ihr »sieben Jahr muß ich in die Welt fortfliegen: alle sieben Schritte aber will ich einen roten Blutstropfen und eine weiße Feder fallen lassen, die sollen dir den Weg zeigen, und wenn du der Spur folgst, kannst du mich erlösen.«

Da flog die Taube zur Tür hinaus, und sie folgte ihr nach, und alle sieben Schritte fiel ein rotes Blutströpfchen und ein weißes Federchen herab und zeigte ihr den Weg. So ging sie immerzu in die weite Welt hinein, und schaute nicht um sich und ruhte sich nicht, und waren fast die sieben Jahre herum: da freute sie sich und meinte, sie wären bald erlöst, und war noch so weit davon. Einmal, als sie so fortging, fiel kein Federchen mehr und auch kein rotes Blutströpfchen, und als sie die Augen aufschlug, so war die Taube verschwunden. Und weil sie dachte »Menschen können dir da nicht helfen,« so stieg sie zur Sonne hinauf und sagte zu ihr »du scheinst in alle Ritzen und über alle Spitzen, hast du keine weiße Taube fliegen sehen?« »Nein,« sagte die Sonne, »ich habe keine gesehen, aber da schenk ich dir ein Kästchen, das mach auf, wenn du in großer Not bist.« Da dankte sie der Sonne und ging weiter, bis es Abend war und der Mond schien, da fragte sie ihn »du scheinst ja die ganze Nacht und durch alle Felder und Wälder, hast du keine weiße Taube fliegen sehen?« »Nein,« sagte der Mond, »ich habe keine gesehen, aber da schenk ich dir ein Ei, das zerbrich, wenn du in großer Not bist.« Da dankte sie dem Mond, und ging weiter, bis der Nachtwind herankam und sie anblies: da sprach sie zu ihm »du wehst ja über alle Bäume und unter allen Blättern weg, hast du keine weiße Taube fliegen sehen?« »Nein,« sagte der Nachtwind, »ich habe keine gesehen, aber ich will die drei andern Winde fragen, die haben sie vielleicht gesehen.« Der Ostwind und der Westwind kamen und hatten nichts gesehen, der Südwind aber sprach »die weiße Taube habe ich gesehen, sie ist zum Roten Meer geflogen, da ist sie wieder ein Löwe geworden, denn die sieben Jahre sind herum, und der Löwe steht dort im Kampf mit einem Lindwurm, der Lindwurm ist aber eine verzauberte Königstochter.« Da sagte der Nachtwind zu ihr »ich will dir Rat geben, geh zum Roten Meer, am rechten Ufer, da stehen große Ruten, die zähle, und die eilfte schneid dir ab und schlag den Lindwurm damit, dann kann ihn der Löwe bezwingen, und beide bekommen auch ihren menschlichen Leib wieder. Hernach schau dich um, und du wirst den Vogel Greif sehen, der am Roten Meer sitzt, schwing dich mit deinem Liebsten auf seinen Rücken: der Vogel wird euch übers Meer nach Haus tragen. Da hast du auch eine Nuß, wenn du mitten über dem Meere bist, laß sie herabfallen, alsbald wird sie aufgehen, und ein großer Nußbaum wird aus dem Wasser hervorwachsen, auf dem sich der Greif ausruht: und könnte er nicht ruhen, so wäre er nicht stark genug, euch hinüberzutragen: und wenn du vergißt, die Nuß herabzuwerfen, so läßt er euch ins Meer fallen.«

Da ging sie hin und fand alles, wie der Nachtwind gesagt hatte. Sie zählte die Ruten am Meer und schnitt die eilfte ab, damit schlug sie den Lindwurm, und der Löwe bezwang ihn: alsbald hatten beide ihren menschlichen Leib wieder. Aber wie die Königstochter, die vorher ein Lindwurm gewesen war, vom Zauber frei war, nahm sie den Jüngling in den Arm, setzte sich auf den Vogel Greif, und führte ihn mit sich fort. Da stand die arme Weitgewanderte und war wieder verlassen, und setzte sich nieder und weinte. Endlich aber ermutigte sie sich und sprach »ich will noch so weit gehen, als der Wind weht, und so lange, als der Hahn kräht, bis ich ihn finde.« Und ging fort, lange lange Wege, bis sie endlich zu dem Schloß kam, wo beide zusammen lebten: da hörte sie, daß bald ein Fest wäre, wo sie Hochzeit miteinander machen wollten. Sie sprach aber »Gott hilft mir noch,« und öffnete das Kästchen, das ihr die Sonne gegeben hatte, da lag ein Kleid darin, so glänzend wie die Sonne selber. Da nahm sie es heraus und zog es an und ging hinauf in das Schloß, und alle Leute und die Braut selber sahen sie mit Verwunderung an; und das Kleid gefiel der Braut so gut, daß sie dachte, es könnte ihr Hochzeitskleid geben, und fragte, ob es nicht feil wäre? »Nicht für Geld und Gut,« antwortete sie, »aber für Fleisch und Blut.« Die Braut fragte, was sie damit meinte. Da sagte sie »laßt mich eine Nacht in der Kammer schlafen, wo der Bräutigam schläft.« Die Braut wollte nicht, und wollte doch gerne das Kleid haben, endlich willigte sie ein, aber der Kammerdiener mußte dem Königssohn einen Schlaftrunk geben. Als es nun

Nacht war und der Jüngling schon schlief, ward sie in die Kammer geführt. Da setzte sie sich ans Bett und sagte »ich bin dir nachgefolgt sieben Jahre, bin bei Sonne und Mond und bei den vier Winden gewesen, und habe nach dir gefragt, und habe dir geholfen gegen den Lindwurm, willst du mich denn ganz vergessen?« Der Königssohn aber schlief so hart, daß es ihm nur vorkam, als rauschte der Wind draußen in den Tannenbäumen. Wie nun der Morgen anbrach, da ward sie wieder hinausgeführt und mußte das goldene Kleid hingeben. Und als auch das nichts geholfen hatte, ward sie traurig, ging hinaus auf eine Wiese, setzte sich da hin und weinte. Und wie sie so saß, da fiel ihr das Ei noch ein, das ihr der Mond gegeben hatte: sie schlug es auf, da kam eine Glucke heraus mit zwölf Küchlein ganz von Gold, die liefen herum und piepten und krochen der Alten wieder unter die Flügel, so daß nichts Schöneres auf der Welt zu sehen war. Da stand sie auf, trieb sie auf der Wiese vor sich her, so lange, bis die Braut aus dem Fenster sah, und da gefielen ihr die kleinen Küchlein so gut, daß sie gleich herabkam und fragte, ob sie nicht feil wären. »Nicht für Geld und Gut, aber für Fleisch und Blut; laßt mich noch eine Nacht in der Kammer schlafen, wo der Bräutigam schläft.« Die Braut sagte »ja« und wollte sie betrügen wie am vorigen Abend. Als aber der Königssohn zu Bett ging, fragte er seinen Kammerdiener, was das Murmeln und Rauschen in der Nacht gewesen sei. Da erzählte der Kammerdiener alles, daß er ihm einen Schlaftrunk hätte geben müssen, weil ein armes Mädchen heimlich in der Kammer geschlafen hätte, und heute nacht sollte er ihm wieder einen geben. Sagte der Königssohn »gieß den Trank neben das Bett aus.« Zur Nacht wurde sie wieder hereingeführt, und als sie anfing zu erzählen, wie es ihr traurig ergangen wäre, da erkannte er gleich an der Stimme seine liebe Gemahlin, sprang auf und rief »jetzt bin ich erst recht erlöst, mir ist gewesen wie in einem Traum, denn die fremde Königstochter hatte mich bezaubert, daß ich dich vergessen mußte, aber Gott hat noch zu rechter Stunde die Betörung von mir genommen.« Da gingen sie beide in der Nacht heimlich aus dem Schloß, denn sie fürchteten sich vor dem Vater der Königstochter, der ein Zauberer war, und setzten sich auf den Vogel Greif, der trug sie über das Rote Meer, und als sie in der Mitte waren, ließ sie die Nuß fallen. Alsbald wuchs ein großer Nußbaum, darauf ruhte sich der Vogel, und dann führte er sie nach Haus, wo sie ihr Kind fanden, das war groß und schön geworden, und sie lebten von nun an vergnügt bis an ihr Ende.

89. Die Gänsemagd.

Es lebte einmal eine alte Königin, der war ihr Gemahl schon lange Jahre gestorben, und sie hatte eine schöne Tochter. Wie die erwuchs, wurde sie weit über Feld an einen Königssohn versprochen. Als nun die Zeit kam, wo sie vermählt werden sollten und das Kind in das fremde Reich abreisen mußte, packte ihr die Alte gar viel köstliches Gerät und Geschmeide ein, Gold und Silber, Becher und Kleinode, kurz alles, was nur zu einem königlichen Brautschatz gehörte, denn sie hatte ihr Kind von Herzen lieb. Auch gab sie ihr eine Kammerjungfer bei, welche mitreiten und die Braut in die Hände des Bräutigams überliefern sollte, und jede bekam ein Pferd zur Reise, aber das Pferd der Königstochter hieß Falada und konnte sprechen. Wie nun die Abschiedsstunde da war, begab sich die alte Mutter in ihre Schlafkammer, nahm ein Messerlein und schnitt damit in ihre Finger, daß sie bluteten: darauf hielt sie ein weißes Läppchen unter und ließ drei Tropfen Blut hineinfallen, gab sie der Tochter und sprach »liebes Kind, verwahre sie wohl, sie werden dir unterwegs not tun.«

Also nahmen beide voneinander betrübten Abschied: das Läppchen steckte die Königstochter in ihren Busen vor sich, setzte sich aufs Pferd und zog nun fort zu ihrem Bräutigam. Da sie eine Stunde geritten waren, empfand sie heißen Durst und sprach zu ihrer Kammerjungfer »steig ab, und schöpfe mir mit meinem Becher, den du für mich mitgenommen hast, Wasser aus dem Bache, ich möchte gern einmal trinken.« »Wenn Ihr Durst habt,« sprach die Kammerjungfer, »so steigt selber ab, legt Euch ans Wasser und trinkt, ich mag Eure Magd nicht sein.« Da stieg die Königstochter vor großem Durst herunter, neigte sich über das Wasser im Bach und trank, und durfte nicht aus dem goldenen Becher trinken. Da sprach sie »ach Gott!« da antworteten die drei Blutstropfen »wenn das deine Mutter wüßte, das Herz im Leibe tät ihr zerspringen.« Aber die Königsbraut war demütig, sagte nichts und stieg wieder zu Pferde. So ritten sie etliche Meilen weiter fort, aber der Tag war warm, die Sonne stach, und sie durstete bald von neuem. Da sie nun an einen Wasserfluß kamen, rief sie noch einmal ihrer Kammerjungfer »steig ab und gib mir aus meinem Goldbecher zu trinken,« denn sie hatte aller bösen Worte längst vergessen. Die Kammerjungfer sprach aber noch hochmütiger »wollt Ihr trinken, so trinkt allein, ich mag nicht Eure Magd sein.« Da stieg die Königstochter hernieder vor großem Durst, legte sich über das fließende Wasser, weinte und sprach »ach Gott!« und die Blutstropfen antworteten wiederum »wenn das deine Mutter wüßte, das Herz im Leibe tät ihr zerspringen.« Und wie sie so trank und sich recht überlehnte, fiel ihr das Läppchen, worin die drei Tropfen waren, aus dem Busen und floß mit dem Wasser fort, ohne daß sie es in ihrer großen Angst merkte. Die Kammerjungfer hatte aber zugesehen und freute sich, daß sie Gewalt über die Braut bekäme: denn damit, daß diese die Blutstropfen verloren hatte, war sie schwach und machtlos geworden. Als sie nun wieder auf ihr Pferd steigen wollte, das da hieß Falada, sagte die Kammerfrau »auf

Falada gehör ich, und auf meinen Gaul gehörst du;« und das mußte sie sich gefallen lassen. Dann befahl ihr die Kammerfrau mit harten Worten, die königlichen Kleider auszuziehen und ihre schlechten anzulegen, und endlich mußte sie sich unter freiem Himmel verschwören, daß sie am königlichen Hof keinem Menschen etwas davon sprechen wollte; und wenn sie diesen Eid nicht abgelegt hätte, wäre sie auf der Stelle umgebracht worden. Aber Falada sah das alles an und nahms wohl in acht.

Die Kammerfrau stieg nun auf Falada und die wahre Braut auf das schlechte Roß, und so zogen sie weiter, bis sie endlich in dem königlichen Schloß eintrafen. Da war große Freude über ihre Ankunft, und der Königssohn sprang ihnen entgegen, hob die Kammerfrau vom Pferde und meinte, sie wäre seine Gemahlin: sie ward die Treppe hinaufgeführt, die wahre Königstochter aber mußte unten stehen bleiben. Da schaute der alte König am Fenster und sah sie im Hof halten und sah, wie sie fein war, zart und gar schön: ging alsbald hin ins königliche Gemach und fragte die Braut nach der, die sie bei sich hätte und da unten im Hofe stände, und wer sie wäre. »Die hab ich mir unterwegs mitgenommen zur Gesellschaft; gebt der Magd was zu arbeiten, daß sie nicht müßig steht.« Aber der alte König hatte keine Arbeit für sie und wußte nichts, als daß er sagte »da hab ich so einen kleinen Jungen, der hütet die Gänse, dem mag sie helfen.« Der Junge hieß Kürdchen (Konrädchen), dem mußte die wahre Braut helfen Gänse hüten.

Bald aber sprach die falsche Braut zu dem jungen König »liebster Gemahl, ich bitte Euch, tut mir einen Gefallen.« Er antwortete »das will ich gerne tun.« »Nun so laßt den Schinder rufen und da dem Pferde, worauf ich hergeritten bin, den Hals abhauen, weil es mich unterwegs geärgert hat.« Eigentlich aber fürchtete sie, daß das Pferd sprechen möchte, wie sie mit der Königstochter umgegangen war. Nun war das so weit geraten, daß es geschehen und der treue Falada sterben sollte, da kam es auch der rechten Königstochter zu Ohr, und sie versprach dem Schinder heimlich ein Stück Geld, das sie ihm bezahlen wollte, wenn er ihr einen kleinen Dienst erwiese. In der Stadt war ein großes finsteres Tor, wo sie abends und morgens mit den Gänsen durch mußte, »unter das finstere Tor möchte er dem Falada seinen Kopf hinnageln, daß sie ihn doch noch mehr als einmal sehen könnte.« Also versprach das der Schindersknecht zu tun, hieb den Kopf ab und nagelte ihn unter das finstere Tor fest.

Des Morgens früh, da sie und Kürdchen unterm Tor hinaustrieben, sprach sie im Vorbeigehen

»o du Falada, da du hangest,«

da antwortete der Kopf

»o du Jungfer Königin, da du gangest,
wenn das deine Mutter wüßte,
ihr Herz tät ihr zerspringen.«

Da zog sie still weiter zur Stadt hinaus, und sie trieben die Gänse aufs Feld. Und wenn sie auf der Wiese angekommen war, saß sie nieder und machte ihre Haare auf, die waren eitel Gold, und Kürdchen sah sie und freute sich, wie sie glänzten, und wollte ihr ein paar ausraufen. Da sprach sie

»weh, weh, Windchen,
nimm Kürdchen sein Hütchen,
und laß'n sich mit jagen,
bis ich mich geflochten und geschnatzt,
und wieder aufgesatzt.«

Und da kam ein so starker Wind, daß er dem Kürdchen sein Hütchen wegwehte über alle Land, und es mußte ihm nachlaufen. Bis es wiederkam, war sie mit dem Kämmen und Aufsetzen fertig, und er konnte keine Haare kriegen. Da war Kürdchen bös und sprach nicht mit ihr; und so hüteten sie die Gänse, bis daß es Abend ward, dann gingen sie nach Haus.

Den andern Morgen, wie sie unter dem finstern Tor hinaustrieben, sprach die Jungfrau

»o du Falada, da du hangest,«

Falada antwortete

»o du Jungfer Königin, da du gangest,
wenn das deine Mutter wüßte,
ihr Herz tät ihr zerspringen.«

Und in dem Feld setzte sie sich wieder auf die Wiese und fing an ihr Haar auszukämmen, und Kürdchen lief und wollte danach greifen, da sprach sie schnell

»weh, weh, Windchen,
nimm Kürdchen sein Hütchen,
und laß'n sich mit jagen,
bis ich mich geflochten und geschnatzt,
und wieder aufgesatzt.«

Da wehte der Wind und wehte ihm das Hütchen vom Kopf weit weg, daß Kürdchen nachlaufen mußte; und als es wiederkam, hatte sie längst ihr Haar zurecht, und es konnte keins davon erwischen; und so hüteten sie die Gänse, bis es Abend ward.

Abends aber, nachdem sie heim gekommen waren, ging Kürdchen vor den alten König und sagte »mit dem Mädchen will ich nicht länger Gänse hüten.« »Warum denn?« fragte der alte König. »Ei, das ärgert mich den ganzen Tag.« Da befahl ihm der alte König zu erzählen, wies ihm denn mit ihr ginge. Da sagte Kürdchen »morgens, wenn wir unter dem finsteren Tor mit der Herde durchkommen, so ist da ein Gaulskopf an der Wand, zu dem

redet sie
»Falada, da du hangest,«

da antwortet der Kopf

»o du Königsjungfer, da du gangest,
wenn das deine Mutter wüßte,
das Herz tät ihr zerspringen.«

Und so erzählte Kürdchen weiter, was auf der Gänsewiese geschähe, und wie es da dem Hut im Winde nachlaufen müßte.

Der alte König befahl ihm, den nächsten Tag wieder hinauszutreiben, und er selbst, wie es Morgen war, setzte sich hinter das finstere Tor und hörte da, wie sie mit dem Haupt des Falada sprach; und dann ging er ihr auch nach in das Feld und barg sich in einem Busch auf der Wiese. Da sah er nun bald mit seinen eigenen Augen, wie die Gänsemagd und der Gänsejunge die Herde getrieben brachte, und wie nach einer Weile sie sich setzte und ihre Haare losflocht, die strahlten von Glanz. Gleich sprach sie wieder
»weh, weh, Windchen,
faß Kürdchen sein Hütchen,
und laß'n sich mit jagen,
bis daß ich mich geflochten und geschnatzt,
und wieder aufgesatzt.«

Da kam ein Windstoß und fuhr mit Kürdchens Hut weg, daß es weit zu laufen hatte, und die Magd kämmte und flocht ihre Locken still fort, welches der alte König alles beobachtete. Darauf ging er unbemerkt zurück, und als abends die Gänsemagd heim kam, rief er sie beiseite und fragte, warum sie dem allem so täte. »Das darf ich Euch nicht sagen, und darf auch keinem Menschen mein Leid klagen, denn so hab ich mich unter freiem Himmel verschworen, weil ich sonst um mein Leben gekommen wäre.« Er drang in sie und ließ ihr keinen Frieden, aber er konnte nichts aus ihr herausbringen. Da sprach er »wenn du mirs nicht sagen willst, so klag dem Eisenofen da dein Leid,« und ging fort. Da kroch sie in den Eisenofen, fing an zu jammern und zu weinen, schüttete ihr Herz aus und sprach »da sitze ich nun von aller Welt verlassen, und bin doch eine Königstochter, und eine falsche Kammerjungfer hat mich mit Gewalt dahingebracht, daß ich meine königlichen Kleider habe ablegen müssen, und hat meinen Platz bei meinem Bräutigam eingenommen, und ich muß als Gänsemagd gemeine Dienste tun. Wenn das meine Mutter wüßte, das Herz im Leib tät ihr zerspringen.« Der alte König stand aber außen an der Ofenröhre, lauerte ihr zu und hörte, was sie sprach. Da kam er wieder herein und hieß sie aus dem Ofen gehen. Da wurden ihr königliche Kleider angetan, und es schien ein Wunder, wie sie so schön war. Der alte König rief seinen Sohn und offenbarte ihm, daß er die falsche Braut hätte: die wäre bloß ein Kammermädchen, die wahre aber stände hier, als die gewesene Gänsemagd. Der junge König war herzensfroh, als er ihre Schönheit und Tugend erblickte, und ein großes Mahl wurde angestellt, zu dem alle Leute und guten Freunde gebeten wurden. Obenan saß der Bräutigam, die Königstochter zur einen Seite und die Kammerjungfer zur andern, aber die Kammerjungfer war verblendet und erkannte jene nicht mehr in dem glänzenden Schmuck. Als sie nun gegessen und getrunken hatten und gutes Muts waren, gab der alte König der Kammerfrau ein Rätsel auf, was eine solche wert wäre, die den Herrn so und so betrogen hätte, erzählte damit den ganzen Verlauf und fragte »welches Urteils ist diese würdig?« Da sprach die falsche Braut »die ist nichts Besseres wert, als daß sie splitternackt ausgezogen und in ein Faß gesteckt wird, das inwendig mit spitzen Nägeln beschlagen ist: und zwei weiße Pferde müssen vorgespannt werden, die sie Gasse auf, Gasse ab zu Tode schleifen.« »Das bist du,« sprach der alte König, »und hast dein eigen Urteil gefunden, und danach soll dir widerfahren.« Und als das Urteil vollzogen war, vermählte sich der junge König mit seiner rechten Gemahlin, und beide beherrschten ihr Reich in Frieden und Seligkeit.

90. Der junge Riese.

Ein Bauersmann hatte einen Sohn, der war so groß wie ein Daumen und ward gar nicht größer und wuchs in etlichen Jahren nicht ein Haarbreit. Einmal wollte der Bauer ins Feld gehen und pflügen, da sagte der Kleine »Vater, ich will mit hinaus.« »Du willst mit hinaus?« sprach der Vater, »bleib du hier, dort bist du zu nichts nutz; du könntest mir auch verloren gehen.« Da fing der Däumling an zu weinen, und um Ruhe zu haben, steckte ihn der Vater in die Tasche und nahm ihn mit. Draußen auf dem Felde holte er ihn wieder heraus und setzte ihn in eine frische Furche. Wie er da so saß, kam über den Berg ein großer Riese daher. »Siehst du dort den großen Butzemann?« sagte der Vater, und wollte den Kleinen schrecken, damit er artig wäre, »der kommt und holt dich.« Der Riese aber hatte mit seinen langen Beinen kaum ein paar Schritte getan, so war er bei der Furche. Er hob den kleinen Däumling mit zwei Fingern behutsam in die Höhe, betrachtete ihn und ging, ohne ein Wort zu sprechen, mit ihm fort. Der Vater stand dabei, konnte vor Schrecken keinen Laut hervorbringen und dachte nicht anders als sein Kind für verloren, also daß ers sein Lebtag nicht wieder mit Augen sehen würde.

Der Riese aber trug es heim und ließ es an seiner Brust saugen, und der Däumling wuchs und ward groß und stark nach Art der Riesen. Nach Verlauf von zwei Jahren ging der Alte mit ihm in den Wald, wollte ihn versuchen und sprach »zieh dir eine Gerte heraus.« Da war der Knabe schon so stark, daß er einen jungen Baum mit den Wurzeln aus der Erde riß. Der Riese aber meinte »das muß besser kommen,« nahm ihn wieder mit und säugte ihn noch zwei Jahre. Als er ihn versuchte, hatte seine Kraft schon so zugenommen, daß er einen alten Baum aus der Erde brechen konnte. Das war dem Riesen noch immer nicht genug, er säugte ihn abermals zwei Jahre, und als er dann mit ihm in den Wald ging und sprach »nun reiß einmal eine ordentliche Gerte aus,« so riß der Junge den dicksten Eichenbaum aus der Erde, daß er krachte, und war ihm nur ein Spaß. »Nun ists genug,« sprach der Riese, »du hast ausgelernt,« und führte ihn zurück auf den Acker, wo er ihn geholt hatte. Sein Vater stand da hinter dem Pflug, der junge Riese ging auf ihn zu und sprach »sieht er wohl, Vater, was sein Sohn für ein Mann geworden ist.« Der Bauer erschrak und sagte »nein, du bist mein Sohn nicht, ich will dich nicht, geh weg von mir.« »Freilich bin ich sein Sohn, laß er mich an die Arbeit, ich kann pflügen so gut als er und noch besser.« »Nein, nein, du bist mein Sohn nicht, du kannst auch nicht pflügen, geh weg von mir.« Weil er sich aber vor dem großen Mann fürchtete, ließ er den Pflug los, trat zurück und setzte sich zur Seite ans Land. Da nahm der Junge das Geschirr und drückte bloß mit einer Hand darauf, aber der Druck war so gewaltig, daß der Pflug tief in die Erde ging. Der Bauer konnte das nicht mit ansehen und rief ihm zu »wenn du pflügen willst, mußt du nicht so gewaltig drücken, das gibt schlechte Arbeit.« Der Junge aber spannte die Pferde aus, zog selber den Pflug und sagte »geh er nur nach Haus, Vater, und laß er die

Mutter eine große Schüssel voll Essen kochen; ich will derweil den Acker schon umreißen.« Da ging der Bauer heim und bestellte das Essen bei seiner Frau: der Junge aber pflügte das Feld, zwei Morgen groß, ganz allein, und dann spannte er sich auch selber vor die Egge und eggte alles mit zwei Eggen zugleich. Wie er fertig war, ging er in den Wald und riß zwei Eichenbäume aus, legte sie auf die Schultern, und hinten und vorn eine Egge darauf, und hinten und vorn auch ein Pferd, und trug das alles, als war es ein Bund Stroh, nach seiner Eltern Haus. Wie er in den Hof kam, erkannte ihn seine Mutter nicht und fragte »wer ist der entsetzliche große Mann?« Der Bauer sagte »das ist unser Sohn.« Sie sprach »nein, unser Sohn ist das nimmermehr, so groß haben wir keinen gehabt, unser war ein kleines Ding.« Sie rief ihm zu »geh fort, wir wollen dich nicht.« Der Junge schwieg still, zog seine Pferde in den Stall, gab ihnen Hafer und Heu, alles wie sichs gehörte. Als er fertig war, ging er in die Stube, setzte sich auf die Bank und sagte »Mutter, nun hätte ich Lust zu essen, ists bald fertig?« Da sagte sie »ja« und brachte zwei große große Schüsseln voll herein, daran hätten sie und ihr Mann acht Tage lang satt gehabt. Der Junge aber aß sie allein auf und fragte, ob sie nicht mehr vorsetzen könnte. »Nein,« sagte sie, »das ist alles, was wir haben.« »Das war ja nur zum Schmecken, ich muß mehr haben.« Sie getraute nicht, ihm zu widerstehen, ging hin und setzte einen großen Schweinekessel voll übers Feuer, und wie es gar war, trug sie es herein. »Endlich kommen noch ein paar Brocken,« sagte er und aß alles hinein; es war aber doch nicht genug, seinen Hunger zu stillen. Da sprach er »Vater, ich sehe wohl, bei ihm werd ich nicht satt, will er mir einen Stab von Eisen verschaffen, der stark ist und den ich vor meinen Knien nicht zerbrechen kann, so will ich fort in die Welt gehen.« Der Bauer war froh, spannte seine zwei Pferde vor den Wagen und holte bei dem Schmied einen Stab so groß und dick, als ihn die zwei Pferde nur fortschaffen konnten. Der Junge nahm ihn vor die Knie und ratsch! brach er ihn wie eine Bohnenstange in der Mitte entzwei und warf ihn weg. Der Vater spannte vier Pferde vor und holte einen Stab so groß und dick, als ihn die vier Pferde fortschaffen konnten. Der Sohn knickte auch diesen vor dem Knie entzwei, warf ihn hin und sprach »Vater, der kann mir nicht helfen, er muß besser vorspannen und einen stärkern Stab holen.« Da spannte der Vater acht Pferde vor und holte einen so groß und dick, als ihn die acht Pferde herbeifahren konnten. Wie der Sohn den in die Hand nahm, brach er gleich oben ein Stück davon ab und sagte »Vater, ich sehe, er kann mir keinen Stab anschaffen, wie ich ihn brauche, ich will nicht länger bei ihm bleiben.«

Da ging er fort und gab sich für einen Schmiedegesellen aus.

Er kam in ein Dorf, darin wohnte ein Schmied, der war ein Geizmann, gönnte keinem Menschen etwas und wollte alles allein haben; zu dem trat er in die Schmiede und fragte, ob er keinen Gesellen brauchte. »Ja,« sagte der Schmied, sah ihn an und dachte »das ist ein tüchtiger Kerl, der wird gut vorschlagen und sein Brot verdienen.« Er fragte »wieviel willst du Lohn haben?« »Gar keinen will ich haben,« antwortete er, »nur alle vierzehn Tage, wenn die andern Gesellen ihren Lohn bezahlt kriegen, will ich dir zwei

Streiche geben, die mußt du aushalten.« Das war der Geizmann von Herzen zufrieden und dachte damit viel Geld zu sparen. Am andern Morgen sollte der fremde Geselle zuerst vorschlagen, wie aber der Meister den glühenden Stab brachte und jener den ersten Schlag tat, so flog das Eisen voneinander und der Amboß sank in die Erde, so tief, daß sie ihn gar nicht wieder herausbringen konnten. Da ward der Geizmann bös und sagte »ei was, dich kann ich nicht brauchen, du schlägst gar zu grob, was willst du für den einen Zuschlag haben?« Da sprach er »ich will dir nur einen ganz kleinen Streich geben, weiter nichts.« Und hob seinen Fuß auf und gab ihm einen Tritt, daß er über vier Fuder Heu hinausflog. Darauf suchte er sich den dicksten Eisenstab aus, der in der Schmiede war, nahm ihn als einen Stock in die Hand und ging weiter.

Als er eine Weile gezogen war, kam er zu einem Vorwerk und fragte den Amtmann, ob er keinen Großknecht nötig hätte. »Ja,« sagte der Amtmann, »ich kann einen brauchen: du siehst aus wie ein tüchtiger Kerl, der schon was vermag, wieviel willst du Jahrslohn haben?« Er antwortete wiederum, er verlangte gar keinen Lohn, aber alle Jahre wollte er ihm drei Streiche geben, die müßte er aushalten. Das war der Amtmann zufrieden, denn er war auch ein Geizhals. Am andern Morgen, da sollten die Knechte ins Holz fahren, und die andern Knechte waren schon auf, er aber lag noch im Bett. Da rief ihn einer an »steh auf, es ist Zeit, wir wollen ins Holz, und du mußt mit.« »Ach,« sagte er ganz grob und trotzig, »geht ihr nur hin, ich komme doch eher wieder als ihr alle miteinander.« Da gingen die andern zum Amtmann und erzählten ihm, der Großknecht läge noch im Bett und wollte nicht mit ins Holz fahren. Der Amtmann sagte, sie sollten ihn noch einmal wecken und ihn heißen die Pferde vorspannen. Der Großknecht sprach aber wie vorher »geht ihr nur hin, ich komme doch eher wieder als ihr alle miteinander.« Darauf blieb er noch zwei Stunden liegen, da stieg er endlich aus den Federn, holte sich aber erst zwei Scheffel voll Erbsen vom Boden, kochte sich einen Brei und aß den mit guter Ruhe, und wie das alles geschehen war, ging er hin, spannte die Pferde vor und fuhr ins Holz. Nicht weit vor dem Holz war ein Hohlweg, wo er durch mußte, da fuhr er den Wagen erst vorwärts, dann mußten die Pferde stille halten, und er ging hinter den Wagen, nahm Bäume und Reisig und machte da eine große Hucke (Verhack), so daß kein Pferd durchkommen konnte. Wie er nun vors Holz kam, fuhren die andern eben mit ihren beladenen Wagen heraus und wollten heim, da sprach er zu ihnen »fahrt nur hin, ich komme doch eher als ihr nach Haus.« Er fuhr gar nicht weit ins Holz, riß gleich zwei der allergrößten Bäume aus der Erde, warf sie auf den Wagen und drehte um. Als er vor der Hucke anlangte, standen die andern noch da und konnten nicht durch. »Seht ihr wohl,« sprach er, »wärt ihr bei mir geblieben, so wärt ihr ebenso schnell nach Haus gekommen und hättet noch eine Stunde schlafen können.« Er wollte nun zufahren, aber seine Pferde konnten sich nicht durcharbeiten, da spannte er sie aus, legte sie oben auf den Wagen, nahm selber die Deichsel in die Hand, und hüf! zog er alles durch, und das ging so leicht, als hätt er Federn geladen. Wie er drüben war, sprach er zu den andern »seht ihr wohl, ich bin schneller hindurch als ihr,« fuhr weiter, und die andern mußten stehen bleiben. In dem Hof aber nahm er einen Baum in die Hand, zeigte ihn dem Amtmann und sagte »ist das nicht ein schönes Klafterstück?« Da sprach der Amtmann zu seiner Frau »der Knecht ist gut; wenn er auch lang schläft, er ist doch eher wieder da als die andern.«

Nun diente er dem Amtmann ein Jahr: wie das herum war und die andern Knechte ihren Lohn kriegten, sprach er, es wäre Zeit, er wollte sich auch seinen Lohn nehmen. Dem Amtmann ward aber angst vor den Streichen, die er kriegen sollte, und bat ihn inständig, er möchte sie ihm schenken, lieber wollte er selbst Großknecht werden, und er sollte Amtmann sein. »Nein,« sprach er, »ich will kein Amtmann werden, ich bin Großknecht und wills bleiben, ich will aber austeilen, was bedungen ist.« Der Amtmann wollte ihm geben, was er nur verlangte, aber es half nichts, der Großknecht sprach zu allem »nein.« Da wußte sich der Amtmann nicht zu helfen und bat ihn um vierzehn Tage Frist, er wollte sich auf etwas besinnen. Der Großknecht sprach, die Frist sollte er haben. Der Amtmann berief alle seine Schreiber zusammen, sie sollten sich bedenken und ihm einen Rat geben. Die Schreiber besannen sich lange, endlich sagten sie, vor dem Großknecht wäre niemand seines Lebens sicher, der schlüge einen Menschen wie eine Mücke tot. Er sollte ihn heißen in den Brunnen steigen und ihn reinigen, wenn er unten wäre, wollten sie einen von den Mühlensteinen, die da lägen, herbeirollen und ihm auf den Kopf werfen, dann würde er nicht wieder an des Tages Licht kommen. Der Rat gefiel dem Amtmann, und der Großknecht war bereit, in den Brunnen hinabzusteigen. Als er unten auf dem Grund stand, rollten sie den größten Mühlenstein hinab, und meinten, der Kopf wäre ihm eingeschlagen, aber er rief »jagt die Hühner vom Brunnen weg, die kratzen da oben im Sand und werfen mir die Körner in die Augen, daß ich nicht sehen kann.« Da rief der Amtmann »husch! husch!« und tat, als scheuchte er die Hühner weg. Als der Großknecht mit seiner Arbeit fertig war, stieg er herauf und sagte »seht einmal, ich habe doch ein schönes Halsband um,« da war es der Mühlenstein, den er um den Hals trug. Der Großknecht wollte jetzt seinen Lohn nehmen, aber der Amtmann bat wieder um vierzehn Tage Bedenkzeit. Die Schreiber kamen zusammen und gaben den Rat, er sollte den Großknecht in die verwünschte Mühle schicken, um dort in der Nacht Korn zu mahlen: von da wäre noch kein Mensch morgens lebendig herausgekommen. Der Anschlag gefiel dem Amtmann, er rief den Großknecht noch denselben Abend und hieß ihn acht Malter Korn in die Mühle fahren und in der Nacht noch mahlen; sie hättens nötig. Da ging der Großknecht auf den Boden und tat zwei Malter in seine rechte Tasche, zwei in die linke, vier nahm er in einem Quersack halb auf den Rücken, halb auf die Brust, und ging also beladen nach der verwünschten Mühle. Der Müller sagte ihm, bei Tag könnte er recht gut da mahlen, aber nicht in der Nacht, da wäre die Mühle verwünscht, und wer da noch hineingegangen wäre, den hätte man am Morgen tot darin gefunden. Er sprach »ich will schon durchkommen, macht Euch nur fort und legt Euch aufs Ohr.« Darauf ging er in die Mühle und schüttete das Korn auf. Gegen elf Uhr ging er in die

Müllerstube und setzte sich auf die Bank. Als er ein Weilchen da gesessen hatte, tat sich auf einmal die Tür auf und kam eine große große Tafel herein, und auf die Tafel stellte sich Wein und Braten und viel gutes Essen, alles von selber, denn es war niemand da, ders auftrug. Und danach rückten sich die Stühle herbei, aber es kamen keine Leute, bis auf einmal sah er Finger, die hantierten mit den Messern und Gabeln und legten Speisen auf die Teller, aber sonst konnte er nichts sehen. Da er hungrig war und die Speisen sah, so setzte er sich auch an die Tafel, aß mit und ließ sichs gut schmecken. Als er satt war und die andern ihre Schüsseln auch ganz leer gemacht hatten, da wurden die Lichter auf einmal alle ausgeputzt, das hörte er deutlich, und wies nun stockfinster war, so kriegte er so etwas wie eine Ohrfeige ins Gesicht. Da sprach er »wenn noch einmal so etwas kommt, so teil ich auch wieder aus.« Und wie er zum zweitenmal eine Ohrfeige kriegte, da schlug er gleichfalls mit hinein. Und so ging das fort die ganze Nacht, er nahm nichts umsonst, sondern gab reichlich zurück und schlug nicht faul um sich herum: bei Tagesanbruch aber hörte alles auf. Wie der Müller aufgestanden war, wollte er nach ihm sehen und verwunderte sich, daß er noch lebte. Da sprach er »ich habe mich satt gegessen, habe Ohrfeigen gekriegt, aber ich habe auch Ohrfeigen ausgeteilt.« Der Müller freute sich und sagte, nun wäre die Mühle erlöst, und wollt ihm gern zur Belohnung viel Geld geben. Er sprach aber »Geld will ich nicht, ich habe doch genug.« Dann nahm er sein Mehl auf den Rücken, ging nach Haus und sagte dem Amtmann, er hätte die Sache ausgerichtet und wollte nun seinen bedungenen Lohn haben. Wie der Amtmann das hörte, da ward ihm erst recht angst: er wußte sich nicht zu lassen, ging in der Stube auf und ab, und die Schweißtropfen liefen ihm von der Stirne herunter. Da machte er das Fenster auf nach frischer Luft, ehe er sichs aber versah, hatte ihm der Großknecht einen Tritt gegeben, daß er durchs Fenster in die Luft hineinflog, immer fort, bis ihn niemand mehr sehen konnte. Da sprach der Großknecht zur Frau des Amtmanns »kommt er nicht wieder, so müßt Ihr den anderen Streich hinnehmen.« Sie rief »nein, nein, ich kanns nicht aushalten,« und machte das andere Fenster auf, weil ihr die Schweißtropfen die Stirne herunterliefen. Da gab er ihr einen Tritt, daß sie gleichfalls hinausflog, und da sie leichter war, noch viel höher als ihr Mann. Der Mann rief »komm doch zu mir,« sie aber rief »komm du zu mir, ich kann nicht zu dir.« Und sie schwebten da in der Luft, und konnte keins zum andern kommen, und ob sie da noch schweben, das weiß ich nicht; der junge Riese aber nahm seine Eisenstange und ging weiter.

91. Dat Erdmänneken.

Et was mal en rik Künig west, de hadde drei Döchter had, de wören alle Dage in den Schlottgoren spazeren gaen, un de Künig, dat was so en Leivhawer von allerhand wackeren Bömen west: un einen, den hadde he so lelv had, dat he denjenigen, de ümme en Appel dervon plückede, hunnerd Klafter unner de Eere verwünschede. As et nu Hervest war, da worden de Appel an den einen Baume so raut ase Blaud. De drei Döchter gungen alle Dage unner den Baum un seihen to, ov nig de Wind ‘n Appel herunner schlagen hädde, awerst se fan-nen ir Levedage kienen, un de Baum, de satt so vull, dat he breken wull, un de Telgen (Zweige) hungen bis up de Eere. Da gelustede den jungesten Künigskinne gewaldig, un et segde to sinen Süstern »use Teite (Vater), det hett us viel to leiv, ase dat he us verwünschen deihe: ik glöve, dat he dat nur wegen de frümden Lude dahen hat.« Un indes plücked dat Kind en gans dicken Appel af un sprunk für sinen Süstern un segde »a, nu schmecket mal, mine lewen Süsterkes, nu hew ik doch min Levedage so wat Schönes no nig schmecket.« Da beeten de beiden annern Künigsdöchter auch mal in den Appel, un da versünken se alle drei deip unner de Eere, dat kien Haan mer danach krähete.

As et da Middag is, da wull se de Künig do Diske roopen, do sind se nirgends to finnen: he söket se so viel im Schlott un in Goren, awerst he kun se nig finnen. Da werd he so bedröwet un let dat ganse Land upbeien (aufbieten), un wer ünne sine Döchter wier brechte, de sull ene davon tor Fruen hewen. Da gahet so viele junge Lude uwer Feld un söket, dat is gans ut der Wiese (über alle Maßen), denn jeder hadde de drei Kinner geren had, wiil se wören gegen jedermann so fründlig un so schön von Angesichte west. Un et togen auck drei Jägerburschen ut, un ase da wol en acht Dage rieset hadden, da kummet se up en grot Schlott, da woren so hübsche Stoben inne west, un in einen Zimmer is en Disch decket, darup wören so söte Spisen, de sied noch so warme, dat se dampet, awerst in den ganzen Schlott ist kien Minsk to hören noch to seihen. Do wartet se noch en halwen Dag, un de Spisen bliewet immer warme un dampet, bis up et lest, da weret se so hungerig, dat se sik derbie settet und ettet, un macket mit en anner ut, se wüllen up den Schlotte wuhnen bliewen, un wüllen darümme loosen, dat eine in Huse blev un de beiden annern de Döchter söketen; dat doet se auck, un dat Loos dreppet den ölesten. Den annern Dag, da gaet de twei jüngesten söken, un de öleste mot to Huse bliewen. Am Middage kümmt der so en klein klein Männeken un hölt um ‘n Stückesken Braud ane, da nümmt he von dem Braude, wat he da funnen hädde, un schnitt en Stücke rund umme den Braud weg un will ünne dat giewen, indes dat he et ünne reiket, lett et dat kleine Männeken fallen un segd, he sulle dok so gut sin un giewen ün dat Stücke wier. Da will he dat auck doen und bucket sik, mit des nümmt dat Männeken en Stock un päckt ünne bie den Haaren un giwt ünne düete Schläge. Den anneren Dag, da is de tweide to Hus bliewen, den geit et nicks better. Ase de beiden annern da den Awend nah Hus kümmet, da segt de öleste »no, wie hätt et die dann gaen?« »O, et geit mie gans schlechte.« Da klaget se sik enanner ere Naud, awerst den jungesten hadden se nicks davonne sagd, den hadden se gar nig lien (leiden) mogt un hadden ünne jummer den dummen Hans heiten, weil he nig recht van de Weld was. Den dritten Dag, da blivt de jungeste to Hus, da kümmet dat kleine Männeken wier und hölt um en Stücksken Braud an; da he ünne dat giewen hätt, let he et wier fallen un segt, he mügte dock so gut sien un reicken ünne dat Stücksken wier. Da segd he to den kleinen Männeken »wat! kannst du dat Stücke nig sulwens wier up nümmen, wenn du die de Möhe nig mal um dine dägliche Narunge giewen wust, so bist du auck nich wert, dat du et etest.« Da word dat Männeken so bös un segde, he möst et doen: he awerst nig fuhl, nam min lewe Männeken un drosch et duet dör (tüchtig durch). Da schriege dat Männeken so viel un rep »hör up, hör up, un lat mie geweren, dann will ik die auck seggen, wo de Künigsdöchter sied.« Wie he dat hörde, häll hei up to slaen, un dat Männeken vertelde, he wör en Erdmänneken, un sulke wären mehr ase dusend, he mögte man mit ünne gaen, dann wull he ünne wiesen, wo de Künigsdöchter weren. Da wist he ünne en deipen Born, da is awerst kien Water inne west. Da segt dat Männeken, he wuste wohl, dat et sine Gesellen nig ehrlich mit ünne meinten, wenn he de Künigskinner erlösen wulle, dann möste he et alleine doen. De beiden annern Broer wullen wohl auck geren die Künigsdöchter wier hewen, awerst se wullen der kiene Möge un Gefahr umme doen, he möste so en grauten Korv nümmen, un möste sik mit sinen Hirschfänger un en Schelle darinne setten un sik herunterwinnen laten: unnen, da wören drei Zimmer, in jeden sette ein Künigskind un hädde en Drachen mit villen Köppen to lusen, den möste he de Köppe afschlagen. Ase dat Erdmänneken nu dat alle sagd hadde, verschwand et. Ase’t Awend is, da kümmet de beiden annern un fraget, wie et ün gaen hädde, da segd he »o, so wit gut,« un hädde keinen Minsken sehen ase des Middags, da wer so ein klein Männeken kummen, de hädde ün umme en Stücksken Braud biddit, do he et ünne giewen hädde, hädde dat Männeken et fallen laten un hädde segd, he mögtet ünne doch wier up nümmen, wie he dat nig hadde doen wullt, da hädde et anfangen to puchen, dat hädde he awerst unrecht verstan un hädde dat Männeken prügelt, un da hädde et ünne vertellt, wo de Künigsdöchter wären. Da ärgerten sik de beiden so viel, dat se gehl un grön wören. Den annern Morgen, da gungen se to haupe an den Born un mackten Loose, wer sik dat erste in den Korv setten sulle, da feel dat Loos wier den öllesten to, he mot sik darin setten un de Klingel mitnümmen. Da segd he »wenn ik klingele, so mutt gi mik nur geschwinne wier herupwinnen.« Ase he en bitken herunner is, da klingelte wat, da winnen se ünne wier heruper: da sett sik de tweide herinne, de maket ewen sau: nu kümmet dann auck de Riege an den jungesten, de lät sik awerst gans drinne runner winnen. Ase he ut den Korve stiegen is, da nümmet he sienen Hirschfänger un geit vor der ersten Doer staen un lustert, da hort he den Drachen gans lute schnarchen. He macket langsam de Döre oppen, da sitt da de eine Künigsdochter un häd op eren Schot niegene (neun) Drachenköppe liegen un luset de. Da nümmet he sinen Hirschfänger und hogget to, da siet de niegne Koppe awe. De Künigsdöchter sprank up un fäl ünne um den Hals un drucket un piepete (küßte) ünn so viel, un nümmet ihr Bruststücke, dat wor von rauen Golle west, un henget ünne dat umme. Da geit he auck nach der tweiden Künigsdochter, de häd en Drachen mit sieven Köppe to lusen, un erlöset de auck, so de jungeste, de hadde en Drachen mit viere Köppen to lusen had, da geit he auck hinne. Do froget se sich alle so viel, un drucketen un piepeten ohne uphören. Da klingelte he sau harde, bis dat se owen hört. Da set he de Künigsdöchter ein nach der annern in den Korv un let se alle drei heruptrecken, wie nu an ünne de Riege kümmt, da fallet ün de Woore (Worte) von den Erdmänneken wier bie, dat et sine Gesellen mit ünne nig gut meinden. Da nümmet he en groten Stein, de da ligt, un legt ün in den Korv, ase de Korv da ungefähr bis in de Midde herup is, schnien de falsken Broer owen dat Strick af, dat de Korv mit den Stein up den Grund füll, un meinten, he wöre nu daude, un laupet mit de drei Künigsdöchter wege un latet sik dervan verspreken, dat se an ehren Vater seggen willt, dat se beiden se erlöset hädden; da kümmet se tom Künig un begert se tor Frugen. Unnerdies geit de jungeste Jägerbursche gans bedröwet in den drei Kammern herummer un denket, dat he nu wull sterwen möste, da süht he an der Wand ‘n Fleutenpipe hangen, da segd he »worümme hengest du da wull, hier kann ja doch keiner lustig sin.« He bekucket auck de Drachenköppe un segd »ju künnt mie nu auck nig helpen.« He geit so mannigmal up un af spatzeren, dat de Erdboden davon glatt werd. Un et lest, da kriegt he annere Gedanken, da nümmet he de Fleutenpipen van der Wand un blest en Stücksken, up eenmahl kummet da so viele Erdmännekens, bie jeden Don, den he däht, kummt eint mehr: da blest he so lange dat Stücksken, bis det Zimmer stopte vull is. De fraget alle, wat sin Begeren wöre, da segd he, he wull geren wier up de Eere an Dages Licht, da fatten se ünne alle an, an jeden Spir (Faden) Haar, wat he up sinen Koppe hadde, un sau fleiget se mit ünne herupper bis up de Eere. Wie he owen is, geit he glick nach den Künigsschlott, wo grade de Hochtit mit der einen Künigsdochter sin sulle, un geit up den Zimmer, wo de Künig mit sinen drei Döchtern is. Wie ünne da de Kinner seihet, da wered se gans beschwämt (ohnmächtig). Da werd de Künig so böse und let ünne glick in een Gefängnisse setten, weil he meint, he hädde den Kinnern en Leid anne daen. Ase awer de Künigsdöchter wier to sik kummt, da biddet se so viel, he mogte ünne doch wier lose laten. Der Künig fraget se, worümme, da segd se, dat se dat nig vertellen dorften, awerst de Vaer, de segd, se sullen et den Owen (Ofen) vertellen. Da geit he herut un lustert an de Döre un hört alles. Da lät he de beiden an en Galgen hängen, un den einen givt he de jungeste Dochter: un da trok ik en Paar gläserne Schohe an, un da stott ik an en Stein, da segd et »klink!« da wören se kaput.

92. Der König vom goldenen Berg.

Ein Kaufmann, der hatte zwei Kinder, einen Buben und ein Mädchen, die waren beide noch klein und konnten noch nicht laufen. Es gingen aber zwei reichbeladene Schiffe von ihm auf dem Meer, und sein ganzes Vermögen war darin, und wie er meinte, dadurch viel Geld zu gewinnen, kam die Nachricht, sie wären versunken. Da war er nun statt eines reichen Mannes ein armer Mann und hatte nichts mehr übrig als einen Acker vor der Stadt. Um sich sein Unglück ein wenig aus den Gedanken zu schlagen, ging er hinaus auf den Acker, und wie er da so auf- und abging, stand auf einmal ein kleines schwarzes Männchen neben ihm und fragte, warum er so traurig wäre, und was er sich so sehr zu Herzen nähme. Da sprach der Kaufmann »wenn du mir helfen könntest, wollt ich dir es wohl sagen.« »Wer weiß,« antwortete das schwarze Männchen »vielleicht helf ich dir.« Da erzählte der Kaufmann, daß ihm sein ganzer Reichtum auf dem Meer zugrunde gegangen wäre, und hätte er nichts mehr übrig als diesen Acker. »Bekümmere dich nicht,« sagte das Männchen, »wenn du mir versprichst, das, was dir zu Haus am ersten widers Bein stößt, in zwölf Jahren hierher auf den Platz zu bringen, sollst du Geld haben, soviel du willst.« Der Kaufmann dachte »was kann das anders sein als mein Hund?« aber an seinen kleinen Jungen dachte er nicht und sagte ja, gab dem schwarzen Mann Handschrift und Siegel darüber und ging nach Haus.

Als er nach Haus kam, da freute sich sein kleiner Junge so sehr darüber, daß er sich an den Bänken hielt, zu ihm herbeiwackelte und ihn an den Beinen fest packte. Da erschrak der Vater, denn es fiel ihm sein Versprechen ein, und er wußte nun, was er verschrieben hatte: weil er aber immer noch kein Geld in seinen Kisten und Kasten fand, dachte er, es wäre nur ein Spaß von dem Männchen gewesen. Einen Monat nachher ging er auf den Boden und wollte altes Zinn zusammensuchen und verkaufen, da sah er einen großen Haufen Geld liegen. Nun war er wieder guter Dinge, kaufte ein, ward ein größerer Kaufmann als vorher und ließ Gott einen guten Mann sein. Unterdessen ward der Junge groß und dabei klug und gescheit. Je näher aber die zwölf Jahre herbeikamen, je sorgvoller ward der Kaufmann, so daß man ihm die Angst im Gesicht sehen konnte. Da fragte ihn der Sohn einmal, was ihm fehlte: der Vater wollte es nicht sagen, aber jener hielt so lange an, bis er ihm endlich sagte, er hätte ihn, ohne zu wissen, was er verspräche, einem schwarzen Männchen zugesagt und vieles Geld dafür bekommen. Er hätte seine Handschrift mit Siegel darüber gegeben, und nun müßte er ihn, wenn zwölf Jahre herum wären, ausliefern. Da sprach der Sohn »o Vater, laßt Euch nicht bang sein, das soll schon gut werden, der Schwarze hat keine Macht über mich.«

Der Sohn ließ sich von dem Geistlichen segnen, und als die Stunde kam, gingen sie zusammen hinaus auf den Acker, und der Sohn machte einen Kreis und stellte sich mit seinem Vater hinein. Da kam das schwarze Männchen und sprach zu dem Alten »hast du mitgebracht, was du mir versprochen hast?« Er schwieg still, aber der Sohn fragte »was willst du hier?« Da sagte das schwarze Männchen »ich habe mit deinem Vater zu sprechen und nicht mit dir.« Der Sohn antwortete »du hast meinen Vater betrogen und verführt, gib die Handschrift heraus.« »Nein,« sagte das schwarze Männchen, »mein Recht geb ich nicht auf.« Da redeten sie noch lange miteinander, endlich wurden sie einig, der Sohn, weil er nicht dem Erbfeind und nicht mehr seinem Vater zugehörte, sollte sich in ein Schiffchen setzen, das auf einem hinabwärts fließenden Wasser stände, und der Vater sollte es mit seinem eigenen Fuß fortstoßen, und dann sollte der Sohn dem Wasser überlassen bleiben. Da nahm er Abschied von seinem Vater, setzte sich in ein Schiffchen, und der Vater mußte es mit seinem eigenen Fuß fortstoßen. Das Schiffchen schlug um, so daß der unterste Teil oben war, die Decke aber im Wasser; und der Vater glaubte, sein Sohn wäre verloren, ging heim und trauerte um ihn.

Das Schiffchen aber versank nicht, sondern floß ruhig fort, und der Jüngling saß sicher darin, und so floß es lange, bis es endlich an einem unbekannten Ufer festsitzen blieb. Da stieg er ans Land, sah ein schönes Schloß vor sich liegen und ging darauf los. Wie er aber hineintrat, war es verwünscht: er ging durch alle Zimmer, aber sie waren leer, bis er in die letzte Kammer kam, da lag eine Schlange darin und ringelte sich. Die Schlange aber war eine verwünschte Jungfrau, die freute sich, wie sie ihn sah, und sprach zu ihm »kommst du, mein Erlöser? auf dich habe ich schon zwölf Jahre gewartet; dies Reich ist verwünscht, und du mußt es erlösen.« »Wie kann ich das?« fragte er. »Heute nacht kommen zwölf schwarze Männer, die mit Ketten behangen sind, die werden dich fragen, was du hier machst, da schweig aber still und gib ihnen keine Antwort, und laß sie mit dir machen, was sie wollen: sie werden dich quälen, schlagen und stechen, laß alles geschehen, nur rede nicht; um zwölf Uhr müssen sie wieder fort. Und in der zweiten Nacht werden wieder zwölf andere kommen, in der dritten vierundzwanzig, die werden dir den Kopf abhauen: aber um zwölf Uhr ist ihre Macht vorbei, und wenn du dann ausgehalten und kein Wörtchen gesprochen hast, so bin ich erlöst. Ich komme zu dir, und habe in einer Flasche das Wasser des Lebens, damit bestreiche ich dich, und dann bist du wieder lebendig und gesund wie zuvor.« Da sprach er »gerne will ich dich erlösen.« Es geschah nun alles so, wie sie gesagt hatte: die schwarzen Männer konnten ihm kein Wort abzwingen, und in der dritten Nacht ward die Schlange zu einer schönen Königstochter, die kam mit dem Wasser des Lebens und machte ihn wieder lebendig. Und dann fiel sie ihm um den Hals und küßte ihn, und war Jubel und Freude im ganzen Schloß. Da wurde ihre Hochzeit gehalten, und er war König vom goldenen Berge.

Also lebten sie vergnügt zusammen, und die Königin gebar einen schönen Knaben. Acht Jahre waren schon herum, da fiel ihm sein Vater ein, und sein Herz ward bewegt, und er wünschte, ihn einmal heimzusuchen. Die Königin wollte ihn aber nicht fortlassen und sagte »ich weiß schon, daß es mein Unglück ist,« er ließ ihr aber keine Ruhe, bis sie einwilligte. Beim Abschied gab sie ihm noch einen Wünschring und sprach »nimm diesen

Ring und steck ihn an deinen Finger, so wirst du alsbald dahin versetzt, wo du dich hinwünschest, nur mußt du mir versprechen, daß du ihn nicht gebrauchst, mich von hier weg zu deinem Vater zu wünschen.« Er versprach ihr das, steckte den Ring an seinen Finger und wünschte sich heim vor die Stadt, wo sein Vater lebte. Im Augenblick befand er sich auch dort und wollte in die Stadt: wie er aber vors Tor kam, wollten ihn die Schildwachen nicht einlassen, weil er seltsame und doch so reiche und prächtige Kleider anhatte. Da ging er auf einen Berg, wo ein Schäfer hütete, tauschte mit diesem die Kleider und zog den alten Schäferrock an und ging also ungestört in die Stadt ein. Als er zu seinem Vater kam, gab er sich zu erkennen, der aber glaubte nimmermehr, daß es sein Sohn wäre, und sagte, er hätte zwar einen Sohn gehabt, der wäre aber längst tot: doch weil er sähe, daß er ein armer dürftiger Schäfer wäre, so wollte er ihm einen Teller voll zu essen geben. Da sprach der Schäfer zu seinen Eltern »ich bin wahrhaftig euer Sohn, wißt ihr kein Mal an meinem Leibe, woran ihr mich erkennen könnt?« »Ja,« sagte die Mutter, »unser Sohn hatte eine Himbeere unter dem rechten Arm.« Er streifte das Hemd zurück, da sahen sie die Himbeere unter seinem rechten Arm und zweifelten nicht mehr, daß es ihr Sohn wäre. Darauf erzählte er ihnen, er wäre König vom goldenen Berge, und eine Königstochter wäre seine Gemahlin, und sie hätten einen schönen Sohn von sieben Jahren. Da sprach der Vater »nun und nimmermehr ist das wahr: das ist mir ein schöner König, der in einem zerlumpten Schäferrock hergeht.« Da ward der Sohn zornig und drehte, ohne an sein Versprechen zu denken, den Ring herum und wünschte beide, seine Gemahlin und sein Kind, zu sich. In dem Augenblick waren sie auch da, aber die Königin, die klagte und weinte, und sagte, er hätte sein Wort gebrochen und hätte sie unglücklich gemacht. Er sagte »ich habe es unachtsam getan und nicht mit bösem Willen,« und redete ihr zu; sie stellte sich auch, als gäbe sie nach, aber sie hatte Böses im Sinn.

Da führte er sie hinaus vor die Stadt auf den Acker und zeigte ihr das Wasser, wo das Schiffchen war abgestoßen worden, und sprach dann »ich bin müde, setze dich nieder, ich will ein wenig auf deinem Schoß schlafen.« Da legte er seinen Kopf auf ihren Schoß und sie lauste ihn ein wenig, bis er einschlief. Als er eingeschlafen war, zog sie erst den Ring von seinem Finger, dann zog sie den Fuß unter ihm weg und ließ nur den Toffel zurück: hierauf nahm sie ihr Kind in den Arm und wünschte sich wieder in ihr Königreich. Als er erwachte, lag er da ganz verlassen, und seine Gemahlin und das Kind waren fort und der Ring vom Finger auch, nur der Toffel stand noch da zum Wahrzeichen. »Nach Haus zu deinen Eltern kannst du nicht wieder gehen,« dachte er, »die würden sagen, du wärst ein Hexenmeister, du willst aufpacken und gehen, bis du in dein Königreich kommst.« Also ging er fort und kam endlich zu einem Berg, vor dem drei Riesen standen und miteinander stritten, weil sie nicht wußten, wie sie ihres Vaters Erbe teilen sollten. Als sie ihn vorbeigehen sahen, riefen sie ihn an und sagten, kleine Menschen hätten klugen Sinn, er sollte ihnen die Erbschaft verteilen. Die Erbschaft aber bestand aus einem Degen, wenn einer den in die Hand nahm und sprach »Köpf alle runter, nur meiner nicht,« so lagen alle Köpfe auf der Erde; zweitens aus einem Mantel, wer den anzog, war unsichtbar; drittens aus ein Paar Stiefeln, wenn man die angezogen hatte und sich wohin wünschte, so war man im Augenblick da. Er sagte »gebt mir die drei Stücke, damit ich probieren könnte, ob sie noch in gutem Stande sind.« Da gaben sie ihm den Mantel, und als er ihn umgehängt hatte, war er unsichtbar und war in eine Fliege verwandelt. Dann nahm er wieder seine Gestalt an und sprach »der Mantel ist gut, nun gebt mir das Schwert.« Sie sagten »nein, das geben wir nicht! wenn du sprächst »Köpf alle runter, nur meiner nicht!« so wären unsere Köpfe alle herab und du allein hättest den deinigen noch.« Doch gaben sie es ihm unter der Bedingung, daß ers an einem Baum probieren sollte. Das tat er, und das Schwert zerschnitt den Stamm eines Baumes wie einen Strohhalm. Nun wollt er noch die Stiefeln haben, sie sprachen aber »nein, die geben wir nicht weg, wenn du sie angezogen hättest und wünschtest dich oben auf den Berg, so stünden wir da unten und hätten nichts.« »Nein,« sprach er, »das will ich nicht tun.« Da gaben sie ihm auch die Stiefeln. Wie er nun alle drei Stücke hatte, so dachte er an nichts als an seine Frau und sein Kind und sprach so vor sich hin »ach wäre ich auf dem goldenen Berg,« und alsbald verschwand er vor den Augen der Riesen, und war also ihr Erbe geteilt. Als er nah beim Schloß war, hörte er Freudengeschrei, Geigen und Flöten, und die Leute sagten ihm, seine Gemahlin feierte ihre Hochzeit mit einem andern. Da ward er zornig und sprach »die Falsche, sie hat mich betrogen und mich verlassen, als ich eingeschlafen war.« Da hing er seinen Mantel um und ging unsichtbar ins Schloß hinein. Als er in den Saal eintrat, war da eine große Tafel mit köstlichen Speisen besetzt, und die Gäste aßen und tranken, lachten und scherzten. Sie aber saß in der Mitte in prächtigen Kleidern auf einem königlichen Sessel und hatte die Krone auf dem Haupt. Er stellte sich hinter sie, und niemand sah ihn. Wenn sie ihr ein Stück Fleisch auf den Teller legten, nahm er ihn weg und aß es: und wenn sie ihr ein Glas Wein einschenkten, nahm ers weg und tranks aus; sie gaben ihr immer, und sie hatte doch immer nichts, denn Teller und Glas verschwanden augenblicklich. Da ward sie bestürzt und schämte sie sich, stand auf und ging in ihre Kammer und weinte, er aber ging hinter ihr her. Da sprach sie »ist denn der Teufel über mir, oder kam mein Erlöser nie?« Da schlug er ihr ins Angesicht und sagte »kam dein Erlöser nie? er ist über dir, du Betrügerin. Habe ich das an dir verdient?« Da machte er sich sichtbar, ging in den Saal und rief »die Hochzeit ist aus, der wahre König ist gekommen!« Die Könige, Fürsten und Räte, die da versammelt waren, höhnten und verlachten ihn: er aber gab kurze Worte und sprach »wollt ihr hinaus oder nicht?« Da wollten sie ihn fangen und drangen auf ihn ein, aber er zog sein Schwert und sprach »Köpf alle runter, nur meiner nicht.« Da rollten alle Köpfe zur Erde, und er war allein der Herr und war wieder König vom goldenen Berge.

93. Die Rabe.

Es war einmal eine Königin, die hatte ein Töchterchen, das war noch klein und mußte noch auf dem Arm getragen werden. Zu einer Zeit war das Kind unartig, und die Mutter mochte sagen, was sie wollte, es hielt nicht Ruhe. Da ward sie ungeduldig, und weil die Raben so um das Schloß herumflogen, öffnete sie das Fenster und sagte »ich wollte, du wärst eine Rabe und flögst fort, so hätt ich Ruhe.« Kaum hatte sie das Wort gesagt, so war das Kind in eine Rabe verwandelt und flog von ihrem Arm zum Fenster hinaus. Sie flog aber in einen dunkeln Wald und blieb lange Zeit darin und die Eltern hörten nichts von ihr. Danach führte einmal einen Mann sein Weg in diesen Wald, der hörte die Rabe rufen und ging der Stimme nach: und als er näher kam, sprach die Rabe »ich bin eine Königstochter von Geburt und bin verwünscht worden, du aber kannst mich erlösen.« »Was soll ich tun?« fragte er. Sie sagte »geh weiter in den Wald, und du wirst ein Haus finden, darin sitzt eine alte Frau, die wird dir Essen und Trinken reichen, aber du darfst nichts nehmen: wenn du etwas issest oder trinkst, so verfällst du in einen Schlaf und kannst du mich nicht erlösen. Im Garten hinter dem Haus ist eine große Lohhucke, darauf sollst du stehen und mich erwarten. Drei Tage lang komm ich jeden Mittag um zwei Uhr zu dir in einem Wagen, der ist erst mit vier weißen Hengsten bespannt, dann mit vier roten und zuletzt mit vier schwarzen, wenn du aber nicht wach bist, sondern schläfst, so werde ich nicht erlöst.« Der Mann versprach alles zu tun, was sie verlangt hatte. Die Rabe aber sagte »ach, ich weiß es schon, du wirst mich nicht erlösen, du nimmst etwas von der Frau.« Da versprach der Mann noch einmal, er wollte gewiß nichts anrühren, weder von dem Essen noch von dem Trinken. Wie er aber in das Haus kam, trat die alte Frau zu ihm und sagte »armer Mann, was seid Ihr abgemattet, kommt und erquickt Euch, esset und trinket.« »Nein,« sagte der Mann, »ich will nicht essen und nicht trinken.« Sie ließ ihm aber keine Ruhe und sprach »wenn Ihr dann nicht essen wollt, so tut einen Zug aus dem Glas, einmal ist keinmal.« Da ließ er sich überreden und trank. Nachmittags gegen zwei Uhr ging er hinaus in den Garten auf die Lohhucke und wollte auf die Rabe warten. Wie er da stand, ward er auf einmal so müde, und konnte es nicht überwinden und legte sich ein wenig nieder: doch wollte er nicht einschlafen. Aber kaum hatte er sich hingestreckt, so fielen ihm die Augen von selber zu, und er schlief ein und schlief so fest, daß ihn nichts auf der Welt hätte erwecken können. Um zwei Uhr kam die Rabe mit vier weißen Hengsten gefahren, aber sie war schon in voller Trauer und sprach »ich weiß, daß er schläft.« Und als sie in den Garten kam, lag er auch da auf der Lohhucke und schlief. Sie stieg aus dem Wagen, ging zu ihm und schüttelte ihn und rief ihn an, aber er erwachte nicht. Am andern Tag zur Mittagszeit kam die alte Frau wieder und brachte ihm Essen und Trinken, aber er wollte es nicht annehmen. Doch sie ließ ihm keine Ruhe und redete ihm so lange zu, bis er wieder einen Zug aus dem Glase tat. Gegen zwei Uhr ging er in den Garten auf die Lohhucke und wollte auf die Rabe warten, da empfand er auf einmal so große Müdigkeit, daß seine Glieder ihn nicht mehr hielten: er konnte sich nicht helfen, mußte sich legen und fiel in tiefen Schlaf. Als die Rabe daherfuhr mit vier braunen Hengsten, war sie schon in voller Trauer und sagte »ich weiß, daß er schläft.« Sie ging zu ihm hin, aber er lag da im Schlaf und war nicht zu erwecken. Am andern Tage sagte die alte Frau, was das wäre? er äße und tränke nichts, ob er sterben wollte? Er antwortete »ich will und darf nicht essen und nicht trinken.« Sie stellte aber die Schüssel mit Essen und das Glas mit Wein vor ihm hin, und als der Geruch davon zu ihm aufstieg, so konnte er nicht widerstehen und tat einen starken Zug. Als die Zeit kam, ging er hinaus in den Garten auf die Lohhucke und wartete auf die Königstochter: da ward er noch müder als die Tage vorher, legte sich nieder und schlief so fest, als wäre er ein Stein. Um zwei Uhr kam die Rabe und hatte vier schwarze Hengste, und die Kutsche und alles war schwarz. Sie war aber schon in voller Trauer und sprach »ich weiß, daß er schläft und mich nicht erlösen kann.« Als sie zu ihm kam, lag er da und schlief fest. Sie rüttelte ihn und rief ihn, aber sie konnte ihn nicht aufwecken. Da legte sie ein Brot neben ihn hin, dann ein Stück Fleisch, zum dritten eine Flasche Wein, und er konnte von allem so viel nehmen, als er wollte, es ward nicht weniger. Danach nahm sie einen goldenen Ring von ihrem Finger, und steckte ihn an seinen Finger, und war ihr Name eingegraben. Zuletzt legte sie einen Brief hin, darin stand, was sie ihm gegeben hatte, und daß es nie all würde, und es stand auch darin »ich sehe wohl, daß du mich hier nicht erlösen kannst, willst du mich aber noch erlösen, so komm nach dem goldenen Schloß von Stromberg, es steht in deiner Macht, das weiß ich gewiß.« Und wie sie ihm das alles gegeben hatte, setzte sie sich in ihren Wagen und fuhr in das goldene Schloß von Stromberg.

Als der Mann aufwachte und sah, daß er geschlafen hatte, ward er von Herzen traurig und sprach »gewiß nun ist sie vorbeigefahren, und ich habe sie nicht erlöst.« Da fielen ihm die Dinge in die Augen, die neben ihm lagen, und er las den Brief, darin geschrieben stand, wie es zugegangen war. Also machte er sich auf und ging fort, und wollte nach dem goldenen Schloß von Stromberg, aber er wußte nicht, wo es lag. Nun war er schon lange in der Welt herumgegangen, da kam er in einen dunkeln Wald und ging vierzehn Tage darin fort und konnte sich nicht herausfinden. Da ward es wieder Abend, und er war so müde, daß er sich an einen Busch legte und einschlief. Am andern Tag ging er weiter, und abends als er sich wieder an einen Busch legen wollte, hörte er ein Heulen und Jammern, daß er nicht einschlafen konnte. Und wie die Zeit kam, wo die Leute Lichter anstecken, sah er eins schimmern, machte sich auf und ging ihm nach; da kam er vor ein Haus, das schien so klein, denn es stand ein großer Riese davor. Da dachte er bei sich »gehst du hinein und der Riese erblickt dich, so ist es leicht um dein Leben geschehen.« Endlich wagte er es und trat heran. Als der Riese ihn sah, sprach er »es ist gut, daß du kommst, ich habe lange nichts gegessen: ich will dich gleich zum Abendbrot verschlucken.« »Laß das lieber sein,« sprach der Mann, »ich lasse mich nicht gerne verschlucken; verlangst du zu essen, so habe ich genug, um dich satt zu machen.« »Wenn das wahr ist,« sagte der Riese, »so kannst du ruhig bleiben; ich wollte dich nur verzehren, weil ich nichts anderes habe.« Da gingen sie und setzten sich an den Tisch, und der Mann holte Brot, Wein und Fleisch, das nicht all ward. »Das gefällt mir wohl,« sprach der Riese und aß nach Herzenslust. Danach sprach der Mann zu ihm »kannst du mir nicht sagen, wo das goldene Schloß von Stromberg ist?« Der Riese sagte »ich will auf meiner Landkarte nachsehen, darauf sind alle Städte, Dörfer und Häuser zu finden.« Er holte die Landkarte, die er in der Stube hatte, und suchte das Schloß, aber es stand nicht darauf. »Es tut nichts,« sprach er, »ich habe oben im Schranke noch größere Landkarten; darauf wollen wir suchen;« aber es war auch vergeblich.

Der Mann wollte nun weitergehen; aber der Riese bat ihn, noch ein paar Tage zu warten, bis sein Bruder heim käme, der wäre ausgegangen, Lebensmittel zu holen. Als der Bruder heim kam, fragten sie nach dem goldenen Schloß von Stromberg, er antwortete »wenn ich gegessen habe und satt bin, dann will ich auf der Karte suchen.« Er stieg dann mit ihnen auf seine Kammer und sie suchten auf seiner Landkarte, konnten es aber nicht finden: da holte er noch andere alte Karten, und sie ließen nicht ab, bis sie endlich das goldene Schloß von Stromberg fanden, aber es war viele tausend Meilen weit weg. »Wie werde ich nun dahin kommen?« fragte der Mann. Der Riese sprach »zwei Stunden hab ich Zeit, da will ich dich bis in die Nähe tragen, dann aber muß ich wieder nach Haus und das Kind säugen, das wir haben.« Da trug der Riese den Mann bis etwa hundert Stunden vom Schloß und sagte »den übrigen Weg kannst du wohl allein gehen.« Dann kehrte er um, der Mann aber ging vorwärts Tag und Nacht, bis er endlich zu dem goldenen Schloß von Stromberg kam. Es stand aber auf einem gläsernen Berge, und die verwünschte Jungfrau fuhr in ihrem Wagen um das Schloß herum und ging dann hinein. Er freute sich, als er sie erblickte, und wollte zu ihr hinaufsteigen, aber wie er es auch anfing, er rutschte an dem Glas immer wieder herunter. Und als er sah, daß er sie nicht erreichen konnte, ward er ganz betrübt und sprach zu sich selbst »ich will hier unten bleiben und auf sie warten.« Also baute er sich eine Hütte und saß darin ein ganzes Jahr und sah die Königstochter alle Tage oben fahren, konnte aber nicht zu ihr hinaufkommen.

Da sah er einmal aus seiner Hütte, wie drei Räuber sich schlugen, und rief ihnen zu »Gott sei mit euch!« Sie hielten bei dem Rufe inne, als sie aber niemand sahen, fingen sie wieder an sich zu schlagen, und das zwar ganz gefährlich. Da rief er abermals »Gott sei mit euch!« Sie hörten wieder auf, guckten sich um, weil sie aber niemand sahen, fuhren sie auch wieder fort sich zu schlagen. Da rief er zum drittenmal »Gott sei mit euch!« und dachte »du mußt sehen, was die drei vorhaben,« ging hin und fragte, warum sie aufeinander losschlügen. Da sagte der eine, er hätte einen Stock gefunden, wenn er damit wider eine Tür schlüge, so spränge sie auf; der andere sagte, er hätte einen Mantel gefunden, wenn er den umhinge, so wäre er unsichtbar; der dritte aber sprach, er hätte ein Pferd gefangen, damit könnte man überall hinreiten, auf den gläsernen Berg hinauf. Nun wüßten sie nicht, ob sie das in Gemeinschaft behalten oder ob sie sich trennen sollten. Da sprach der Mann »die drei Sachen will ich euch eintauschen: Geld habe ich zwar nicht, aber andere Dinge, die mehr wert sind! doch muß ich vorher eine Probe machen, damit ich sehe, ob ihr auch die Wahrheit gesagt habt.« Da ließen sie ihn aufs Pferd sitzen, hingen ihm den Mantel um und gaben ihm den Stock in die Hand, und wie er das alles hatte, konnten sie ihn nicht mehr sehen. Da gab er ihnen tüchtige Schläge und rief »nun, ihr Bärenhäuter, da habt ihr, was euch gebührt: seid ihr zufrieden?« Dann ritt er den Glasberg hinauf, und als er oben vor das Schloß kam, war es verschlossen: da schlug er mit dem Stock an das Tor, und alsbald sprang es auf. Er trat ein und ging die Treppe hinauf bis oben in den Saal, da saß die Jungfrau und hatte einen goldenen Kelch mit Wein vor sich. Sie konnte ihn aber nicht sehen, weil er den Mantel umhatte. Und als er vor sie kam, zog er den Ring, den sie ihm gegeben hatte, vom Finger und warf ihn in den Kelch, daß es klang. Da rief sie »das ist mein Ring, so muß auch der Mann da sein, der mich erlösen wird.« Sie suchten im ganzen Schloß und fanden ihn nicht, er war aber hinausgegangen, hatte sich aufs Pferd gesetzt und den Mantel abgeworfen. Wie sie nun vor das Tor kamen, sahen sie ihn und schrieen vor Freude. Da stieg er ab und nahm die Königstochter in den Arm: sie aber küßte ihn und sagte »jetzt hast du mich erlöst, und morgen wollen wir unsere Hochzeit feiern.«

94. Die kluge Bauerntochter.

Es war einmal ein armer Bauer, der hatte kein Land, nur ein kleines Häuschen und eine alleinige Tochter, da sprach die Tochter »wir sollten den Herrn König um ein Stückchen Rottland bitten.« Da der König ihre Armut hörte, schenkte er ihnen auch ein Eckchen Rasen, den hackte sie und ihr Vater um, und wollten ein wenig Korn und der Art Frucht darauf säen. Als sie den Acker beinah herum hatten, so fanden sie in der Erde einen Mörsel von purem Gold. »Hör,« sagte der Vater zu dem Mädchen, »weil unser Herr König ist so gnädig gewesen und hat uns diesen Acker geschenkt, so müssen wir ihm den Mörsel dafür geben.« Die Tochter aber wollte es nicht bewilligen und sagte »Vater, wenn wir den Mörsel haben und haben den Stößer nicht, dann müssen wir auch den Stößer herbeischaffen, darum schweigt lieber still.« Er wollt ihr aber nicht gehorchen, nahm den Mörsel, trug ihn zum Herrn König und sagte, den hätte er gefunden in der Heide, ob er ihn als eine Verehrung annehmen wollte. Der König nahm den Mörsel und fragte, ob er nichts mehr gefunden hätte. »Nein,« antwortete der Bauer. Da sagte der König, er solle nun auch den Stößer herbeischaffen. Der Bauer sprach, den hätten sie nicht gefunden; aber das half ihm so viel, als hätt ers in den Wind gesagt, er ward ins Gefängnis gesetzt, und sollte so lange da sitzen, bis er den Stößer herbeigeschafft hätte. Die Bedienten mußten ihm täglich Wasser und Brot bringen, was man so in dem Gefängnis kriegt, da hörten sie, wie der Mann als fort schrie »ach, hätt ich meiner Tochter gehört! ach, ach, hätt ich meiner Tochter gehört!« Da gingen die Bedienten zum König und sprachen das, wie der Gefangene als fort schrie »ach, hätt ich doch meiner Tochter gehört!« und wollte nicht essen und nicht trinken. Da befahl er den Bedienten, sie sollten den Gefangenen vor ihn bringen, und da fragte ihn der Herr König, warum er also fort schrie »ach, hätt ich meiner Tochter gehört!« »Was hat Eure Tochter denn gesagt?« »Ja, sie hat gesprochen, ich sollte den Mörsel nicht bringen, sonst müßt ich auch den Stößer schaffen.« »Habt Ihr so eine kluge Tochter, so laßt sie einmal herkommen.« Also mußte sie vor den König kommen, der fragte sie, ob sie denn so klug wäre, und sagte, er wollte ihr ein Rätsel aufgeben, wenn sie das treffen könnte, dann wollte er sie heiraten. Da sprach sie gleich ja, sie wollts erraten. Da sagte der König »komm zu mir, nicht gekleidet, nicht nackend, nicht geritten, nicht gefahren, nicht in dem Weg, nicht außer dem Weg, und wenn du das kannst, will ich dich heiraten.« Da ging sie hin, und zog sich aus splinternackend, da war sie nicht gekleidet, und nahm ein großes Fischgarn, und setzte sich hinein und wickelte es ganz um sich herum, da war sie nicht nackend: und borgte einen Esel fürs Geld und band dem Esel das Fischgarn an den Schwanz, darin er sie fortschleppen mußte und war das nicht geritten und nicht gefahren: der Esel mußte sie aber in der Fahrgleise schleppen, so daß sie nur mit der großen Zehe auf die Erde kam, und war das nicht in dem Weg und nicht außer dem Wege. Und wie sie so daherkam, sagte der König, sie hätte das Rätsel getroffen, und es wäre alles erfüllt. Da ließ er ihren Vater los aus dem Gefängnis, und nahm sie bei sich als seine Gemahlin und befahl ihr das ganze königliche Gut an.

Nun waren etliche Jahre herum, als der Herr König einmal auf die Parade zog, da trug es sich zu, daß Bauern mit ihren Wagen vor dem Schloß hielten, die hatten Holz verkauft; etliche hatten Ochsen vorgespannt, und etliche Pferde. Da war ein Bauer, der hatte drei Pferde, davon kriegte eins ein junges Füllchen, das lief weg und legte sich mitten zwischen zwei Ochsen, die vor dem Wagen waren. Als nun die Bauern zusammenkamen, fingen sie an sich zu zanken, zu schmeißen und zu lärmen, und der Ochsenbauer wollte das Füllchen behalten und sagte, die Ochsen hättens gehabt: und der andere sagte nein, seine Pferde hättens gehabt, und es wäre sein. Der Zank kam vor den König, und er tat den Ausspruch, wo das Füllen gelegen hätte, da sollt es bleiben; und also bekams der Ochsenbauer, dems doch nicht gehörte. Da ging der andere weg, weinte und lamentierte über sein Füllchen. Nun hatte er gehört, wie daß die Frau Königin so gnädig wäre, weil sie auch von armen Bauersleuten gekommen wäre: ging er zu ihr und bat sie, ob sie ihm nicht helfen könnte, daß er sein Füllchen wiederbekäme. Sagte sie »ja, wenn Ihr mir versprecht, daß Ihr mich nicht verraten wollt, so will ichs Euch sagen. Morgen früh, wenn der König auf der Wachtparade ist, so stellt Euch hin mitten in die Straße, wo er vorbeikommen muß, nehmt ein großes Fischgarn und tut, als fischtet Ihr, und fischt also fort und schüttet das Garn aus, als wenn Ihrs voll hättet,« und sagte ihm auch, was er antworten sollte, wenn er vom König gefragt würde. Also stand der Bauer am andern Tag da und fischte auf einem trockenen Platz. Wie der König vorbeikam und das sah, schickte er seinen Laufer hin, der sollte fragen, was der närrische Mann vorhätte. Da gab er zur Antwort »ich fische.« Fragte der Laufer, wie er fischen könnte, es wäre ja kein Wasser da. Sagte der Bauer »so gut als zwei Ochsen können ein Füllen kriegen, so gut kann ich auch auf dem trockenen Platz fischen.« Der Laufer ging hin und brachte dem König die Antwort, da ließ er den Bauer vor sich kommen und sagte ihm, das hätte er nicht von sich, von wem er das hätte: und sollts gleich bekennen. Der Bauer aber wollts nicht tun und sagte immer: Gott bewahr! er hätt es von sich. Sie legten ihn aber auf ein Gebund Stroh und schlugen und drangsalten ihn so lange, bis ers bekannte, daß ers von der Frau Königin hätte. Als der König nach Haus kam, sagte er zu seiner Frau »warum bist du so falsch mit mir, ich will dich nicht mehr zur Gemahlin: deine Zeit ist um, geh wieder hin, woher du gekommen bist, in dein Bauernhäuschen.« Doch erlaubte er ihr eins, sie sollte sich das Liebste und Beste mitnehmen, was sie wüßte, und das sollte ihr Abschied sein. Sie sagte »ja, lieber Mann, wenn dus so befiehlst, will ich es auch tun,« und fiel über ihn her und küßte ihn und sprach, sie wollte Abschied von ihm nehmen. Dann ließ sie einen starken Schlaftrunk kommen, Abschied mit ihm zu trinken: der König tat einen großen Zug, sie aber trank nur ein wenig. Da geriet er bald in einen tiefen Schlaf, und als sie das sah, rief sie einen Bedienten und nahm ein schönes weißes Linnentuch und schlug ihn da hinein, und die Bedienten mußten ihn in einen Wagen vor die Türe tragen, und fuhr sie ihn heim in ihr Häuschen.

Da legte sie ihn in ihr Bettchen, und er schlief Tag und Nacht in einem fort, und als er aufwachte, sah er sich um und sagte »ach Gott, wo bin ich denn?« rief seinen Bedienten, aber es war keiner da. Endlich kam seine Frau vors Bett und sagte »lieber Herr König, Ihr habt mir befohlen, ich sollte das Liebste und Beste aus dem Schloß mitnehmen, nun hab ich nichts Besseres und Lieberes als dich, da hab ich dich mitgenommen.« Dem König stiegen die Tränen in die Augen, und er sagte »liebe Frau, du sollst mein sein und ich dein,« und nahm sie wieder mit ins königliche Schloß und ließ sich aufs neue mit ihr vermählen; und werden sie ja wohl noch auf den heutigen Tag leben.

95. Der alte Hildebrand.

Es war amahl a Baur und a Bäurin, und dö Bäurin, dö hat der Pfarra im Dorf gern gesegn, und da hat er alleweil gwunschen, wann er nur amahl an ganzen Tag mit der Bäurin allan recht vergnügt zubringa kunnt, und der Bäurin, der wars halt a recht gwesn. No, da hat er amahl zu der Bäurin gsagt »hanz, mei liebi Bäurin, hietzt hab i was ausstudiert, wie wir halt amahl an ganzen Tag recht vergnügt mitanander zubringa kunnten. Wißts was, ös legts eng aufm Mittwoch ins Bett und sagts engern Mon, ös seits krang, und lamatierts und übelts nur recht, und das treibts fort bis aufm Sunta, wann i die Predi halt, und da wir (werde) i predigen, daß wer z' Haus a krangs Kind, an krangen Mon, a krangs Weib, an krangen Vader, a krange Muader, a krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha is, hat, und der tut a Wollfart aufm Göckerliberg in Wälischland, wo ma um an Kreuzer an Metzen Lorberbladen kriegt, dem wirds krange Kind, der krange Mon, 's krange Weib, der krange Vader, d' krange Muader, d' krange Schwester, oda wers sunst nacha is, auf der Stell gsund.«

»Dös wir i schon machen,« hat die Bäurin drauf gsagt. No, drauf, aufm Mittwoch hat sie halt d' Bäurin ins Bett glegt und hat g'lamatiert und g'übelt als wie, und ihr Mon hat ihr alles braucht, was er nur gwißt hat, 's hat aber halt nix gholfn. Wie denn der Sunta kuma is, hat d' Bäurin gsagt »mir is zwar so miserabel, als ob i glei verschaden sollt, aber ans möcht i do no vor mei End, i möcht halt in Herrn Pfarra sei Predi hörn, dö er heund halten wird.« »A, mei Kind,« sagt der Baur drauf, »tu du dös nit, du kunntst schlechter wern, wann aufstundst. Schau, es wir i in d' Predi gehn und wir recht acht gebe und wir dir alles wieder derzöhln, was der Herr Pfarra gsagt hat.« »No,« hat d' Bäurin gsagt, »so geh halt und gibt recht acht und derzöhl mir alles, was d' gehört hast.« No, und da is der Baur halt in d' Predi ganga, und da hat der Herr Pfarra also angfangt zun predigen und hat halt gsagt, wann ans a krangs Kind, an krangen Mon, a krangs Weib, an krangen Vader, a krange Muader, a krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, z' Haus hät, und der wollt a Wollfart machen aufm Göckerliberg in Wälischland, wo der Metzen Lorberbladen an Kreuzer kost, dem wird 's krange Kind, der krange Mon, 's krange Weib, der krange Vater, d' krange Muader, d' krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, auf der Stell gsund wern, und wer also dö Ras unternehma wollt, der soll nach der Meß zu ihm kuma, da wird er ihm den Lorbersack gebn und den Kreuzer. Da war niembd fröher als der Bauer, und nach der Meß is er gleich zum Pfarra ganga, und der hat ihm also den Lorbersack gebn und den Kreuzer. Drauf is er nach Haus kuma und hat schon bei der Haustür eini gschrien »juchesha, liebes Weib, hietzt is so viel, als obs gsund warst. Der Herr Pfarra hat heunt predigt, daß, wer a krangs Kind, an krangen Mon, a kranges Weib, an krangen Vader, a krange Muader, a krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, z' Haus hat, und der macht a Wollfart aufm Göckerliberg in Wälischland, wo der Metzen Lorberbladen an Kreuzer kost, dem wird 's krange Kind, der krange Mon, ‘s krange Weib, der krange Vader, d’ krange Muader, d’ krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, auf der Stell gsund; und hietzt hab i mir schon den Lorbersack gholt vom Herrn Pfarra und den Kreuzer, und wir glei mein Wanderschaft antreten, daß d’ desto ehender gsund wirst;« und drauf is er fort ganga. Er war aber kam fort, so is die Bäurin schon auf gwesn, und der Pfarra war a glei do. Hietzt lassen wir aber dö zwa indessen auf der Seiten und gänga mir mit’n Baur. Der is halt alleweil drauf los ganga, damit er desto ehender aufm Göckerliberg kummt, und wie halt so geht, begegnt ihm sein Gvatter. Sein Gvatter, dös war an Armon (Eiermann), und der is just von Mark kuma, wo er seine Ar verkauft hat. »Globt seist,« sagt sein Gvatter, »wo gehst denn so trabi hin, Gvatter?« »In Ewigkeit, Gvatter,« sagt der Baur, »mein Weib is krang worn, und da hab i heund in Herrn Pfarra sein Predi ghört, und da hat er predigt, daß, wann aner z’ Haus an krangs Kind, an krangen Mon, a krangs Weib, an krangen Vader, a krange Muader, a krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, hat, und er macht a Wollfart aufm Göckerliberg in Wälischland, wo der Metzen Lorberbladen an Kreuzer kost, dem wird’s krange Kind, der krange Mon, ‘s krange Weib, der krange Vader, d’ krange Muader, d’ krange Schwester, Bruader, oda wers sunst nacha war, auf der Stell gsund, und da hab i mir von Herrn Pfarra den Lorbersack und den Kreuzer gholt, und hietzt trit i halt mein Wanderschaft an.« »Aber hanz, Gvatter,« hat der Gvatter zum Baur gsagt, »seits denn gar so dacket (einfältig), daß so was glauben könts? Wißts, was is? der Pfarra möcht gern mit engern Weib an ganzen Tag allan recht vergnügt zubringa, drum habn’s eng den Bärn anbunden, daß ihr’en aus’n Füßen kumts.« »Mein,« hat der Baur gsagt, »so möcht i do wissen, ob das wahr is.« »No,« hat der Gvatter gsagt, »wast was, setz di in mein Arkorb eini, so will i di nach Haus tragn, und da wirst es selber segn.« No, das is also geschegn, und den Baur hat sein Gvatter in sein Arkorb eini gsetzt, und der hat’n nach Haus tragn. Wie’s nach Haus kuma san, holla, da is schon lusti zuganga. Da hat die Bäurin schon fast alles, was nur in ihren Hof war, abgstochen ghabt, und Krapfen hats bachen, und der Pfarra war a schon da und hat a sein Geige mitbracht ghabt. Und da hat halt der Gvatter anklopft, und d’ Bäurin hat gfragt, wer draußen war. »I bins, Gvatterin,« hat der Gvatter gsagt, »mei, gebts mir heund nacht a Herberg, i hab meini Ar aufm Mark nit verkauft, und hietzt muß i’s wieder nach Haus trage, und sö san gar z’ schwar, i bring’s nit fort, es is a schon finster.« »Ja, mein Gvatter,« sagt d’ Bäurin drauf, »ös kumts mir recht zur unglegna Zeit. No, weils halt her nit anders is, so kömts eina und setzts eng dort auf d’ Ofenbank.« No hat sie der Gvatter also mit sein Buckelkorb auf d’ Ofenbank gsetzt. Der Pfarra aber und d’ Bäurin, dö warn halt recht lusti. Endli fangt der Pfarra an und sagt »hanz, mein liebi Bäurin, ös könnts ja so schön singa, singts mir do ans.« »A,« sagt die Bäurin, »hietzt kann i nix mehr singa, ja, in mein junge Jahren, da hab i’s wohl könna, aber hietzt is schon vorbei.« »Ei,« sagt wieder der Pfarra, »singts do nur a bißl.« No, da fangt die Bäurin an und singt

»i hab mein Mon wohl ausgesandt
aufm Göckerliberg in Wälischland.«

Drauf singt der Pfarra

»i wollt, er blieb da a ganzes Jahr,
was fragt i nach dem Lorbersack.
Halleluja!«

Hietzt fangt der Gvatter hinten an und singt (da muß i aber derzöhln, daß der Baur Hildebrand ghassen hat), singt also der Gvatter

»ei du, mein lieber Hildebrand,
was machst du auf der Ofenbank?
Halleluja!«

Und hietzt singt der Baur in Korb drinna

»hietzt kann i das Singa nimmermehr leiden,
hietzt muß i aus mein Buckelkorb steigen.«

Und steigt aus'n Korb und prügelt den Pfaffen beim Haus hinaus.

96. De drei Vügelkens.

Et is wul dusent un meere Jaare hen, da wören hier im Lanne luter kleine Künige, da hed auck einer up den Keuterberge wünt (gewohnt), de gink sau geren up de Jagd. Ase nu mal mit sinen Jägern vom Schlotte heruttrok, höen (hüteten) unner den Berge drei Mäkens ire Köge (Kühe), un wie sei den Künig mit den vielen Lüen (Leuten) seien, so reip de ölleste den annern beden Mäkens to, un weis up den Künig, »helo! helo! wenn ik den nig kriege, so will ik keinen.« Da antworde de zweide up de annere Side vom Berge, un weis up den, de dem Künige rechter Hand gink, »helo! helo! wenn ik den nig kriege, so will ik keinen.« Da reip de jüngeste, un weis up den, de linker Hand gink, »helo! helo! wenn ik den nig kriege, so will ik keinen.« Dat wören awerst de beden Ministers. Dat hörde de Künig alles, und ase von der Jagd heime kummen was, leit he de drei Mäkens to sik kummen un fragete se, wat se da gistern am Berge segd hedden. Dat wullen se nig seggen, de Künig frog awerst de ölleste, ob se ün wol tom Manne hewen wulle. Da segde se ja, un ere beiden Süstern friggeten de beiden Ministers, denn se wören alle drei scheun un schier (klar, schön) von Angesicht, besunners de Künigin, de hadde Hare ase Flass.

De beiden Süstern awerst kregen keine Kinner, un ase de Künig mal verreisen moste, let he so tor Künigin kummen, um se up to munnern, denn se was grae (gerad) swanger. Se kreg en kleinen Jungen, de hadde ‘n ritsch roen (roten) Stern mit up de Weld. Da sehden de beiden Süstern, eine tor annern, se wullen den hübsken Jungen in’t Water werpen. Wie se’n darin worpen hadden (ick glöwe, et is de Weser west), da flügt ‘n Vügelken in de Högte, dat sank

»tom Daude bereit,
up wietern Bescheid
tom Lilienstrus:
wacker Junge, bist du’s?«

Da dat de beiden hörten, kregen se de Angst up’n Lieve, un makten, dat se fort keimen. Wie de Künig na Hus kam, sehden se to üm, de Künigin hedde ‘n Hund kregen. Da segde de Künig »wat Gott deiet, dat is wole dahn.«

Et wunde awerst ‘n Fisker an den Water, de fiskede den kleinen Jungen wier herut, ase noch ewen lebennig was, un da sine Fru kene Kinner hadde, foerden (fütterten) s’en up. Na’n Jaar was de Künig wier verreist, da krig de Künigin wier ‘n Jungen, den namen de beiden falsken Süstern un warpen ‘n auck in’t Water, da flügt dat Vügelken wier in de Högte un sank:

»tom Daude bereit,
up wietern Bescheid
tom Lilienstrus;

wacker Junge, bist du’s?«

Un wie de Künig torügge kam, sehden se to üm, de Künigin hedde wier »n Hund bekummen, un he segde wier ‚wat Gott deit, dat is wole dahn.« Awerst de Fisker trok düsen auck ut den Water un foerd ‘n up.

Da verreisede de Künig wier, un de Künigin kreg ‘n klein Mäken, dat warpen de falsken Süstern auck in’t Water. Da flügt dat Vügelken wier in de Högte un sank

»tom Daude bereit,
up wietern Bescheid
tom Lilienstrus;
wacker Mäken, bist du’s?«

Un wie de Künig na Hus kam, sehden se to üm, de Künigin hedde ‘ne Katte kregt. Da worde de Künig beuse, un leit sine Fru in’t Gefängnis smieten, da hed se lange Jaare in setten.

De Kinner wören unnerdes anewassen, da gink de ölleste mal mit annern Jungens herut to fisken, da wüllt ün de annern Jungens nig twisken sik hewen un segget »du Fündling, gaa du diner Wege.« Da ward he gans bedröwet un fräggt den olen Fisker, ob dat war wöre. De vertellt ün, dat he mal fisked hedde, un hedde ün ut den Water troken (gezogen). Da segd he, he wulle furt un sinen Teiten (Vater) söken. De Fisker, de biddet ‘n, he mögde doch bliven, awerst he let sik gar nich hallen, bis de Fisker et tolest to givt. Da givt he sik up den Weg un geit meere Dage hinner’n anner, endlich kümmt he vor ‘n graut allmächtig Water, davor steit ‘ne ole Fru un fiskede. »Guden Dag, Moer,« segde de Junge. »Groten Dank.« »Du süst da wol lange fisken, e du ‘n Fisk fängest.« »Und du wol lange söken, e du dinen Teiten findst. Wie wust du der denn da över’t Water kummen?« sehde de Fru. »Ja, dat mag Gott witten.« Da nümmt de ole Fru ün up den Rüggen un dragd ‘n derdörch, un he söcht lange Tiid un kann sinen Teiten nig finnen. Ase nu wol ‘n Jaar veröwer is, da trekt de tweide auck ut un will sinen Broer söken. He kümmt an dat Water, un da geit et ün ewen so, ase sinen Broer. Nu was nur noch de Dochter allein to Hus, de jammerde so viel na eren Broern, dat se upt lest auck den Fisker bad, he mögte se treken laten, se wulle ere Broerkes söken. Da kam se auck bie den grauten Water, da sehde se tor olen Fru »guden Dag, Moer.« »Groten Dank.« »Gott helpe ju bie juen fisken.« Ase de ole Fru dat hörde, da word se gans fründlich un drog se över’t Water im gab er ‘n Roe (Rute), un sehde to er »nu gah man jümmer up düsen Wege to, mine Dochter, un wenn du bie einen groten swarten Hund vorbei kümmst, so must du still un drist, un one to lachen un one ün an to kiken, vorbie gaan. Dann kümmest du an ‘n grot open Schlott, up’n Süll (Schwelle) most du de Roe fallen laten un stracks dörch dat Schlott an den annern Side wier herut gahen; da is ‘n olen Brunnen, darut is ‘n groten Boom wassen, daran hänget ‘n Vugel im Buer, den nümm af: dann nümm noch ‘n Glas Water ut den Brunnen un gaa mi düsen beiden den sülvigen Weg wier torügge: up den Süll nümm de Roe auck wier mit, un wenn du dann wier bie den Hund vorbie kümmst, so schlah ün in't Gesicht, awerst sü to, dat du ün treppest, un dann kumm nur wier to me torügge.« Da fand se et grade so, ase de Fru et sagt hadde, un up den Rückwege, da fand se de beiden Broer, de sik de halve Welt durchsöcht hadden. Se gink tosammen, bis wo de swarte Hund an den Weg lag, den schlog se in't Gesicht, da word et 'n schönen Prinz, de geit met ünen, bis an dat Water. Da stand da noch de ole Fru, de frögede sik ser, da se alle wier da wören, un drog se alle över't Water, un dann gink se auck weg, denn se was nu erlöst. De annern awerst gingen alle na den olen Fisker, un alle wören froh, dat se sik wier funnen hadden, den Vugel awerst hüngen se an der Wand.

De tweide Suhn kunne awerst nig to Huse rasten, un nam 'n Flitzebogen un gink up de Jagd. Wie he möe was, nam he sine Flötepipen un mackte 'n Stücksken. De Künig awerst wör auck up de Jagd un hörde dat, da gink he hin, un wie he den Jungen drap, so sehde he »we hett die verlöwt, hier to jagen?« »O, neimes (niemand).« »Wen hörst du dann to?« »Ik bin den Fisker sin Suhn.« »De hett ja keine Kinner.« »Wenn du't nig glöwen wust, so kum mit.« Dat dehe de Künig un frog den Fisker, de vertälle ün alles, un dat Vügelken an der Wand fing an to singen

»de Möhme (Mutter) sitt allein
wol in dat Kerkerlein.
O Künig, edeles Blod,
dat sind dine Kinner god.
De falsken Süstern beide
de dehen de Kinnerkes Leide,
wol in des Waters Grund,
wo se de Fisker fund.«

Da erschraken se alle, un de Künig nahm den Vugel, den Fisker un de drei Kinner mit sik na den Schlotte un leit dat Gefänknis upschluten un nam sine Fru wier herut, de was awerst gans kränksch un elennig woren. Da gav er de Dochter von den Water ut den Brunnen to drinken, da war se frisk un gesund. De beiden falsken Süstern wören awerst verbrennt, un de Dochter friggede den Prinzen.

97. Das Wasser des Lebens.

Es war einmal ein König, der war krank, und niemand glaubte, daß er mit dem Leben davonkäme. Er hatte aber drei Söhne, die waren darüber betrübt, gingen hinunter in den Schloßgarten und weinten. Da begegnete ihnen ein alter Mann, der fragte sie nach ihrem Kummer. Sie sagten ihm, ihr Vater wäre so krank, daß er wohl sterben würde, denn es wollte ihm nichts helfen. Da sprach der Alte »ich weiß ein Mittel, das ist das Wasser des Lebens, wenn er davon trinkt, so wird er wieder gesund: es ist aber schwer zu finden.« Der älteste sagte »ich will es schon finden,« ging zum kranken König und bat ihn, er möchte ihm erlauben auszuziehen, um das Wasser des Lebens zu suchen, denn das könnte ihn allein heilen. »Nein,« sprach der König, »die Gefahr dabei ist zu groß, lieber will ich sterben.« Er bat aber so lange, bis der König einwilligte. Der Prinz dachte in seinem Herzen »bringe ich das Wasser, so bin ich meinem Vater der liebste und erbe das Reich.«

Also machte er sich auf, und als er eine Zeitlang fortgeritten war, stand da ein Zwerg auf dem Wege, der rief ihn an und sprach »wo hinaus so geschwind?« »Dummer Knirps,« sagte der Prinz ganz stolz, »das brauchst du nicht zu wissen,« und ritt weiter. Das kleine Männchen aber war zornig geworden und hatte einen bösen Wunsch getan. Der Prinz geriet bald hernach in eine Bergschlucht, und je weiter er ritt, je enger taten sich die Berge zusammen, und endlich ward der Weg so eng, daß er keinen Schritt weiter konnte; es war nicht möglich, das Pferd zu wenden oder aus dem Sattel zu steigen, und er saß da wie eingesperrt. Der kranke König wartete lange Zeit auf ihn, aber er kam nicht. Da sagte der zweite Sohn »Vater, laßt mich ausziehen und das Wasser suchen,« und dachte bei sich »ist mein Bruder tot, so fällt das Reich mir zu.« Der König wollt ihn anfangs auch nicht ziehen lassen, endlich gab er nach. Der Prinz zog also auf demselben Weg fort, den sein Bruder eingeschlagen hatte, und begegnete auch dem Zwerg, der ihn anhielt und fragte, wohin er so eilig wollte. »Kleiner Knirps,« sagte der Prinz, »das brauchst du nicht zu wissen,« und ritt fort, ohne sich weiter umzusehen. Aber der Zwerg verwünschte ihn, und er geriet wie der andere in eine Bergschlucht und konnte nicht vorwärts und rückwärts. So gehts aber den Hochmütigen.

Als auch der zweite Sohn ausblieb, so erbot sich der jüngste, auszuziehen und das Wasser zu holen, und der König mußte ihn endlich ziehen lassen. Als er dem Zwerg begegnete und dieser fragte, wohin er so eilig wolle, so hielt er an, gab ihm Rede und Antwort und sagte »ich suche das Wasser des Lebens, denn mein Vater ist sterbenskrank.« »Weißt du auch, wo das zu finden ist?« »Nein,« sagte der Prinz. »Weil du dich betragen hast, wie sichs geziemt, nicht übermütig wie deine falschen Brüder, so will ich dir Auskunft geben und dir sagen, wie du zu dem Wasser des Lebens gelangst. Es quillt aus einem Brunnen in dem Hofe eines verwünschten Schlosses, aber du dringst nicht hinein, wenn ich dir nicht eine eiserne Rute gebe und zwei Laiberchen Brot. Mit der Rute schlag dreimal an das eiserne Tor des

Schlosses, so wird es aufspringen: inwendig liegen zwei Löwen, die den Rachen aufsperren, wenn du aber jedem ein Brot hineinwirfst, so werden sie still, und dann eile dich und hol von dem Wasser des Lebens, bevor es zwölf schlägt, sonst schlägt das Tor wieder zu und du bist eingesperrt.« Der Prinz dankte ihm, nahm die Rute und das Brot, und machte sich auf den Weg. Und als er anlangte, war alles so, wie der Zwerg gesagt hatte. Das Tor sprang beim dritten Rutenschlag auf, und als er die Löwen mit dem Brot gesänftigt hatte, trat er in das Schloß und kam in einen großen schönen Saal: darin saßen verwünschte Prinzen, denen zog er die Ringe vom Finger, dann lag da ein Schwert und ein Brot, das nahm er weg. Und weiter kam er in ein Zimmer, darin stand eine schöne Jungfrau, die freute sich, als sie ihn sah, küßte ihn und sagte, er hätte sie erlöst und sollte ihr ganzes Reich haben, und wenn er in einem Jahre wiederkäme, so sollte ihre Hochzeit gefeiert werden. Dann sagte sie ihm auch, wo der Brunnen wäre mit dem Lebenswasser, er müßte sich aber eilen und daraus schöpfen, eh es zwölf schlüge. Da ging er weiter und kam endlich in ein Zimmer, wo ein schönes frischgedecktes Bett stand, und weil er müde war, wollt er erst ein wenig ausruhen. Also legte er sich und schlief ein: als er erwachte, schlug es dreiviertel auf zwölf. Da sprang er ganz erschrocken auf, lief zu dem Brunnen und schöpfte daraus mit einem Becher, der daneben stand, und eilte, daß er fortkam. Wie er eben zum eisernen Tor hinausging, da schlugs zwölf, und das Tor schlug so heftig zu, daß es ihm noch ein Stück von der Ferse wegnahm.

Er aber war froh, daß er das Wasser des Lebens erlangt hatte, ging heimwärts und kam wieder an dem Zwerg vorbei. Als dieser das Schwert und das Brot sah, sprach er »damit hast du großes Gut gewonnen, mit dem Schwert kannst du ganze Heere schlagen, das Brot aber wird niemals all.« Der Prinz wollte ohne seine Brüder nicht zu dem Vater nach Haus kommen und sprach »lieber Zwerg, kannst du mir nicht sagen, wo meine zwei Brüder sind? sie sind früher als ich nach dem Wasser des Lebens ausgezogen und sind nicht wiedergekommen.« »Zwischen zwei Bergen stecken sie eingeschlossen,« sprach der Zwerg, »dahin habe ich sie verwünscht, weil sie so übermütig waren.« Da bat der Prinz so lange, bis der Zwerg sie wieder losließ, aber er warnte ihn und sprach »hüte dich vor ihnen, sie haben ein böses Herz.«

Als seine Brüder kamen, freute er sich und erzählte ihnen, wie es ihm ergangen wäre, daß er das Wasser des Lebens gefunden und einen Becher voll mitgenommen und eine schöne Prinzessin erlöst hätte, die wollte ein Jahr lang auf ihn warten, dann sollte Hochzeit gehalten werden, und er bekäme ein großes Reich. Danach ritten sie zusammen fort und gerieten in ein Land, wo Hunger und Krieg war, und der König glaubte schon, er müßte verderben, so groß war die Not. Da ging der Prinz zu ihm und gab ihm das Brot, womit er sein ganzes Reich speiste und sättigte: und dann gab ihm der Prinz auch das Schwert, damit schlug er die Heere seiner Feinde und konnte nun in Ruhe und Frieden leben. Da nahm der Prinz sein Brot und Schwert wieder zurück, und die drei Brüder ritten weiter. Sie kamen aber noch in zwei Länder, wo Hunger und Krieg herrschten, und da gab der Prinz den Königen jedesmal sein Brot und Schwert, und hatte nun drei Reiche gerettet. Und danach setzten sie sich auf ein Schiff und fuhren übers Meer. Während der Fahrt, da sprachen die beiden ältesten unter sich »der jüngste hat das Wasser des Lebens gefunden und wir nicht, dafür wird ihm unser Vater das Reich geben, das uns gebührt, und er wird unser Glück wegnehmen.« Da wurden sie rachsüchtig und verabredeten miteinander, daß sie ihn verderben wollten. Sie warteten, bis er einmal fest eingeschlafen war, da gossen sie das Wasser des Lebens aus dem Becher und nahmen es für sich, ihm aber gossen sie bitteres Meerwasser hinein.

Als sie nun daheim ankamen, brachte der jüngste dem kranken König seinen Becher, damit er daraus trinken und gesund werden sollte. Kaum aber hatte er ein wenig von dem bittern Meerwasser getrunken, so ward er noch kränker als zuvor. Und wie er darüber jammerte, kamen die beiden ältesten Söhne und klagten den jüngsten an, er hätte ihn vergiften wollen, sie brächten ihm das rechte Wasser des Lebens, und reichten es ihm. Kaum hatte er davon getrunken, so fühlte er seine Krankheit verschwinden, und war stark und gesund wie in seinen jungen Tagen. Danach gingen die beiden zu dem jüngsten, verspotteten ihn und sagten »du hast zwar das Wasser des Lebens gefunden, aber du hast die Mühe gehabt und wir den Lohn; du hättest klüger sein und die Augen aufbehalten sollen, wir haben dirs genommen, während du auf dem Meere eingeschlafen warst, und übers Jahr, da holt sich einer von uns die schöne Königstochter. Aber hüte dich, daß du nichts davon verrätst, der Vater glaubt dir doch nicht, und wenn du ein einziges Wort sagst, so sollst du noch obendrein dein Leben verlieren, schweigst du aber, so soll dirs geschenkt sein.«

Der alte König war zornig über seinen jüngsten Sohn und glaubte, er hätte ihm nach dem Leben getrachtet. Also ließ er den Hof versammeln und das Urteil über ihn sprechen, daß er heimlich sollte erschossen werden. Als der Prinz nun einmal auf die Jagd ritt und nichts Böses vermutete, mußte des Königs Jäger mitgehen. Draußen, als sie ganz allein im Wald waren, und der Jäger so traurig aussah, sagte der Prinz zu ihm »lieber Jäger, was fehlt dir?« Der Jäger sprach »ich kanns nicht sagen und soll es doch.« Da sprach der Prinz »sage heraus, was es ist, ich will dirs verzeihen.« »Ach,« sagte der Jäger, »ich soll Euch totschießen, der König hat mirs befohlen.« Da erschrak der Prinz und sprach »lieber Jäger, laß mich leben, da geb ich dir mein königliches Kleid, gib mir dafür dein schlechtes.« Der Jäger sagte »das will ich gerne tun, ich hätte doch nicht nach Euch schießen können.« Da tauschten sie die Kleider, und der Jäger ging heim, der Prinz aber ging weiter in den Wald hinein.

Über eine Zeit, da kamen zu dem alten König drei Wagen mit Gold und Edelsteinen für seinen jüngsten Sohn: sie waren aber von den drei Königen geschickt, die mit des Prinzen Schwert die Feinde geschlagen und mit seinem Brot ihr Land ernährt hatten, und die sich dankbar bezeigen wollten. Da dachte der alte König »sollte mein Sohn unschuldig gewesen sein?« und sprach zu seinen Leuten »wäre er noch am Leben, wie tut mirs so leid, daß ich ihn habe töten lassen.« »Er lebt noch,« sprach der Jäger, »ich konnte es nicht übers Herz bringen, Euern Befehl auszuführen,« und sagte dem König, wie es zugegangen war. Da fiel dem König ein Stein von dem Herzen, und er ließ in allen Reichen verkündigen, sein Sohn dürfte wiederkommen und sollte in Gnaden aufgenommen werden.

Die Königstochter aber ließ eine Straße vor ihrem Schloß machen, die war ganz golden und glänzend, und sagte ihren Leuten, wer darauf geradeswegs zu ihr geritten käme, das wäre der rechte, und den sollten sie einlassen, wer aber daneben käme, der wäre der rechte nicht, und den sollten sie auch nicht einlassen. Als nun die Zeit bald herum war, dachte der älteste, er wollte sich eilen, zur Königstochter gehen und sich für ihren Erlöser ausgeben, da bekäme er sie zur Gemahlin und das Reich daneben. Also ritt er fort, und als er vor das Schloß kam und die schöne goldene Straße sah, dachte er »das wäre jammerschade, wenn du darauf rittest,« lenkte ab und ritt rechts nebenher. Wie er aber vor das Tor kam, sagten die Leute zu ihm, er wäre der rechte nicht, er sollte wieder fortgehen. Bald darauf machte sich der zweite Prinz auf, und wie der zur goldenen Straße kam und das Pferd den einen Fuß daraufgesetzt hatte, dachte er »es wäre jammerschade, das könnte etwas abtreten,« lenkte ab und ritt links nebenher. Wie er aber vor das Tor kam, sagten die Leute, er wäre der rechte nicht, er sollte wieder fortgehen. Als nun das Jahr ganz herum war, wollte der dritte aus dem Wald fort zu seiner Liebsten reiten und bei ihr sein Leid vergessen. Also machte er sich auf, und dachte immer an sie und wäre gerne schon bei ihr gewesen, und sah die goldene Straße gar nicht. Da ritt sein Pferd mitten darüber hin, und als er vor das Tor kam, ward es aufgetan, und die Königstochter empfing ihn mit Freuden und sagte, er wär ihr Erlöser und der Herr des Königreichs, und ward die Hochzeit gehalten mit großer Glückseligkeit. Und als sie vorbei war, erzählte sie ihm, daß sein Vater ihn zu sich entboten und ihm verziehen hätte. Da ritt er hin und sagte ihm alles, wie seine Brüder ihn betrogen und er doch dazu geschwiegen hätte. Der alte König wollte sie strafen, aber sie hatten sich aufs Meer gesetzt und waren fortgeschifft und kamen ihr Lebtag nicht wieder.

98. Doktor Allwissend.

Es war einmal ein armer Bauer namens Krebs, der fuhr mit zwei Ochsen ein Fuder Holz in die Stadt und verkaufte es für zwei Taler an einen Doktor. Wie ihm nun das Geld ausbezahlt wurde, saß der Doktor gerade zu Tisch: da sah der Bauer, wie er schön aß und trank, und das Herz ging ihm danach auf, und er wäre auch gern ein Doktor gewesen. Also blieb er noch ein Weilchen stehen und fragte endlich, ob er nicht auch könnte ein Doktor werden. »O ja,« sagte der Doktor, »das ist bald geschehen.« »Was muß ich tun?« fragte der Bauer. »Erstlich kauf dir ein Abcbuch, so ist eins, wo vorn ein Göckelhahn drin ist; zweitens mache deinen Wagen und deine zwei Ochsen zu Geld und schaff dir damit Kleider an und was sonst zur Doktorei gehört; drittens laß dir ein Schild malen mit den Worten »ich bin der Doktor Allwissend,« und laß das oben über deine Haustür nageln.« Der Bauer tat alles, wies ihm geheißen war. Als er nun ein wenig gedoktert hatte, aber noch nicht viel, ward einem reichen großen Herrn Geld gestohlen. Da ward ihm von dem Doktor Allwissend gesagt, der in dem und dem Dorfe wohnte und auch wissen müßte, wo das Geld hingekommen wäre. Also ließ der Herr seinen Wagen anspannen, fuhr hinaus ins Dorf und fragte bei ihm an, ob er der Doktor Allwissend wäre. »Ja, der wär er.« »So sollte er mitgehen und das gestohlene Geld wiederschaffen.« »O ja, aber die Grete, seine Frau, müßte auch mit.« Der Herr war das zufrieden und ließ sie beide in den Wagen sitzen, und sie fuhren zusammen fort. Als sie auf den adligen Hof kamen, war der Tisch gedeckt, da sollte er erst mitessen. »Ja, aber seine Frau, die Grete, auch,« sagte er und setzte sich mit ihr hinter den Tisch. Wie nun der erste Bediente mit einer Schüssel schönem Essen kam, stieß der Bauer seine Frau an und sagte »Grete, das war der erste,« und meinte, es wäre derjenige, welcher das erste Essen brächte. Der Bediente aber meinte, er hätte damit sagen wollen »das ist der erste Dieb,« und weil ers nun wirklich war, ward ihm angst, und er sagte draußen zu seinen Kameraden »der Doktor weiß alles, wir kommen übel an: er hat gesagt, ich wäre der erste.« Der zweite wollte gar nicht herein, er mußte aber doch. Wie er nun mit seiner Schüssel hereinkam, stieß der Bauer seine Frau an »Grete, das ist der zweite.« Dem Bedienten ward ebenfalls angst, und er machte, daß er hinauskam. Dem dritten gings nicht besser, der Bauer sagte wieder »Grete, das ist der dritte.« Der vierte mußte eine verdeckte Schüssel hereintragen, und der Herr sprach zum Doktor, er sollte seine Kunst zeigen und raten, was darunter läge; es waren aber Krebse. Der Bauer sah die Schüssel an, wußte nicht, wie er sich helfen sollte, und sprach »ach, ich armer Krebs!« Wie der Herr das hörte, rief er »da, er weiß es, nun weiß er auch, wer das Geld hat.«

Dem Bedienten aber ward gewaltig angst und er blinzelte den Doktor an, er möchte einmal herauskommen. Wie er nun hinauskam, gestanden sie ihm alle viere, sie hätten das Geld gestohlen: sie wolltens ja gerne herausgeben und ihm eine schwere Summe dazu, wenn er sie nicht verraten wollte: es ginge ihnen sonst an den Hals. Sie führten ihn auch hin, wo das Geld versteckt lag. Damit war der Doktor zufrieden, ging wieder hinein, setzte sich an den Tisch und sprach »Herr, nun will ich in meinem Buch suchen, wo das Geld steckt.« Der fünfte Bediente aber kroch in den Ofen und wollte hören, ob der Doktor noch mehr wüßte. Der saß aber und schlug sein Abcbuch auf, blätterte hin und her und suchte den Göckelhahn. Weil er ihn nicht gleich finden konnte, sprach er »du bist doch darin und mußt auch heraus.« Da glaubte der im Ofen, er wäre gemeint, sprang voller Schrecken heraus und rief »der Mann weiß alles.« Nun zeigte der Doktor Allwissend dem Herrn, wo das Geld lag, sagte aber nicht, wers gestohlen hatte, bekam von beiden Seiten viel Geld zur Belohnung und ward ein berühmter Mann.

99. Der Geist im Glas.

Es war einmal ein armer Holzhacker, der arbeitete vom Morgen bis in die späte Nacht. Als er sich endlich etwas Geld zusammengespart hatte, sprach er zu seinem Jungen »du bist mein einziges Kind, ich will das Geld, das ich mit saurem Schweiß erworben habe, zu deinem Unterricht anwenden; lernst du etwas Rechtschaffenes, so kannst du mich im Alter ernähren, wenn meine Glieder steif geworden sind und ich daheimsitzen muß.« Da ging der Junge auf eine hohe Schule und lernte fleißig, so daß ihn seine Lehrer rühmten, und blieb eine Zeitlang dort. Als er ein paar Schulen durchgelernt hatte, doch aber noch nicht in allem vollkommen war, so war das bißchen Armut, das der Vater erworben hatte, draufgegangen, und er mußte wieder zu ihm heimkehren. »Ach,« sprach der Vater betrübt, »ich kann dir nichts mehr geben und kann in der teuern Zeit auch keinen Heller mehr verdienen als das tägliche Brot.« »Lieber Vater,« antwortete der Sohn, »macht Euch darüber keine Gedanken, wenns Gottes Wille also ist, so wirds zu meinem Besten ausschlagen; ich will mich schon drein schicken.« Als der Vater hinaus in den Wald wollte, um etwas am Malterholz (am Zuhauen und Aufrichten) zu verdienen, so sprach der Sohn »ich will mit Euch gehen und Euch helfen.« »Ja, mein Sohn,« sagte der Vater, »das sollte dir beschwerlich ankommen, du bist an harte Arbeit nicht gewöhnt, du hältst das nicht aus; ich habe auch nur eine Axt und kein Geld übrig, um noch eine zu kaufen.« »Geht nur zum Nachbar,« antwortete der Sohn, »der leiht Euch seine Axt so lange, bis ich mir selbst eine verdient habe.«

Da borgte der Vater beim Nachbar eine Axt, und am andern Morgen, bei Anbruch des Tags, gingen sie zusammen hinaus in den Wald. Der Sohn half dem Vater und war ganz munter und frisch dabei. Als nun die Sonne über ihnen stand, sprach der Vater »wir wollen rasten und Mittag halten, hernach gehts noch einmal so gut.« Der Sohn nahm sein Brot in die Hand und sprach »ruht Euch nur aus, Vater, ich bin nicht müde, ich will in dem Wald ein wenig auf- und abgehen und Vogelnester suchen.« »O du Geck,« sprach der Vater, »was willst du da herumlaufen, hernach bist du müde und kannst den Arm nicht mehr aufheben; bleib hier und setze dich zu mir.«

Der Sohn aber ging in den Wald, aß sein Brot, war ganz fröhlich und sah in die grünen Zweige hinein, ob er etwa ein Nest entdeckte. So ging er hin und her, bis er endlich zu einer großen gefährlichen Eiche kam, die gewiß schon viele hundert Jahre alt war, und die keine fünf Menschen umspannt hätten. Er blieb stehen und sah sie an und dachte »es muß doch mancher Vogel sein Nest hineingebaut haben.« Da deuchte ihn auf einmal, als hörte er eine Stimme. Er horchte und vernahm, wie es mit so einem recht dumpfen Ton rief »laß mich heraus, laß mich heraus.« Er sah sich ringsum, konnte aber nichts entdecken, doch es war ihm, als ob die Stimme unten aus der Erde hervorkäme. Da rief er »wo bist du?« Die Stimme antwortete »ich stecke da unten bei den Eichwurzeln. Laß mich heraus, laß mich heraus.« Der Schüler fing an, unter dem Baum aufzuräumen und bei den Wurzeln zu suchen, bis er endlich in einer kleinen Höhlung eine Glasflasche entdeckte. Er hob sie in die Höhe und hielt sie gegen das Licht, da sah er ein Ding, gleich einem Frosch gestaltet, das sprang darin auf und nieder. »Laß mich heraus, laß mich heraus,« riefs von neuem, und der Schüler, der an nichts Böses dachte, nahm den Pfropfen von der Flasche ab. Alsbald stieg ein Geist heraus und fing an zu wachsen, und wuchs so schnell, daß er in wenigen Augenblicken als ein entsetzlicher Kerl, so groß wie der halbe Baum, vor dem Schüler stand. »Weißt du,« rief er mit einer fürchterlichen Stimme, »was dein Lohn dafür ist, daß du mich herausgelassen hast?« »Nein,« antwortete der Schüler ohne Furcht, »wie soll ich das wissen?« »So will ich dirs sagen,« rief der Geist, »den Hals muß ich dir dafür brechen.« »Das hättest du mir früher sagen sollen,« antwortete der Schüler, »so hätte ich dich stecken lassen; mein Kopf aber soll vor dir wohl feststehen, da müssen mehr Leute gefragt werden.« »Mehr Leute hin, mehr Leute her,« rief der Geist, »deinen verdienten Lohn, den sollst du haben. Denkst du, ich wäre aus Gnade da so lange Zeit eingeschlossen worden, nein, es war zu meiner Strafe; ich bin der großmächtige Merkurius, wer mich losläßt, dem muß ich den Hals brechen.« »Sachte,« antwortete der Schüler, »so geschwind geht das nicht, erst muß ich auch wissen, daß du wirklich in der kleinen Flasche gesessen hast, und daß du der rechte Geist bist: kannst du auch wieder hinein, so will ichs glauben, und dann magst du mit mir anfangen, was du willst.« Der Geist sprach voll Hochmut »das ist eine geringe Kunst,« zog sich zusammen und machte sich so dünn und klein, wie er anfangs gewesen war, also daß er durch dieselbe Öffnung und durch den Hals der Flasche wieder hineinkroch. Kaum aber war er darin, so drückte der Schüler den abgezogenen Pfropfen wieder auf und warf die Flasche unter die Eichwurzeln an ihren alten Platz, und der Geist war betrogen.

Nun wollte der Schüler zu seinem Vater zurückgehen, aber der Geist rief ganz kläglich »ach, laß mich doch heraus, laß mich doch heraus.« »Nein,« antwortete der Schüler, »zum zweiten Male nicht: wer mir einmal nach dem Leben gestrebt hat, den laß ich nicht los, wenn ich ihn wieder eingefangen habe.« »Wenn du mich freimachst,« rief der Geist, »so will ich dir so viel geben, daß du dein Lebtag genug hast.« »Nein,« antwortete der Schüler, »du würdest mich betrügen wie das erstemal.« »Du verscherzest dein Glück,« sprach der Geist, »ich will dir nichts tun, sondern dich reichlich belohnen.« Der Schüler dachte »ich wills wagen, vielleicht hält er Wort und anhaben soll er mir doch nichts.« Da nahm er den Pfropfen ab, und der Geist stieg wie das vorigemal heraus, dehnte sich auseinander und ward groß wie ein Riese. »Nun sollst du deinen Lohn haben,« sprach er, und reichte dem Schüler einen kleinen Lappen, ganz wie ein Pflaster, und sagte »wenn du mit dem einen Ende eine Wunde bestreichst, so heilt sie: und wenn du mit dem andern Ende Stahl und Eisen bestreichst, so wird es in Silber verwandelt.« »Das muß ich erst versuchen,« sprach der Schüler, ging an einen Baum, ritzte die Rinde mit seiner Axt und bestrich sie mit dem einen Ende des Pflasters: alsbald schloß sie sich wieder zusammen und war geheilt. »Nun, es hat seine Richtigkeit,« sprach er zum Geist, »jetzt können wir uns trennen.« Der Geist dankte ihm für seine Erlösung, und der Schüler dankte dem Geist für sein Geschenk und ging zurück zu seinem Vater.

»Wo bist du herumgelaufen?« sprach der Vater, »warum hast du die Arbeit vergessen? Ich habe es ja gleich gesagt, daß du nichts zustande bringen würdest.« »Gebt Euch zufrieden, Vater, ich wills nachholen.« »Ja nachholen,« sprach der Vater zornig, »das hat keine Art.« »Habt acht, Vater, den Baum da will ich gleich umhauen, daß er krachen soll.« Da nahm er sein Pflaster, bestrich die Axt damit und tat einen gewaltigen Hieb: aber weil das Eisen in Silber verwandelt war, so legte sich die Scheide um. »Ei, Vater, seht einmal, was habt Ihr mir für eine schlechte Axt gegeben, die ist ganz schief geworden.« Da erschrak der Vater und sprach »ach, was hast du gemacht! nun muß ich die Axt bezahlen und weiß nicht, womit; das ist der Nutzen, den ich von deiner Arbeit habe.« »Werdet nicht bös,« antwortete der Sohn, »die Axt will ich schon bezahlen.« »O, du Dummbart,« rief der Vater, »wovon willst du sie bezahlen? du hast nichts, als was ich dir gebe; das sind Studentenkniffe, die dir im Kopf stecken, aber vom Holzhacken hast du keinen Verstand.«

Über ein Weilchen sprach der Schüler »Vater, ich kann doch nichts mehr arbeiten, wir wollen lieber Feierabend machen.« »Ei was,« antwortete er, »meinst du, ich wollte die Hände in den Schoß legen wie du? ich muß noch schaffen, du kannst dich aber heim packen.« »Vater, ich bin zum erstenmal hier in dem Wald, ich weiß den Weg nicht allein, geht doch mit mir.« Weil sich der Zorn gelegt hatte, so ließ der Vater sich endlich bereden und ging mit ihm heim. Da sprach er zum Sohn »geh und verkauf die verschändete Axt und sieh zu, was du dafür kriegst, das übrige muß ich verdienen, um sie dem Nachbar zu bezahlen.« Der Sohn nahm die Axt und trug sie in die Stadt zu einem Goldschmied, der probierte sie, legte sie auf die Waage und sprach »sie ist vierhundert Taler wert, so viel habe ich nicht bar.« Der Schüler sprach »gebt mir, was Ihr habt, das übrige will ich Euch borgen.« Der Goldschmied gab ihm dreihundert Taler und blieb einhundert schuldig. Darauf ging der Schüler heim und sprach »Vater, ich habe Geld, geht und fragt, was der Nachbar für die Axt haben will.« »Das weiß ich schon,« antwortete der Alte, »einen Taler, sechs Groschen.« »So gebt ihm zwei Taler zwölf Groschen, das ist das Doppelte und ist genug; seht Ihr, ich habe Geld im Überfluß,« und gab dem Vater einhundert Taler und sprach »es soll Euch niemals fehlen, lebt nach Eurer Bequemlichkeit.« »Mein Gott,« sprach der Alte, »wie bist du zu dem Reichtum gekommen?« Da erzählte er ihm, wie alles zugegangen wäre, und wie er im Vertrauen auf sein Glück einen so reichen Fang getan hätte. Mit dem übrigen Geld aber zog er wieder hin auf die hohe Schule und lernte weiter, und weil er mit seinem Pflaster alle Wunden heilen konnte, ward er der berühmteste Doktor auf der ganzen Welt.

100. Des Teufels rußiger Bruder.

Ein abgedankter Soldat hatte nichts zu leben und wußte sich nicht mehr zu helfen. Da ging er hinaus in den Wald, und als er ein Weilchen gegangen war, begegnete ihm ein kleines Männchen, das war aber der Teufel. Das Männchen sagte zu ihm »was fehlt dir? du siehst ja so trübselig aus.« Da sprach der Soldat »ich habe Hunger, aber kein Geld.« Der Teufel sagte »willst du dich bei mir vermieten und mein Knecht sein, so sollst du für dein Lebtag genug haben; sieben Jahre sollst du mir dienen, hernach bist du wieder frei. Aber eins sag ich dir, du darfst dich nicht waschen, nicht kämmen, nicht schnippen, keine Nägel und Haare abschneiden und kein Wasser aus den Augen wischen.« Der Soldat sprach »frisch dran, wenns nicht anders sein kann,« und ging mit dem Männchen fort, das führte ihn geradewegs in die Hölle hinein. Dann sagte es ihm, was er zu tun hätte: er müßte das Feuer schüren unter den Kesseln, wo die Höllenbraten drinsäßen, das Haus rein halten, den Kehrdreck hinter die Türe tragen und überall auf Ordnung sehen: aber guckte er ein einziges Mal in die Kessel hinein, so würde es ihm schlimm ergehen. Der Soldat sprach »es ist gut, ich wills schon besorgen.« Da ging nun der alte Teufel wieder hinaus auf seine Wanderung, und der Soldat trat seinen Dienst an, legte Feuer zu, kehrte und trug den Kehrdreck hinter die Türe, alles, wie es befohlen war. Wie der alte Teufel wiederkam, sah er nach, ob alles geschehen war, zeigte sich zufrieden und ging zum zweitenmal fort. Der Soldat schaute sich nun einmal recht um, da standen die Kessel rings herum in der Hölle, und war ein gewaltiges Feuer darunter, und es kochte und brutzelte darin. Er hätte für sein Leben gerne hineingeschaut, wenn es ihm der Teufel nicht so streng verboten hätte: endlich konnte er sich nicht mehr anhalten, hob vom ersten Kessel ein klein bißchen den Deckel auf und guckte hinein. Da sah er seinen ehemaligen Unteroffizier darin sitzen: »aha, Vogel,« sprach er, »treff ich dich hier? du hast mich gehabt, jetzt hab ich dich,« ließ geschwind den Deckel fallen, schürte das Feuer und legte noch frisch zu. Danach ging er zum zweiten Kessel, hob ihn auch ein wenig auf und guckte, da saß sein Fähnrich darin: »aha, Vogel, treff ich dich hier? du hast mich gehabt, jetzt hab ich dich,« machte den Deckel wieder zu und trug noch einen Klotz herbei, der sollte ihm erst recht heiß machen. Nun wollte er auch sehen, wer im dritten Kessel säße, da wars gar ein General: »aha, Vogel, treff ich dich hier? du hast mich gehabt, jetzt hab ich dich,« holte den Blasbalg und ließ das Höllenfeuer recht unter ihm flackern. Also tat er sieben Jahr seinen Dienst in der Hölle, wusch sich nicht, kämmte sich nicht, schnippte sich nicht, schnitt sich die Nägel und Haare nicht und wischte sich kein Wasser aus den Augen; und die sieben Jahre waren ihm so kurz, daß er meinte, es wäre nur ein halbes Jahr gewesen. Als nun die Zeit vollends herum war, kam der Teufel und sagte »nun, Hans, was hast du gemacht?« »Ich habe das Feuer unter den Kesseln geschürt, ich habe gekehrt und den Kehrdreck hinter die Türe getragen.« »Aber du hast auch in die Kessel geguckt; dein Glück ist, daß du noch Holz zugelegt hast, sonst war dein Leben verloren; jetzt ist die Zeit herum, willst du wieder heim?« »Ja,« sagte der Soldat, »ich wollt auch gerne sehen, was mein Vater daheim macht.« Sprach der Teufel »damit du deinen verdienten Lohn kriegst, geh und raffe dir deinen Ranzen voll Kehrdreck und nimms mit nach Haus. Du sollst auch gehen ungewaschen und ungekämmt, mit langen Haaren am Kopf und am Bart, mit ungeschnittenen Nägeln und mit trüben Augen, und wenn du gefragt wirst, woher du kämst, sollst du sagen »aus der Hölle,« und wenn du gefragt wirst, wer du wärst, sollst du sagen »des Teufels rußiger Bruder und mein König auch.«« Der Soldat schwieg still und tat, was der Teufel sagte, aber er war mit seinem Lohn gar nicht zufrieden.

Sobald er nun wieder oben im Wald war, hob er seinen Ranzen vom Rücken und wollt ihn ausschütten: wie er ihn aber öffnete, so war der Kehrdreck pures Gold geworden. »Das hätte ich mir nicht gedacht,« sprach er, war vergnügt und ging in die Stadt hinein. Vor dem Wirtshaus stand der Wirt, und wie ihn der herankommen sah, erschrak er, weil Hans so entsetzlich aussah, ärger als eine Vogelscheuche. Er rief ihn an und fragte »woher kommst du?« »Aus der Hölle.« »Wer bist du?« »Dem Teufel sein rußiger Bruder, und mein König auch.« Nun wollte der Wirt ihn nicht einlassen, wie er ihm aber das Gold zeigte, ging er und klinkte selber die Türe auf. Da ließ sich Hans die beste Stube geben und köstlich aufwarten, aß und trank sich satt, wusch sich aber nicht und kämmte sich nicht, wie ihm der Teufel geheißen hatte, und legte sich endlich schlafen. Dem Wirt aber stand der Ranzen voll Gold vor Augen und ließ ihm keine Ruhe, bis er in der Nacht hinschlich und ihn wegstahl.

Wie nun Hans am andern Morgen aufstand, den Wirt bezahlen und weitergehen wollte, da war sein Ranzen weg. Er faßte sich aber kurz, dachte »du bist ohne Schuld unglücklich gewesen,« und kehrte wieder um, geradezu in die Hölle: da klagte er dem alten Teufel seine Not und bat ihn um Hilfe. Der Teufel sagte »setze dich, ich will dich waschen, kämmen, schnippen, die Haare und Nägel schneiden und die Augen auswischen,« und als er mit ihm fertig war, gab er ihm den Ranzen wieder voll Kehrdreck und sprach »geh hin und sage dem Wirt, er sollte dir dein Gold wieder herausgeben, sonst wollt ich kommen und ihn abholen, und er sollte an deinem Platz das Feuer schüren.« Hans ging hinauf und sprach zum Wirt »du hast mein Gold gestohlen, gibst dus nicht wieder, so kommst du in die Hölle an meinen Platz, und sollst aussehen so greulich wie ich.« Da gab ihm der Wirt das Gold und noch mehr dazu, und bat ihn, nur still davon zu sein; und Hans war nun ein reicher Mann.

Hans machte sich auf den Weg heim zu seinem Vater, kaufte sich einen schlechten Linnenkittel auf den Leib, ging herum und machte Musik, denn das hatte er beim Teufel in der Hölle gelernt. Es war aber ein alter König im Land, vor dem mußt er spielen, und der geriet darüber in solche Freude, daß er dem Hans seine älteste Tochter zur Ehe versprach. Als die aber hörte, daß sie so einen gemeinen Kerl im weißen Kittel heiraten sollte, sprach sie »eh ich das tät, wollt ich lieber ins tiefste Wasser gehen.« Da gab ihm der König die jüngste, die wollts ihrem Vater zuliebe gerne tun; und also bekam des Teufels rußiger Bruder die Königstochter, und als der alte König gestorben war, auch das ganze Reich.

101. Der Bärenhäuter.

Es war einmal ein junger Kerl, der ließ sich als Soldat anwerben, hielt sich tapfer und war immer der vorderste, wenn es blaue Bohnen regnete. So lange der Krieg dauerte, ging alles gut, aber als Friede geschlossen war, erhielt er seinen Abschied, und der Hauptmann sagte, er könnte gehen, wohin er wollte. Seine Eltern waren tot, und er hatte keine Heimat mehr, da ging er zu seinen Brüdern und bat, sie möchten ihm so lange Unterhalt geben, bis der Krieg wieder anfinge. Die Brüder aber waren hartherzig und sagten »was sollen wir mit dir? wir können dich nicht brauchen, sieh zu, wie du dich durchschlägst.« Der Soldat hatte nichts übrig als sein Gewehr, das nahm er auf die Schulter und wollte in die Welt gehen. Er kam auf eine große Heide, auf der nichts zu sehen war als ein Ring von Bäumen: darunter setzte er sich ganz traurig nieder und sann über sein Schicksal nach. »Ich habe kein Geld,« dachte er, »ich habe nichts gelernt als das Kriegshandwerk, und jetzt, weil Friede geschlossen ist, brauchen sie mich nicht mehr; ich sehe voraus, ich muß verhungern.« Auf einmal hörte er ein Brausen, und wie er sich umblickte, stand ein unbekannter Mann vor ihm, der einen grünen Rock trug, recht stattlich aussah, aber einen garstigen Pferdefuß hatte. »Ich weiß schon, was dir fehlt,« sagte der Mann, »Geld und Gut sollst du haben, soviel du mit aller Gewalt durchbringen kannst, aber ich muß zuvor wissen, ob du dich nicht fürchtest, damit ich mein Geld nicht umsonst ausgebe.« »Ein Soldat und Furcht, wie paßt das zusammen?« antwortete er, »du kannst mich auf die Probe stellen.« »Wohlan,« antwortete der Mann, »schau hinter dich.« Der Soldat kehrte sich um und sah einen großen Bär, der brummend auf ihn zutrabte. »Oho,« rief der Soldat, »dich will ich an der Nase kitzeln, daß dir die Lust zum Brummen vergehen soll,« legte an und schoß dem Bär auf die Schnauze, daß er zusammenfiel und sich nicht mehr regte. »Ich sehe wohl,« sagte der Fremde, »daß dirs an Mut nicht fehlt, aber es ist noch eine Bedingung dabei, die mußt du erfüllen.« »Wenn mirs an meiner Seligkeit nicht schadet,« antwortete der Soldat, der wohl merkte, wen er vor sich hatte, »sonst laß ich mich auf nichts ein.« »Das wirst du selber sehen,« antwortete der Grünrock, »du darfst in den nächsten sieben Jahren dich nicht waschen, dir Bart und Haare nicht kämmen, die Nägel nicht schneiden und kein Vaterunser beten. Dann will ich dir einen Rock und Mantel geben, den mußt du in dieser Zeit tragen. Stirbst du in diesen sieben Jahren, so bist du mein, bleibst du aber leben, so bist du frei und bist reich dazu für dein Lebtag.« Der Soldat dachte an die große Not, in der er sich befand, und da er so oft in den Tod gegangen war, wollte er es auch jetzt wagen und willigte ein. Der Teufel zog den grünen Rock aus, reichte ihn dem Soldaten hin und sagte »wenn du den Rock an deinem Leibe hast und in die Tasche greifst, so wirst du die Hand immer voll Geld haben.« Dann zog er dem Bären die Haut ab und sagte »das soll dein Mantel sein und auch dein Bett, denn darauf mußt du schlafen und darfst in kein anderes Bett kommen. Und dieser Tracht wegen sollst du Bärenhäuter heißen.« Hierauf verschwand der Teufel.

Der Soldat zog den Rock an, griff gleich in die Tasche und fand, daß die Sache ihre Richtigkeit hatte. Dann hing er die Bärenhaut um, ging in die Welt, war guter Dinge und unterließ nichts, was ihm wohl und dem Gelde wehe tat. Im ersten Jahr ging es noch leidlich, aber in dem zweiten sah er schon aus wie ein Ungeheuer. Das Haar bedeckte ihm fast das ganze Gesicht, sein Bart glich einem Stück grobem Filztuch, seine Finger hatten Krallen, und sein Gesicht war so mit Schmutz bedeckt, daß wenn man Kresse hineingesät hätte, sie aufgegangen wäre. Wer ihn sah, lief fort, weil er aber allerorten den Armen Geld gab, damit sie für ihn beteten, daß er in den sieben Jahren nicht stürbe, und weil er alles gut bezahlte, so erhielt er doch immer noch Herberge. Im vierten Jahr kam er in ein Wirtshaus, da wollte ihn der Wirt nicht aufnehmen und wollte ihm nicht einmal einen Platz im Stall anweisen, weil er fürchtete, seine Pferde würden scheu werden. Doch als der Bärenhäuter in die Tasche griff und eine Handvoll Dukaten herausholte, so ließ der Wirt sich erweichen und gab ihm eine Stube im Hintergebäude; doch mußte er versprechen, sich nicht sehen zu lassen, damit sein Haus nicht in bösen Ruf käme.

Als der Bärenhäuter abends allein saß und von Herzen wünschte, daß die sieben Jahre herum wären, so hörte er in einem Nebenzimmer ein lautes Jammern. Er hatte ein mitleidiges Herz, öffnete die Türe und erblickte einen alten Mann, der heftig weinte und die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlug. Der Bärenhäuter trat näher, aber der Mann sprang auf und wollte entfliehen. Endlich, als er eine menschliche Stimme vernahm, ließ er sich bewegen, und durch freundliches Zureden brachte es der Bärenhäuter dahin, daß er ihm die Ursache seines Kummers offenbarte. Sein Vermögen war nach und nach geschwunden, er und seine Töchter mußten darben, und er war so arm, daß er den Wirt nicht einmal bezahlen konnte und ins Gefängnis sollte gesetzt werden. »Wenn Ihr weiter keine Sorgen habt,« sagte der Bärenhäuter, »Geld habe ich genug.« Er ließ den Wirt herbeikommen, bezahlte ihn und steckte dem Unglücklichen noch einen Beutel voll Gold in die Tasche.

Als der alte Mann sich aus seinen Sorgen erlöst sah, wußte er nicht, womit er sich dankbar beweisen sollte. »Komm mit mir,« sprach er zu ihm, »meine Töchter sind Wunder von Schönheit, wähle dir eine davon zur Frau. Wenn sie hört, was du für mich getan hast, so wird sie sich nicht weigern. Du siehst freilich ein wenig seltsam aus, aber sie wird dich schon wieder in Ordnung bringen.« Dem Bärenhäuter gefiel das wohl, und er ging mit. Als ihn die älteste erblickte, entsetzte sie sich so gewaltig vor seinem Antlitz, daß sie aufschrie und fortlief. Die zweite blieb zwar stehen und betrachtete ihn von Kopf bis zu Füßen, dann aber sprach sie »wie kann ich einen Mann nehmen, der keine menschliche Gestalt mehr hat? Da gefiel mir der rasierte Bär noch besser, der einmal hier zu sehen war und sich für einen Menschen ausgab, der hatte doch einen Husarenpelz an und weiße Handschuhe. Wenn er nur häßlich wäre, so könnte ich mich an ihn gewöhnen.« Die jüngste aber sprach »lieber Vater, das muß ein guter Mann sein, der Euch aus der Not geholfen hat, habt Ihr ihm dafür eine Braut versprochen, so muß Euer Wort gehalten werden.« Es war schade, daß das Gesicht des Bärenhäuters von Schmutz und Haaren bedeckt war, sonst hätte man sehen können, wie ihm das Herz im Leibe lachte, als er diese Worte hörte. Er nahm einen Ring von seinem Finger, brach ihn entzwei und gab ihr die eine Hälfte, die andere behielt er für sich. In ihre Hälfte aber schrieb er seinen Namen, und in seine Hälfte schrieb er ihren Namen und bat sie, ihr Stück gut aufzuheben. Hierauf nahm er Abschied und sprach »ich muß noch drei Jahre wandern: komm ich aber nicht wieder, so bist du frei, weil ich dann tot bin. Bitte aber Gott, daß er mir das Leben erhält.«

Die arme Braut kleidete sich ganz schwarz, und wenn sie an ihren Bräutigam dachte, so kamen ihr die Tränen in die Augen. Von ihren Schwestern ward ihr nichts als Hohn und Spott zuteil. »Nimm dich in acht,« sprach die älteste, »wenn du ihm die Hand reichst, so schlägt er dir mit der Tatze darauf.« »Hüte dich,« sagte die zweite, »die Bären lieben die Süßigkeit, und wenn du ihm gefällst, so frißt er dich auf.« »Du mußt nur immer seinen Willen tun,« hub die älteste wieder an, »sonst fängt er an zu brummen.« Und die zweite fuhr fort »aber die Hochzeit wird lustig sein, Bären, die tanzen gut.« Die Braut schwieg still und ließ sich nicht irre machen. Der Bärenhäuter aber zog in der Welt herum, von einem Ort zum andern, tat Gutes, wo er konnte, und gab den Armen reichlich, damit sie für ihn beteten. Endlich, als der letzte Tag von den sieben Jahren anbrach, ging er wieder hinaus auf die Heide und setzte sich unter den Ring von Bäumen. Nicht lange, so sauste der Wind, und der Teufel stand vor ihm und blickte ihn verdrießlich an; dann warf er ihm den alten Rock hin und verlangte seinen grünen zurück. »So weit sind wir noch nicht,« antwortete der Bärenhäuter, »erst sollst du mich reinigen.« Der Teufel mochte wollen oder nicht, er mußte Wasser holen, den Bärenhäuter abwaschen, ihm die Haare kämmen und die Nägel schneiden. Hierauf sah er wie ein tapferer Kriegsmann aus und war viel schöner als je vorher.

Als der Teufel glücklich abgezogen war, so war es dem Bärenhäuter ganz leicht ums Herz. Er ging in die Stadt, tat einen prächtigen Sammetrock an, setzte sich in einen Wagen mit vier Schimmeln bespannt und fuhr zu dem Haus seiner Braut. Niemand erkannte ihn, der Vater hielt ihn für einen vornehmen Feldobrist und führte ihn in das Zimmer, wo seine Töchter saßen. Er mußte sich zwischen den beiden ältesten niederlassen: sie schenkten ihm Wein ein, legten ihm die besten Bissen vor und meinten, sie hätten keinen schönern Mann auf der Welt gesehen. Die Braut aber saß in schwarzem Kleide ihm gegenüber, schlug die Augen nicht auf und sprach kein Wort. Als er endlich den Vater fragte, ob er ihm eine seiner Töchter zur Frau geben wollte, so sprangen die beiden ältesten auf, liefen in ihre Kammer und wollten prächtige Kleider anziehen, denn eine jede bildete sich ein, sie wäre die Auserwählte. Der Fremde, sobald er mit seiner Braut allein war, holte den halben Ring hervor und warf ihn in einen Becher mit Wein, den er ihr über den Tisch reichte. Sie nahm ihn an, aber als sie getrunken hatte und den halben Ring auf dem Grund liegen fand, so schlug ihr das Herz. Sie holte die andere Hälfte, die sie an einem Band um den Hals trug, hielt sie daran, und es zeigte sich, daß beide Teile vollkommen zueinander paßten. Da sprach er »ich bin dein verlobter Bräutigam, den du als Bärenhäuter gesehen hast, aber durch Gottes Gnade habe ich meine menschliche Gestalt wiedererhalten, und bin wieder rein geworden.« Er ging auf sie zu, umarmte sie und gab ihr einen Kuß. Indem kamen die beiden Schwestern in vollem Putz herein, und als sie sahen, daß der schöne Mann der jüngsten zuteil geworden war, und hörten, daß das der Bärenhäuter war, liefen sie voll Zorn und Wut hinaus; die eine ersäufte sich im Brunnen, die andere erhenkte sich an einem Baum. Am Abend klopfte jemand an der Türe, und als der Bräutigam öffnete, so wars der Teufel im grünen Rock, der sprach »siehst du, nun habe ich zwei Seelen für deine eine.«

102. Der Zaunkönig und der Bär.

Zur Sommerszeit gingen einmal der Bär und der Wolf im Wald spazieren, da hörte der Bär so schönen Gesang von einem Vogel und sprach »Bruder Wolf, was ist das für ein Vogel, der so schön singt?« »Das ist der König der Vögel,« sagte der Wolf, »vor dem müssen wir uns neigen;« es war aber der Zaunkönig. »Wenn das ist,« sagte der Bär, »so möcht ich auch gerne seinen königlichen Palast sehen, komm und führe mich hin.« »Das geht nicht so, wie du meinst,« sprach der Wolf, »du mußt warten, bis die Frau Königin kommt.« Bald darauf kam die Frau Königin und hatte Futter im Schnabel, und der Herr König auch, und wollten ihre Jungen ätzen. Der Bär wäre gerne nun gleich hinterdrein gegangen, aber der Wolf hielt ihn am Ärmel und sagte »nein, du mußt warten, bis Herr und Frau Königin wieder fort sind.« Also nahmen sie das Loch in acht, wo das Nest stand, und trabten wieder ab. Der Bär aber hatte keine Ruhe, wollte den königlichen Palast sehen, und ging nach einer kurzen Weile wieder vor. Da waren König und Königin richtig ausgeflogen: er guckte hinein und sah fünf oder sechs Junge, die lagen darin. »Ist das der königliche Palast!« rief der Bär, »das ist ein erbärmlicher Palast! ihr seid auch keine Königskinder, ihr seid unehrliche Kinder.« Wie das die jungen Zaunkönige hörten, wurden sie gewaltig bös und schrien »nein, das sind wir nicht, unsere Eltern sind ehrliche Leute; Bär, das soll ausgemacht werden mit dir.« Dem Bär und dem Wolf ward angst, sie kehrten um und setzten sich in ihre Höhlen. Die jungen Zaunkönige aber schrien und lärmten fort, und als ihre Eltern wieder Futter brachten, sagten sie »wir rühren kein Fliegenbeinchen an, und sollten wir verhungern, bis ihr erst ausgemacht habt, ob wir ehrliche Kinder sind oder nicht: der Bär ist da gewesen und hat uns gescholten.« Da sagte der alte König »seid nur ruhig, das soll ausgemacht werden.« Flog darauf mit der Frau Königin dem Bären vor seine Höhle und rief hinein »alter Brummbär, warum hast du meine Kinder gescholten? das soll dir übel bekommen, das wollen wir in einem blutigen Krieg ausmachen.« Also war dem Bären der Krieg angekündigt, und ward alles vierfüßige Getier berufen, Ochs, Esel, Rind, Hirsch, Reh, und was die Erde sonst alles trägt. Der Zaunkönig aber berief alles, was in der Luft fliegt; nicht allein die Vögel groß und klein, sondern auch die Mücken, Hornissen, Bienen und Fliegen mußten herbei.

Als nun die Zeit kam, wo der Krieg angehen sollte, da schickte der Zaunkönig Kundschafter aus, wer der kommandierende General des Feindes wäre. Die Mücke war die Listigste von allen, schwärmte im Wald, wo der Feind sich versammelte, und setzte sich endlich unter ein Blatt auf den Baum, wo die Parole ausgegeben wurde. Da stand der Bär, rief den Fuchs vor sich und sprach »Fuchs, du bist der Schlauste unter allem Getier, du sollst General sein und uns anführen.« »Gut,« sagte der Fuchs, »aber was für Zeichen wollen wir verabreden?« Niemand wußte es. Da sprach der Fuchs »ich habe einen schönen langen buschigen Schwanz, der sieht aus fast wie ein roter Federbusch; wenn ich den Schwanz in die Höhe halte, so geht die

Sache gut, und ihr müßt darauflos marschieren: laß ich ihn aber herunterhängen, so lauft, was ihr könnt.« Als die Mücke das gehört hatte, flog sie wieder heim und verriet dem Zaunkönig alles haarklein.

Als der Tag anbrach, wo die Schlacht sollte geliefert werden, hu, da kam das vierfüßige Getier dahergerennt mit Gebraus, daß die Erde zitterte; Zaunkönig mit seiner Armee kam auch durch die Luft daher, die schnurrte, schrie und schwärmte, daß einem angst und bange ward; und gingen sie da von beiden Seiten aneinander. Der Zaunkönig aber schickte die Hornisse hinab, sie sollte sich dem Fuchs unter den Schwanz setzen und aus Leibeskräften stechen. Wie nun der Fuchs den ersten Stich bekam, zuckte er, daß er das eine Bein aufhob, doch ertrug ers und hielt den Schwanz noch in der Höhe: beim zweiten Stich mußte er ihn einen Augenblick herunterlassen: beim dritten aber konnte er sich nicht mehr halten, schrie und nahm den Schwanz zwischen die Beine. Wie das die Tiere sahen, meinten sie, alles wäre verloren, und fingen an zu laufen, jeder in seine Höhle: und hatten die Vögel die Schlacht gewonnen.

Da flog der Herr König und die Frau Königin heim zu ihren Kindern und riefen »Kinder, seid fröhlich, eßt und trinkt nach Herzenslust, wir haben den Krieg gewonnen.« Die jungen Zaunkönige aber sagten »noch essen wir nicht, der Bär soll erst vors Nest kommen und Abbitte tun und soll sagen, daß wir ehrliche Kinder sind.« Da flog der Zaunkönig vor das Loch des Bären und rief »Brummbär, du sollst vor das Nest zu meinen Kindern gehen und Abbitte tun und sagen, daß sie ehrliche Kinder sind, sonst sollen dir die Rippen im Leib zertreten werden.« Da kroch der Bär in der größten Angst hin und tat Abbitte. Jetzt waren die jungen Zaunkönige erst zufrieden, setzten sich zusammen, aßen und tranken und machten sich lustig bis in die späte Nacht hinein.

103. Der süße Brei.

Es war einmal ein armes frommes Mädchen, das lebte mit seiner Mutter allein, und sie hatten nichts mehr zu essen. Da ging das Kind hinaus in den Wald, und begegnete ihm da eine alte Frau, die wußte seinen Jammer schon und schenkte ihm ein Töpfchen, zu dem sollt es sagen »Töpfchen, koche,« so kochte es guten süßen Hirsenbrei, und wenn es sagte »Töpfchen, steh,« so hörte es wieder auf zu kochen. Das Mädchen brachte den Topf seiner Mutter heim, und nun waren sie ihrer Armut und ihres Hungers ledig und aßen süßen Brei, sooft sie wollten. Auf eine Zeit war das Mädchen ausgegangen, da sprach die Mutter »Töpfchen, koche,« da kocht es, und sie ißt sich satt; nun will sie, daß das Töpfchen wieder aufhören soll, aber sie weiß das Wort nicht. Also kocht es fort, und der Brei steigt über den Rand hinaus und kocht immerzu, die Küche und das ganze Haus voll, und das zweite Haus und dann die Straße, als wollts die ganze Welt satt machen, und ist die größte Not, und kein Mensch weiß sich da zu helfen. Endlich, wie nur noch ein einziges Haus übrig ist, da kommt das Kind heim, und spricht nur »Töpfchen, steh,« da steht es und hört auf zu kochen; und wer wieder in die Stadt wollte, der mußte sich durchessen.

104. Die klugen Leute.

Eines Tages holte ein Bauer seinen hagebüchnen Stock aus der Ecke und sprach zu seiner Frau »Trine, ich gehe jetzt über Land und komme erst in drei Tagen wieder zurück. Wenn der Viehhändler in der Zeit bei uns einspricht und will unsere drei Kühe kaufen, so kannst du sie losschlagen, aber nicht anders als für zweihundert Taler, geringer nicht, hörst du?« »Geh nur in Gottes Namen,« antwortete die Frau, »ich will das schon machen.« »Ja, du!« sprach der Mann, »du bist als ein kleines Kind einmal auf den Kopf gefallen, das hängt dir bis auf diese Stunde nach. Aber das sage ich dir, machst du dummes Zeug, so streiche ich dir den Rücken blau an, und das ohne Farbe, bloß mit dem Stock, den ich da in der Hand habe, und der Anstrich soll ein ganzes Jahr halten, darauf kannst du dich verlassen.« Damit ging der Mann seine Wege.

Am andern Morgen kam der Viehhändler, und die Frau brauchte mit ihm nicht viel Worte zu machen. Als er die Kühe besehen hatte und den Preis vernahm, sagte er »das gebe ich gerne, so viel sind sie unter Brüdern wert. Ich will die Tiere gleich mitnehmen.« Er machte sie von der Kette los und trieb sie aus dem Stall. Als er eben zum Hoftor hinaus wollte, faßte ihn die Frau am Ärmel und sprach »Ihr müßt mir erst die zweihundert Taler geben, sonst kann ich Euch nicht gehen lassen.« »Richtig,« antwortete der Mann, »ich habe nur vergessen, meine Geldkatze umzuschnallen. Aber macht Euch keine Sorge, Ihr sollt Sicherheit haben, bis ich zahle. Zwei Kühe nehme ich mit, und die dritte lasse ich Euch zurück, so habt Ihr ein gutes Pfand.« Der Frau leuchtete das ein, sie ließ den Mann mit seinen Kühen abziehen und dachte »wie wird sich der Hans freuen, wenn er sieht, daß ich es so klug gemacht habe.« Der Bauer kam den dritten Tag, wie er gesagt hatte, nach Haus und fragte gleich, ob die Kühe verkauft wären. »Freilich, lieber Hans,« antwortete die Frau, »und wie du gesagt hast, für zweihundert Taler. So viel sind sie kaum wert, aber der Mann nahm sie ohne Widerrede.« »Wo ist das Geld?« fragte der Bauer. »Das Geld, das habe ich nicht,« antwortete die Frau, »er hatte gerade seine Geldkatze vergessen, wirds aber bald bringen; er hat mir ein gutes Pfand zurückgelassen.« »Was für ein Pfand?« fragte der Mann. »Eine von den drei Kühen, die kriegt er nicht eher, als bis er die andern bezahlt hat. Ich habe es klug gemacht, ich habe die kleinste zurückbehalten, die frißt am wenigsten.« Der Mann ward zornig, hob seinen Stock in die Höhe und wollte ihr damit den verheißenen Anstrich geben. Plötzlich ließ er ihn sinken und sagte »du bist die dummste Gans, die auf Gottes Erdboden herumwackelt, aber du dauerst mich. Ich will auf die Landstraße gehen und drei Tage lang warten, ob ich jemand finde, der noch einfältiger ist, als du bist. Glückt mirs, so sollst du frei sein, find ich ihn aber nicht, so sollst du deinen wohlverdienten Lohn ohne Abzug erhalten.«

Er ging hinaus auf die große Straße, setzte sich auf einen Stein und wartete auf die Dinge, die kommen sollten. Da sah er einen Leiterwagen heranfahren, und eine Frau stand mitten darauf, statt auf dem Gebund Stroh zu sitzen, das dabei lag, oder neben den Ochsen zu gehen und sie zu leiten. Der Mann dachte »das ist wohl eine, wie du sie suchst,« sprang auf und lief vor dem Wagen hin und her, wie einer, der nicht recht gescheit ist. »Was wollt Ihr, Gevatter,« sagte die Frau zu ihm, »ich kenne Euch nicht, von wo kommt Ihr her?« »Ich bin von dem Himmel gefallen,« antwortete der Mann, »und weiß nicht, wie ich wieder hinkommen soll; könnt Ihr mich nicht hinauffahren?« »Nein,« sagte die Frau, »ich weiß den Weg nicht. Aber wenn Ihr aus dem Himmel kommt, so könnt Ihr mir wohl sagen, wie es meinem Mann geht, der schon seit drei Jahren dort ist: Ihr habt ihn gewiß gesehen?« »Ich habe ihn wohl gesehen, aber es kann nicht allen Menschen gut gehen. Er hütet die Schafe, und das liebe Vieh macht ihm viel zu schaffen, das springt auf die Berge und verirrt sich in der Wildnis, und da muß er hinterherlaufen und es wieder zusammentreiben. Abgerissen ist er auch, und die Kleider werden ihm bald vom Leib fallen. Schneider gibt es dort nicht, der heilige Petrus läßt keinen hinein, wie Ihr aus dem Märchen wißt.« »Wer hätte sich das gedacht!« rief die Frau, »wißt Ihr was? ich will seinen Sonntagsrock holen, der noch daheim im Schrank hängt, den kann er dort mit Ehren tragen. Ihr seid so gut und nehmt ihn mit.« »Das geht nicht wohl,« antwortete der Bauer, »Kleider darf man nicht in den Himmel bringen, die werden einem vor dem Tor abgenommen.« »Hört mich an,« sprach die Frau, »ich habe gestern meinen schönen Weizen verkauft und ein hübsches Geld dafür bekommen, das will ich ihm schicken. Wenn Ihr den Beutel in die Tasche steckt, so wirds kein Mensch gewahr.« »Kanns nicht anders sein,« erwiderte der Bauer, »so will ich Euch wohl den Gefallen tun.« »Bleibt nur da sitzen,« sagte sie, »ich will heim fahren und den Beutel holen; ich bin bald wieder hier. Ich setze mich nicht auf das Bund Stroh, sondern stehe auf dem Wagen, so hats das Vieh leichter.« Sie trieb ihre Ochsen an, und der Bauer dachte »die hat Anlage zur Narrheit, bringt sie das Geld wirklich, so kann meine Frau von Glück sagen, denn sie kriegt keine Schläge.« Es dauerte nicht lange, so kam sie gelaufen, brachte das Geld und steckte es ihm selbst in die Tasche. Eh sie wegging, dankte sie ihm noch tausendmal für seine Gefälligkeit.

Als die Frau wieder heim kam, so fand sie ihren Sohn, der aus dem Feld zurückgekehrt war. Sie erzählte ihm, was sie für unerwartete Dinge erfahren hätte, und setzte dann hinzu »ich freue mich recht, daß ich Gelegenheit gefunden habe, meinem armen Mann etwas zu schicken, wer hätte sich vorgestellt, daß er im Himmel an etwas Mangel leiden würde?« Der Sohn war in der größten Verwunderung, »Mutter,« sagte er, »so einer aus dem Himmel kommt nicht alle Tage, ich will gleich hinaus und sehen, daß ich den Mann noch finde: der muß mir erzählen, wies dort aussieht und wies mit der Arbeit geht.« Er sattelte das Pferd und ritt in aller Hast fort. Er fand den Bauer, der unter einem Weidenbaum saß und das Geld, das im Beutel war, zählen wollte. »Habt Ihr nicht den Mann gesehen,« rief ihm der Junge zu, »der aus dem Himmel gekommen ist?« »Ja,« antwortete der Bauer, »der hat sich wieder auf den Rückweg gemacht und ist den Berg dort hinaufgegangen, von wo ers etwas näher hat. Ihr könnt ihn noch einholen, wenn Ihr scharf reitet.« »Ach,« sagte der Junge, »ich habe mich den ganzen Tag abgeäschert, und der Ritt hierher hat mich vollends müde gemacht: Ihr kennt den Mann, seid so gut und setzt Euch auf mein Pferd und überredet ihn, daß er hierher kommt.« »Aha,« meinte der Bauer, »das ist auch einer, der keinen Docht in seiner Lampe hat.« »Warum sollte ich Euch den Gefallen nicht tun?« sprach er, stieg auf und ritt im stärksten Trab fort. Der Junge blieb sitzen, bis die Nacht einbrach, aber der Bauer kam nicht zurück. »Gewiß,« dachte er, »hat der Mann aus dem Himmel große Eile gehabt und nicht umkehren wollen, und der Bauer hat ihm das Pferd mitgegeben, um es meinem Vater zu bringen.« Er ging heim und erzählte seiner Mutter, was geschehen war: das Pferd habe er dem Vater geschickt, damit er nicht immer herumzulaufen brauche. »Du hast wohl getan,« antwortete sie, »du hast noch junge Beine und kannst zu Fuß gehen.«

Als der Bauer nach Haus gekommen war, stellte er das Pferd in den Stall neben die verpfändete Kuh, ging dann zu seiner Frau und sagte »Trine, das war dein Glück, ich habe zwei gefunden, die noch einfältigere Narren sind als du: diesmal kommst du ohne Schläge davon, ich will sie für eine andere Gelegenheit aufsparen.« Dann zündete er seine Pfeife an, setzte sich in den Großvaterstuhl und sprach »das war ein gutes Geschäft, für zwei magere Kühe ein glattes Pferd und dazu einen großen Beutel voll Geld. Wenn die Dummheit immer soviel einbrächte, so wollte ich sie gerne in Ehren halten.« So dachte der Bauer, aber dir sind gewiß die Einfältigen lieber.

105. Märchen von der Unke.

I

Es war einmal ein kleines Kind, dem gab seine Mutter jeden Nachmittag ein Schüsselchen mit Milch und Weckbrocken, und das Kind setzte sich damit hinaus in den Hof. Wenn es aber anfing zu essen, so kam die Hausunke aus einer Mauerritze hervorgekrochen, senkte ihr Köpfchen in die Milch und aß mit. Das Kind hatte seine Freude daran, und wenn es mit seinem Schüsselchen dasaß und die Unke kam nicht gleich herbei, so rief es ihr zu

»Unke, Unke, komm geschwind,
komm herbei, du kleines Ding,
sollst dein Bröckchen haben,
an der Milch dich laben.«

Da kam die Unke gelaufen und ließ es sich gut schmecken. Sie zeigte sich auch dankbar, denn sie brachte dem Kind aus ihrem heimlichen Schatz allerlei schöne Dinge, glänzende Steine, Perlen und goldene Spielsachen. Die Unke trank aber nur Milch und ließ die Brocken liegen. Da nahm das Kind einmal sein Löffelchen, schlug ihr damit sanft auf den Kopf und sagte »Ding, iß auch Brocken.« Die Mutter, die in der Küche stand, hörte, daß das Kind mit jemand sprach, und als sie sah, daß es mit seinem Löffelchen nach einer Unke schlug, so lief sie mit einem Scheit Holz heraus und tötete das gute Tier.

Von der Zeit an ging eine Veränderung mit dem Kinde vor. Es war, solange die Unke mit ihm gegessen hatte, groß und stark geworden, jetzt aber verlor es seine schönen roten Backen und magerte ab. Nicht lange, so fing in der Nacht der Totenvogel an zu schreien, und das Rotkehlchen sammelte Zweiglein und Blätter zu einem Totenkranz, und bald hernach lag das Kind auf der Bahre.

II

Ein Waisenkind saß an der Stadtmauer und spann, da sah es eine Unke aus der Öffnung unten an der Mauer hervorkommen. Geschwind breitete es sein blauseidenes Halstuch neben sich aus, das die Unken gewaltig lieben und auf das sie allein gehen. Alsobald die Unke das erblickte, kehrte sie um, kam wieder und brachte ein kleines goldenes Krönchen getragen, legte es darauf und ging dann wieder fort. Das Mädchen nahm die Krone auf, sie glitzerte und war von zartem Goldgespinst. Nicht lange, so kam die Unke zum zweitenmal wieder: wie sie aber die Krone nicht mehr sah, kroch sie an die Wand und schlug vor Leid ihr Köpfchen so lange dawider, als sie nur noch Kräfte hatte, bis sie endlich tot dalag. Hätte das Mädchen die Krone liegen lassen, die Unke hätte wohl noch mehr von ihren Schätzen aus der Höhle herbeigetragen.

III

Unke ruft »huhu, huhu,« Kind spricht »komm herut.« Die Unke kommt hervor, da fragt das Kind nach seinem Schwesterchen »hast du Rotstrümpfchen nicht gesehen?« Unke sagt »ne, ik og nit: wie du denn? huhu, huhu, huhu.«

106. Der arme Müllerbursch und das Kätzchen.

In einer Mühle lebte ein alter Müller, der hatte weder Frau noch Kinder, und drei Müllerburschen dienten bei ihm. Wie sie nun etliche Jahre bei ihm gewesen waren, sagte er eines Tags zu ihnen »ich bin alt und will mich hinter den Ofen setzen: zieht aus, und wer mir das beste Pferd nach Haus bringt, dem will ich die Mühle geben, und er soll mich dafür bis an meinen Tod verpflegen.« Der dritte von den Burschen war aber der Kleinknecht, der ward von den andern für albern gehalten, dem gönnten sie die Mühle nicht; und er wollte sie hernach nicht einmal. Da zogen sie alle drei miteinander aus, und wie sie vor das Dorf kamen, sagten die zwei zu dem albernen Hans »du kannst nur hier bleiben, du kriegst dein Lebtag keinen Gaul.« Hans aber ging doch mit, und als es Nacht war, kamen sie an eine Höhle, dahinein legten sie sich schlafen. Die zwei Klugen warteten, bis Hans eingeschlafen war, dann stiegen sie auf, machten sich fort und ließen Hänschen liegen, und meintens recht fein gemacht zu haben; ja, es wird euch doch nicht gut gehen! Wie nun die Sonne kam, und Hans aufwachte, lag er in einer tiefen Höhle: er guckte sich überall um und rief »ach Gott, wo bin ich!« Da erhob er sich und krabbelte die Höhle hinauf, ging in den Wald und dachte »ich bin hier ganz allein und verlassen, wie soll ich nun zu einem Pferd kommen!« Indem er so in Gedanken dahinging, begegnete ihm ein kleines buntes Kätzchen, das sprach ganz freundlich »Hans, wo willst du hin?« »Ach, du kannst mir doch nicht helfen.« »Was dein Begehren ist, weiß ich wohl,« sprach das Kätzchen, »du willst einen hübschen Gaul haben. Komm mit mir und sei sieben Jahre lang mein treuer Knecht, so will ich dir einen geben, schöner, als du dein Lebtag einen gesehen hast.« »Nun, das ist eine wunderliche Katze,« dachte Hans, »aber sehen will ich doch, ob das wahr ist, was sie sagt.« Da nahm sie ihn mit in ihr verwünschtes Schlößchen und hatte da lauter Kätzchen, die ihr dienten: die sprangen flink die Treppe auf und ab, waren lustig und guter Dinge. Abends, als sie sich zu Tisch setzten, mußten drei Musik machen: eins strich den Baß, das andere die Geige, das dritte setzte die Trompete an und blies die Backen auf, so sehr es nur konnte. Als sie gegessen hatten, wurde der Tisch weggetragen, und die Katze sagte »nun komm, Hans, und tanze mit mir.« »Nein,« antwortete er, »mit einer Miezekatze tanze ich nicht, das habe ich noch niemals getan.« »So bringt ihn ins Bett,« sagte sie zu den Kätzchen. Da leuchtete ihm eins in seine Schlafkammer, eins zog ihm die Schuhe aus, eins die Strümpfe, und zuletzt blies eins das Licht aus. Am andern Morgen kamen sie wieder und halfen ihm aus dem Bett: eins zog ihm die Strümpfe an, eins band ihm die Strumpfbänder, eins holte die Schuhe, eins wusch ihn, und eins trocknete ihm mit dem Schwanz das Gesicht ab. »Das tut recht sanft,« sagte Hans. Er mußte aber auch der Katze dienen und alle Tage Holz klein machen; dazu kriegte er eine Axt von Silber, und die Keile und Säge von Silber, und der Schläger war von Kupfer. Nun, da machte ers klein, blieb da im Haus, hatte sein gutes Essen und Trinken, sah aber niemand als die bunte Katze und ihr

Gesinde. Einmal sagte sie zu ihm »geh hin und mähe meine Wiese, und mache das Gras trocken,« und gab ihm von Silber eine Sense und von Gold einen Wetzstein, hieß ihn aber auch alles wieder richtig abliefern. Da ging Hans hin und tat, was ihm geheißen war; nach vollbrachter Arbeit trug er Sense, Wetzstein und Heu nach Haus und fragte, ob sie ihm noch nicht seinen Lohn geben wollte. »Nein,« sagte die Katze, »du sollst mir erst noch einerlei tun, da ist Bauholz von Silber, Zimmeraxt, Winkeleisen, und was nötig ist, alles von Silber, daraus baue mir erst ein kleines Häuschen.« Da baute Hans das Häuschen fertig und sagte, er hätte nun alles getan, und hätte noch kein Pferd. Doch waren ihm die sieben Jahre herumgegangen wie ein halbes. Fragte die Katze, ob er ihre Pferde sehen wollte? »Ja,« sagte Hans. Da machte sie ihm das Häuschen auf, und weil sie die Türe so aufmacht, da stehen zwölf Pferde, ach, die waren gewesen ganz stolz, die hatten geblänkt und gespiegelt, daß sich sein Herz im Leibe darüber freute. Nun gab sie ihm zu essen und zu trinken und sprach »geh heim, dein Pferd geb ich dir nicht mit: in drei Tagen aber komm ich und bringe dirs nach.« Also machte Hans sich auf, und sie zeigte ihm den Weg zur Mühle. Sie hatte ihm aber nicht einmal ein neues Kleid gegeben, sondern er mußte sein altes lumpiges Kittelchen behalten, das er mitgebracht hatte, und das ihm in den sieben Jahren überall zu kurz geworden war. Wie er nun heim kam, so waren die beiden andern Müllerburschen auch wieder da: jeder hatte zwar sein Pferd mitgebracht, aber des einen seins war blind, des andern seins lahm. Sie fragten »Hans, wo hast du dein Pferd?« »In drei Tagen wirds nachkommen.« Da lachten sie und sagten »ja du Hans, wo willst du ein Pferd herkriegen, das wird was Rechtes sein!« Hans ging in die Stube, der Müller sagte aber, er sollte nicht an den Tisch kommen, er wäre so zerrissen und zerlumpt, man müßte sich schämen, wenn jemand hereinkäme. Da gaben sie ihm ein bißchen Essen hinaus, und wie sie abends schlafen gingen, wollten ihm die zwei andern kein Bett geben, und er mußte endlich ins Gänseställchen kriechen und sich auf ein wenig hartes Stroh legen. Am Morgen, wie er aufwacht, sind schon die drei Tage herum, und es kommt eine Kutsche mit sechs Pferden, ei, die glänzten, daß es schön war, und ein Bedienter, der brachte noch ein siebentes, das war für den armen Müllerbursch. Aus der Kutsche aber stieg eine prächtige Königstochter und ging in die Mühle hinein, und die Königstochter war das kleine bunte Kätzchen, dem der arme Hans sieben Jahr gedient hatte. Sie fragte den Müller, wo der Mahlbursch, der Kleinknecht wäre. Da sagte der Müller »den können wir nicht in die Mühle nehmen, der ist so verrissen und liegt im Gänsestall.« Da sagte die Königstochter, sie sollten ihn gleich holen. Also holten sie ihn heraus, und er mußte sein Kittelchen zusammenpacken, um sich zu bedecken. Da schnallte der Bediente prächtige Kleider aus, und mußte ihn waschen und anziehen, und wie er fertig war, konnte kein König schöner aussehen. Danach verlangte die Jungfrau, die Pferde zu sehen, welche die andern Mahlburschen mitgebracht hatten, eins war blind, das andere lahm. Da ließ sie den Bedienten das siebente Pferd bringen: wie der Müller das sah, sprach er, so eins wär ihm noch nicht auf den Hof gekommen; »und das ist für den dritten Mahlbursch,« sagte sie. »Da muß er die Mühle haben,« sagte der Müller, die Königstochter aber sprach, da wäre das Pferd, er sollte seine Mühle auch behalten: und nimmt ihren treuen Hans und setzt ihn in die Kutsche und fährt mit ihm fort. Sie fahren zuerst nach dem kleinen Häuschen, das er mit dem silbernen Werkzeug gebaut hat, da ist es ein großes Schloß, und ist alles darin von Silber und Gold; und da hat sie ihn geheiratet, und war er reich, so reich, daß er für sein Lebtag genug hatte. Darum soll keiner sagen, daß, wer albern ist, deshalb nichts Rechtes werden könne.

107. Die beiden Wanderer.

Berg und Tal begegnen sich nicht, wohl aber die Menschenkinder, zumal gute und böse. So kam auch einmal ein Schuster und ein Schneider auf der Wanderschaft zusammen. Der Schneider war ein kleiner hübscher Kerl und war immer lustig und guter Dinge. Er sah den Schuster von der andern Seite herankommen, und da er an seinem Felleisen merkte, was er für ein Handwerk trieb, rief er ihm ein Spottliedchen zu

»nähe mir die Naht,
ziehe mir den Draht,
streich ihn rechts und links mit Pech,
schlag, schlag mir fest den Zweck.«

Der Schuster aber konnte keinen Spaß vertragen, er verzog ein Gesicht, als wenn er Essig getrunken hätte, und machte Miene, das Schneiderlein am Kragen zu packen. Der kleine Kerl fing aber an zu lachen, reichte ihm seine Flasche und sprach »es ist nicht bös gemeint, trink einmal und schluck die Galle hinunter.« Der Schuster tat einen gewaltigen Schluck, und das Gewitter auf seinem Gesicht fing an sich zu verziehen. Er gab dem Schneider die Flasche zurück und sprach »ich habe ihr ordentlich zugesprochen, man sagt wohl vom vielen Trinken, aber nicht vom großen Durst. Wollen wir zusammen wandern?« »Mir ists recht,« antwortete der Schneider, »wenn du nur Lust hast, in eine große Stadt zu gehen, wo es nicht an Arbeit fehlt.« »Gerade dahin wollte ich auch,« antwortete der Schuster, »in einem kleinen Nest ist nichts zu verdienen, und auf dem Lande gehen die Leute lieber barfuß.« Sie wanderten also zusammen weiter und setzten immer einen Fuß vor den andern wie die Wiesel im Schnee.

Zeit genug hatten sie beide, aber wenig zu beißen und zu brechen. Wenn sie in eine Stadt kamen, so gingen sie umher und grüßten das Handwerk, und weil das Schneiderlein so frisch und munter aussah und so hübsche rote Backen hatte, so gab ihm jeder gerne, und wenn das Glück gut war, so gab ihm die Meistertochter unter der Haustüre auch noch einen Kuß auf den Weg. Wenn er mit dem Schuster wieder zusammentraf, so hatte er immer mehr in seinem Bündel. Der griesgrämige Schuster schnitt ein schiefes Gesicht und meinte »je größer der Schelm, je größer das Glück.« Aber der Schneider fing an zu lachen und zu singen und teilte alles, was er bekam, mit seinem Kameraden. Klingelten nun ein paar Groschen in seiner Tasche, so ließ er auftragen, schlug vor Freude auf den Tisch, daß die Gläser tanzten, und es hieß bei ihm »leicht verdient und leicht vertan.«

Als sie eine Zeitlang gewandert waren, kamen sie an einen großen Wald, durch welchen der Weg nach der Königsstadt ging. Es führten aber zwei Fußsteige hindurch, davon war der eine sieben Tage lang, der andere nur zwei Tage, aber niemand von ihnen wußte, welcher der kürzere Weg war. Die zwei Wanderer setzten sich unter einen Eichenbaum und ratschlagten, wie sie sich vorsehen und für wie viel Tage sie Brot mitnehmen wollten. Der

Schuster sagte »man muß weiter denken, als man geht, ich will für sieben Tage Brot mitnehmen.« »Was,« sagte der Schneider, »für sieben Tage Brot auf dem Rücken schleppen wie ein Lasttier und sich nicht umschauen? ich halte mich an Gott und kehre mich an nichts. Das Geld, das ich in der Tasche habe, das ist im Sommer so gut als im Winter, aber das Brot wird in der heißen Zeit trocken und obendrein schimmelig. Mein Rock geht auch nicht länger als auf die Knöchel. Warum sollen wir den richtigen Weg nicht finden? Für zwei Tage Brot und damit gut.« Es kaufte sich also ein jeder sein Brot, dann gingen sie auf gut Glück in den Wald hinein.

In dem Wald war es so still wie in einer Kirche. Kein Wind wehte, kein Bach rauschte, kein Vogel sang, und durch die dichtbelaubten Äste drang kein Sonnenstrahl. Der Schuster sprach kein Wort, ihn drückte das schwere Brot auf dem Rücken, daß ihm der Schweiß über sein verdrießliches und finsteres Gesicht herabfloß. Der Schneider aber war ganz munter, sprang daher, pfiff auf einem Blatt oder sang ein Liedchen und dachte »Gott im Himmel muß sich freuen, daß ich so lustig bin.« Zwei Tage ging das so fort, aber als am dritten Tag der Wald kein Ende nehmen wollte und der Schneider sein Brot aufgegessen hatte, so fiel ihm das Herz doch eine Elle tiefer herab: indessen verlor er nicht den Mut, sondern verließ sich auf Gott und auf sein Glück. Den dritten Tag legte er sich abends hungrig unter einen Baum und stieg den andern Morgen hungrig wieder auf. So ging es auch den vierten Tag, und wenn der Schuster sich auf einen umgestürzten Baum setzte und seine Mahlzeit verzehrte, so blieb dem Schneider nichts als das Zusehen. Bat er um ein Stückchen Brot, so lachte der andere höhnisch und sagte »du bist immer so lustig gewesen, da kannst du auch einmal versuchen, wies tut, wenn man unlustig ist: die Vögel, die morgens zu früh singen, die stößt abends der Habicht,« kurz, er war ohne Barmherzigkeit. Aber am fünften Morgen konnte der arme Schneider nicht mehr aufstehen und vor Mattigkeit kaum ein Wort herausbringen; die Backen waren ihm weiß und die Augen rot. Da sagte der Schuster zu ihm »ich will dir heute ein Stück Brot geben, aber dafür will ich dir dein rechtes Auge ausstechen.« Der unglückliche Schneider, der doch gerne sein Leben erhalten wollte, konnte sich nicht anders helfen: er weinte noch einmal mit beiden Augen und hielt sie dann hin, und der Schuster, der ein Herz von Stein hatte, stach ihm mit einem scharfen Messer das rechte Auge aus. Dem Schneider kam in den Sinn, was ihm sonst seine Mutter gesagt hatte, wenn er in der Speisekammer genascht hatte »essen, soviel man mag, und leiden, was man muß.« Als er sein teuer bezahltes Brot verzehrt hatte, machte er sich wieder auf die Beine, vergaß sein Unglück und tröstete sich damit, daß er mit einem Auge noch immer genug sehen könnte. Aber am sechsten Tag meldete sich der Hunger aufs neue und zehrte ihm fast das Herz auf. Er fiel abends bei einem Baum nieder, und am siebenten Morgen konnte er sich vor Mattigkeit nicht erheben, und der Tod saß ihm im Nacken. Da sagte der Schuster »ich will Barmherzigkeit ausüben und dir nochmals Brot geben; umsonst bekommst du es nicht, ich steche dir dafür das andere Auge noch aus.« Da erkannte der Schneider sein leichtsinniges Leben, bat den lieben Gott um Verzeihung und sprach »tue, was du mußt, ich will leiden, was ich muß; aber bedenke, daß unser Herrgott nicht jeden Augenblick richtet, und daß eine andere Stunde kommt, wo die böse Tat vergolten wird, die du an mir verübst und die ich nicht an dir verdient habe. Ich habe in guten Tagen mit dir geteilt, was ich hatte. Mein Handwerk ist der Art, daß Stich muß Stich vertreiben. Wenn ich keine Augen mehr habe, und nicht mehr nähen kann, so muß ich betteln gehen. Laß mich nur, wenn ich blind bin, hier nicht allein liegen, sonst muß ich verschmachten.« Der Schuster aber, der Gott aus seinem Herzen vertrieben hatte, nahm das Messer und stach ihm noch das linke Auge aus. Dann gab er ihm ein Stück Brot zu essen, reichte ihm einen Stock und führte ihn hinter sich her.

Als die Sonne unterging, kamen sie aus dem Wald, und vor dem Wald auf dem Feld stand ein Galgen. Dahin leitete der Schuster den blinden Schneider, ließ ihn dann liegen und ging seiner Wege. Vor Müdigkeit, Schmerz und Hunger schlief der Unglückliche ein und schlief die ganze Nacht. Als der Tag dämmerte, erwachte er, wußte aber nicht, wo er lag. An dem Galgen hingen zwei arme Sünder, und auf dem Kopfe eines jeden saß eine Krähe. Da fing der eine an zu sprechen »Bruder, wachst du?« »Ja, ich wache,« antwortete der zweite. »So will ich dir etwas sagen,« fing der erste wieder an, »der Tau, der heute Nacht über uns vom Galgen herabgefallen ist, der gibt jedem, der sich damit wäscht, die Augen wieder. Wenn das die Blinden wüßten, wie mancher könnte sein Gesicht wiederhaben, der nicht glaubt, daß das möglich sei.« Als der Schneider das hörte, nahm er sein Taschentuch, drückte es auf das Gras, und als es mit dem Tau befeuchtet war, wusch er seine Augenhöhlen damit. Alsbald ging in Erfüllung, was der Gehenkte gesagt hatte, und ein Paar frische und gesunde Augen füllten die Höhlen. Es dauerte nicht lange, so sah der Schneider die Sonne hinter den Bergen aufsteigen: vor ihm in der Ebene lag die große Königsstadt mit ihren prächtigen Toren und hundert Türmen, und die goldenen Knöpfe und Kreuze, die auf den Spitzen standen, fingen an zu glühen. Er unterschied jedes Blatt an den Bäumen, erblickte die Vögel, die vorbeiflogen, und die Mücken, die in der Luft tanzten. Er holte eine Nähnadel aus der Tasche, und als er den Zwirn einfädeln konnte, so gut, als er es je gekonnt hatte, so sprang sein Herz vor Freude. Er warf sich auf seine Knie, dankte Gott für die erwiesene Gnade und sprach seinen Morgensegen: er vergaß auch nicht, für die armen Sünder zu bitten, die da hingen wie der Schwengel in der Glocke, und die der Wind aneinander schlug. Dann nahm er seinen Bündel auf den Rücken, vergaß bald das ausgestandene Herzeleid und ging unter Singen und Pfeifen weiter.

Das erste, was ihm begegnete, war ein braunes Füllen, das frei im Felde herumsprang. Er packte es an der Mähne, wollte sich aufschwingen und in die Stadt reiten. Das Füllen aber bat um seine Freiheit; »ich bin noch zu jung,« sprach es, »auch ein leichter Schneider wie du bricht mir den Rücken entzwei, laß mich laufen, bis ich stark geworden bin. Es kommt vielleicht eine Zeit, wo ich dirs lohnen kann.« »Lauf hin,« sagte der Schneider, »ich sehe, du bist auch so ein Springinsfeld.« Er gab ihm noch einen Hieb mit der

Gerte über den Rücken, daß es vor Freude mit den Hinterbeinen ausschlug, über Hecken und Gräben setzte und in das Feld hineinjagte.

Aber das Schneiderlein hatte seit gestern nichts gegessen. »Die Sonne,« sprach er, »füllt mir zwar die Augen, aber das Brot nicht den Mund. Das erste, was mir begegnet und halbwegs genießbar ist, das muß herhalten.« Indem schritt ein Storch ganz ernsthaft über die Wiese daher. »Halt, halt,« rief der Schneider und packte ihn am Bein, »ich weiß nicht, ob du zu genießen bist, aber mein Hunger erlaubt mir keine lange Wahl, ich muß dir den Kopf abschneiden und dich braten.« »Tue das nicht,« antwortete der Storch, »ich bin ein heiliger Vogel, dem niemand ein Leid zufügt, und der den Menschen großen Nutzen bringt. Läßt du mir mein Leben, so kann ich dirs ein andermal vergelten.« »So zieh ab, Vetter Langbein,« sagte der Schneider. Der Storch erhob sich, ließ die langen Beine hängen und flog gemächlich fort.

»Was soll daraus werden?« sagte der Schneider zu sich selbst, »mein Hunger wird immer größer und mein Magen immer leerer. Was mir jetzt in den Weg kommt, das ist verloren.« Indem sah er auf einem Teich ein paar junge Enten daherschwimmen. »Ihr kommt ja wie gerufen,« sagte er, packte eine davon, und wollte ihr den Hals umdrehen. Da fing eine alte Ente, die in dem Schilf steckte, laut an zu kreischen, schwamm mit aufgesperrtem Schnabel herbei und bat ihn flehentlich, sich ihrer lieben Kinder zu erbarmen. »Denkst du nicht,« sagte sie, »wie deine Mutter jammern würde, wenn dich einer wegholen und dir den Garaus machen wollte?« »Sei nur still,« sagte der gutmütige Schneider, »du sollst deine Kinder behalten,« und setzte die Gefangene wieder ins Wasser.

Als er sich umkehrte, stand er vor einem alten Baum, der halb hohl war, und sah die wilden Bienen aus- und einfliegen. »Da finde ich gleich den Lohn für meine gute Tat,« sagte der Schneider, »der Honig wird mich laben.« Aber der Weisel kam heraus, drohte und sprach »wenn du mein Volk anrührst und mein Nest zerstörst, so sollen dir unsere Stacheln wie zehntausend glühende Nadeln in die Haut fahren. Läßt du uns aber in Ruhe und gehst deiner Wege, so wollen wir dir ein andermal dafür einen Dienst leisten.«

Das Schneiderlein sah, daß auch hier nichts anzufangen war. »Drei Schüsseln leer,« sagte er, »und auf der vierten nichts, das ist eine schlechte Mahlzeit.« Er schleppte sich also mit seinem ausgehungerten Magen in die Stadt, und da es eben zu Mittag läutete, so war für ihn im Gasthaus schon gekocht, und er konnte sich gleich zu Tisch setzen. Als er satt war, sagte er »nun will ich auch arbeiten.« Er ging in der Stadt umher, suchte einen Meister und fand auch bald ein gutes Unterkommen. Da er aber sein Handwerk von Grund aus gelernt hatte, so dauerte es nicht lange, er ward berühmt, und jeder wollte seinen neuen Rock von dem kleinen Schneider gemacht haben. Alle Tage nahm sein Ansehen zu. »Ich kann in meiner Kunst nicht weiterkommen,« sprach er, »und doch gehts jeden Tag besser.« Endlich bestellte ihn der König zu seinem Hofschneider.

Aber wies in der Welt geht. An demselben Tag war sein ehemaliger Kamerad, der Schuster, auch Hofschuster geworden. Als dieser den Schneider erblickte und sah, daß er wieder zwei gesunde Augen hatte, so peinigte ihn das Gewissen. »Ehe er Rache an mir nimmt,« dachte er bei sich selbst, »muß ich ihm eine Grube graben.« Wer aber andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein. Abends, als er Feierabend gemacht hatte und es dämmerig geworden war, schlich er sich zu dem König und sagte »Herr König, der Schneider ist ein übermütiger Mensch und hat sich vermessen, er wollte die goldene Krone wieder herbeischaffen, die vor alten Zeiten ist verloren gegangen.« »Das sollte mir lieb sein,« sprach der König, ließ den Schneider am andern Morgen vor sich fordern und befahl ihm, die Krone wieder herbeizuschaffen, oder für immer die Stadt zu verlassen. »Oho,« dachte der Schneider, »ein Schelm gibt mehr, als er hat. Wenn der murrköpfige König von mir verlangt, was kein Mensch leisten kann, so will ich nicht warten bis morgen, sondern gleich heute wieder zur Stadt hinauswandern.« Er schnürte also sein Bündel, als er aber aus dem Tor heraus war, so tat es ihm doch leid, daß er sein Glück aufgegeben und die Stadt, in der es ihm so wohl gegangen war, mit dem Rücken ansehen sollte. Er kam zu dem Teich, wo er mit den Enten Bekanntschaft gemacht hatte, da saß gerade die Alte, der er ihre Jungen gelassen hatte, am Ufer und putzte sich mit dem Schnabel. Sie erkannte ihn gleich und fragte, warum er den Kopf so hängen lasse. »Du wirst dich nicht wundern, wenn du hörst, was mir begegnet ist,« antwortete der Schneider und erzählte ihr sein Schicksal. »Wenns weiter nichts ist,« sagte die Ente, »da können wir Rat schaffen. Die Krone ist ins Wasser gefallen und liegt unten auf dem Grund, wie bald haben wir sie wieder heraufgeholt. Breite nur derweil dein Taschentuch ans Ufer aus.« Sie tauchte mit ihren zwölf Jungen unter, und nach fünf Minuten war sie wieder oben und saß mitten in der Krone, die auf ihren Fittichen ruhte, und die zwölf Jungen schwammen rund herum, hatten ihre Schnäbel untergelegt und halfen tragen. Sie schwammen ans Land und legten die Krone auf das Tuch. Du glaubst nicht, wie prächtig die Krone war, wenn die Sonne darauf schien, so glänzte sie wie hunderttausend Karfunkelsteine. Der Schneider band sein Tuch mit den vier Zipfeln zusammen und trug sie zum König, der in einer Freude war und dem Schneider eine goldene Kette um den Hals hing.

Als der Schuster sah, daß der eine Streich mißlungen war, so besann er sich auf einen zweiten, trat vor den König und sprach »Herr König, der Schneider ist wieder so übermütig geworden, er vermißt sich, das ganze königliche Schloß mit allem, was darin ist, los und fest, innen und außen, in Wachs abzubilden.« Der König ließ den Schneider kommen und befahl ihm, das ganze königliche Schloß mit allem, was darin wäre, los und fest, innen und außen, in Wachs abzubilden, und wenn er es nicht zustande brächte, oder es fehlte nur ein Nagel an der Wand, so sollte er zeitlebens unter der Erde gefangen sitzen. Der Schneider dachte »es kommt immer ärger, das hält kein Mensch aus,« warf sein Bündel auf den Rücken und wanderte fort. Als er an den hohlen Baum kam, setzte er sich nieder und ließ den Kopf hängen. Die Bienen kamen herausgeflogen, und der Weisel fragte ihn, ob er einen steifen Hals hätte, weil er den Kopf so schief hielt. »Ach nein,« antwortete der Schneider, »mich drückt etwas anderes,« und erzählte, was der König von ihm gefordert hatte. Die Bienen fingen an unter einander zu summen und zu brummen, und der Weisel sprach »geh nur wieder nach Haus, komm aber morgen um diese Zeit wieder und bring ein großes Tuch mit, so wird alles gut gehen.« Da kehrte er wieder um, die Bienen aber flogen nach dem königlichen Schloß geradezu in die offenen Fenster hinein, krochen in allen Ecken herum und besahen alles aufs genaueste. Dann liefen sie zurück und bildeten das Schloß in Wachs nach mit einer solchen Geschwindigkeit, daß man meinte, es wüchse einem vor den Augen. Schon am Abend war alles fertig, und als der Schneider am folgenden Morgen kam, so stand das ganze prächtige Gebäude da, und es fehlte kein Nagel an der Wand und kein Ziegel auf dem Dach; dabei war es zart und schneeweiß, und roch süß wie Honig. Der Schneider packte es vorsichtig in sein Tuch und brachte es dem König, der aber konnte sich nicht genug verwundern, stellte es in seinem größten Saal auf und schenkte dem Schneider dafür ein großes steinernes Haus.

Der Schuster ab ließ nicht nach, ging zum drittenmal zu dem König und sprach »Herr König, dem Schneider ist zu Ohren gekommen, daß auf dem Schloßhof kein Wasser springen will, da hat er sich vermessen, es solle mitten im Hof mannshoch aufsteigen und hell sein wie Kristall.« Da ließ der König den Schneider herbeiholen und sagte »wenn nicht morgen ein Strahl von Wasser in meinem Hof springt, wie du versprochen hast, so soll dich der Scharfrichter auf demselben Hof um einen Kopf kürzer machen.« Der arme Schneider besann sich nicht lange und eilte zum Tore hinaus, und weil es ihm diesmal ans Leben gehen sollte, so rollten ihm die Tränen über die Backen herab. Indem er so voll Trauer dahinging, kam das Füllen herangesprungen, dem er einmal die Freiheit geschenkt hatte, und aus dem ein hübscher Brauner geworden war. »Jetzt kommt die Stunde,« sprach er zu ihm, »wo ich dir deine Guttat vergelten kann. Ich weiß schon, was dir fehlt, aber es soll dir bald geholfen werden, sitz nur auf, mein Rücken kann deiner zwei tragen.« Dem Schneider kam das Herz wieder, er sprang in einem Satz auf, und das Pferd rennte in vollem Lauf zur Stadt hinein und geradezu auf den Schloßhof. Da jagte es dreimal rund herum, schnell wie der Blitz, und beim drittenmal stürzte es nieder. In dem Augenblick aber krachte es furchtbar: ein Stück Erde sprang in der Mitte des Hofs wie eine Kugel in die Luft und über das Schloß hinaus, und gleich dahinterher erhob sich ein Strahl von Wasser so hoch wie Mann und Pferd, und das Wasser war so rein wie Kristall, und die Sonnenstrahlen fingen an darauf zu tanzen. Als der König das sah, stand er vor Verwunderung auf, ging und umarmte das Schneiderlein im Angesicht aller Menschen.

Aber das Glück dauerte nicht lange. Der König hatte Töchter genug, eine immer schöner als die andere, aber keinen Sohn. Da begab sich der boshafte Schuster zum viertenmal zu dem Könige und sprach »Herr König, der Schneider läßt nicht ab von seinem Übermut. Jetzt hat er sich vermessen, wenn er wolle, so könne er dem Herrn König einen Sohn durch die Lüfte herbeitragen lassen.« Der König ließ den Schneider rufen und sprach »wenn du mir binnen neun Tagen einen Sohn bringen läßt, so sollst du meine älteste Tochter zur Frau haben.« »Der Lohn ist freilich groß,« dachte das Schneiderlein, »da täte man wohl ein übriges, aber die Kirschen hängen mir zu hoch: wenn ich danach steige, so bricht unter mir der Ast, und ich falle herab.« Er ging nach Haus, setzte sich mit unterschlagenen Beinen auf seinen Arbeitstisch und bedachte sich, was zu tun wäre. »Es geht nicht,« rief er endlich aus, »ich will fort, hier kann ich doch nicht in Ruhe leben.« Er schnürte sein Bündel und eilte zum Tore hinaus. Als er auf die Wiesen kam, erblickte er seinen alten Freund, den Storch, der da wie ein Weltweiser auf- und abging, zuweilen still stand, einen Frosch in nähere Betrachtung nahm und ihn endlich verschluckte. Der Storch kam heran und begrüßte ihn. »Ich sehe,« hub er an, »du hast deinen Ranzen auf dem Rücken, warum willst du die Stadt verlassen?« Der Schneider erzählte ihm, was der König von ihm verlangt hatte und er nicht erfüllen konnte, und jammerte über sein Mißgeschick. »Laß dir darüber keine grauen Haare wachsen,« sagte der Storch, »ich will dir aus der Not helfen. Schon lange bringe ich die Wickelkinder in die Stadt, da kann ich auch einmal einen kleinen Prinzen aus dem Brunnen holen. Geh heim und verhalte dich ruhig. Heut über neun Tage begib dich in das königliche Schloß, da will ich kommen.« Das Schneiderlein ging nach Haus und war zu rechter Zeit in dem Schloß. Nicht lange, so kam der Storch herangeflogen und klopfte ans Fenster. Der Schneider öffnete ihm, und Vetter Langbein stieg vorsichtig herein und ging mit gravitätischen Schritten über den glatten Marmorboden; er hatte aber ein Kind im Schnabel, das schön wie ein Engel, und seine Händchen nach der Königin ausstreckte. Er legte es ihr auf den Schoß, und sie herzte und küßte es, und war vor Freude außer sich. Der Storch nahm, bevor er wieder wegflog, seine Reisetasche von der Schulter herab und überreichte sie der Königin. Es steckten Tüten darin mit bunten Zuckererbsen, sie wurden unter die kleinen Prinzessinnen verteilt. Die älteste aber erhielt nichts, sondern bekam den lustigen Schneider zum Mann. »Es ist mir geradeso,« sprach der Schneider, »als wenn ich das große Los gewonnen hätte. Meine Mutter hatte doch recht, die sagte immer, wer auf Gott vertraut und nur Glück hat, dem kanns nicht fehlen.«

Der Schuster mußte die Schuhe machen, in welchen das Schneiderlein auf dem Hochzeitfest tanzte, hernach ward ihm befohlen, die Stadt auf immer zu verlassen. Der Weg nach dem Wald führte ihn zu dem Galgen. Von Zorn, Wut und der Hitze des Tages ermüdet, warf er sich nieder. Als er die Augen zumachte und schlafen wollte, stürzten die beiden Krähen von den Köpfen der Gehenkten mit lautem Geschrei herab und hackten ihm die Augen aus. Unsinnig rannte er in den Wald und muß darin verschmachtet sein, denn es hat ihn niemand wieder gesehen oder etwas von ihm gehört.

108. Hans mein Igel.

Es war einmal ein Bauer, der hatte Geld und Gut genug, aber wie reich er war, so fehlte doch etwas an seinem Glück: er hatte mit seiner Frau keine Kinder. Öfters, wenn er mit den andern Bauern in die Stadt ging, spotteten sie und fragten, warum er keine Kinder hätte. Da ward er endlich zornig, und als er nach Haus kam, sprach er »ich will ein Kind haben, und sollts ein Igel sein.« Da kriegte seine Frau ein Kind, das war oben ein Igel und unten ein Junge, und als sie das Kind sah, erschrak sie und sprach »siehst du, du hast uns verwünscht.« Da sprach der Mann »was kann das alles helfen, getauft muß der Junge werden, aber wir können keinen Gevatter dazu nehmen.« Die Frau sprach »wir können ihn auch nicht anders taufen als Hans mein Igel.« Als er getauft war, sagte der Pfarrer »der kann wegen seiner Stacheln in kein ordentlich Bett kommen.« Da ward hinter dem Ofen ein wenig Stroh zurecht gemacht und Hans mein Igel darauf gelegt. Er konnte auch an der Mutter nicht trinken, denn er hätte sie mit seinen Stacheln gestochen. So lag er da hinter dem Ofen acht Jahre, und sein Vater war ihn müde und dachte, wenn er nur stürbe; aber er starb nicht, sondern blieb da liegen. Nun trug es sich zu, daß in der Stadt ein Markt war, und der Bauer wollte hingehen, da fragte er seine Frau, was er ihr sollte mitbringen. »Ein wenig Fleisch und ein paar Wecke, was zum Haushalt gehört,« sprach sie. Darauf fragte er die Magd, die wollte ein paar Toffeln und Zwickelstrümpfe. Endlich sagte er auch »Hans mein Igel, was willst du denn haben?« »Väterchen,« sprach er, »bring mir doch einen Dudelsack mit.« Wie nun der Bauer wieder nach Haus kam, gab er der Frau, was er ihr gekauft hatte, Fleisch und Wecke, dann gab er der Magd die Toffeln und die Zwickelstrümpfe, endlich ging er hinter den Ofen und gab dem Hans mein Igel den Dudelsack. Und wie Hans mein Igel den Dudelsack hatte, sprach er »Väterchen, geht doch vor die Schmiede und laßt mir meinen Göckelhahn beschlagen, dann will ich fortreiten und will nimmermehr wiederkommen.« Da war der Vater froh, daß er ihn los werden sollte, und ließ ihm den Hahn beschlagen, und als er fertig war, setzte sich Hans mein Igel darauf, ritt fort, nahm auch Schweine und Esel mit, die wollt er draußen im Walde hüten. Im Wald aber mußte der Hahn mit ihm auf einen hohen Baum fliegen, da saß er und hütete die Esel und Schweine, und saß lange Jahre, bis die Herde ganz groß war, und wußte sein Vater nichts von ihm. Wenn er aber auf dem Baum saß, blies er seinen Dudelsack und machte Musik, die war sehr schön. Einmal kam ein König vorbeigefahren, der hatte sich verirrt und hörte die Musik: da verwunderte er sich darüber und schickte seinen Bedienten hin, er sollte sich einmal umgucken, wo die Musik herkäme. Er guckte sich um, sah aber nichts als ein kleines Tier auf dem Baum oben sitzen, das war wie ein Göckelhahn, auf dem ein Igel saß, und der machte die Musik. Da sprach der König zum Bedienten, er sollte fragen, warum er da säße, und ob er nicht wüßte, wo der Weg in sein Königreich ginge. Da stieg Hans mein Igel vom Baum und sprach, er wollte den Weg zeigen, wenn der König ihm wollte verschreiben und versprechen, was ihm zuerst begegnete am königlichen Hofe, sobald er nach Haus käme. Da dachte der König »das kann ich leicht tun, Hans mein Igel verstehts doch nicht, und ich kann schreiben, was ich will.« Da nahm der König Feder und Tinte und schrieb etwas auf, und als es geschehen war, zeigte ihm Hans mein Igel den Weg, und er kam glücklich nach Haus. Seine Tochter aber, wie sie ihn von weitem sah, war so voll Freuden, daß sie ihm entgegenlief und ihn küßte. Da gedachte er an Hans mein Igel und erzählte ihr, wie es ihm gegangen wäre, und daß er einem wunderlichen Tier hätte verschreiben sollen, was ihm daheim zuerst begegnen würde, und das Tier hätte auf einem Hahn wie auf einem Pferde gesessen und schöne Musik gemacht; er hätte aber geschrieben, es sollts nicht haben, denn Hans mein Igel könnt es doch nicht lesen. Darüber war die Prinzessin froh und sagte, das wäre gut, denn sie wäre doch nimmermehr hingegangen.

Hans mein Igel aber hütete die Esel und Schweine, war immer lustig, saß auf dem Baum und blies auf seinem Dudelsack. Nun geschah es, daß ein anderer König gefahren kam mit seinen Bedienten und Laufern, und hatte sich verirrt, und wußte nicht wieder nach Haus zu kommen, weil der Wald so groß war. Da hörte er gleichfalls die schöne Musik von weitem und sprach zu seinem Laufer, was das wohl wäre, er sollte einmal zusehen. Da ging der Laufer hin unter den Baum und sah den Göckelhahn sitzen und Hans mein Igel oben drauf. Der Laufer fragte ihn, was er da oben vorhätte. »Ich hüte meine Esel und Schweine; aber was ist Euer Begehren?« Der Laufer sagte, sie hätten sich verirrt und könnten nicht wieder ins Königreich, ob er ihnen den Weg nicht zeigen wollte. Da stieg Hans mein Igel mit dem Hahn vom Baum herunter, und sagte zu dem alten König, er wolle ihm den Weg zeigen, wenn er ihm zu eigen geben wollte, was ihm zu Haus vor seinem königlichen Schlosse das erste begegnen würde. Der König sagte »ja« und unterschrieb sich dem Hans mein Igel, er sollte es haben. Als das geschehen war, ritt er auf dem Göckelhahn voraus und zeigte ihm den Weg, und gelangte der König glücklich wieder in sein Reich. Wie er auf den Hof kam, war große Freude darüber. Nun hatte er eine einzige Tochter, die war sehr schön, die lief ihm entgegen, fiel ihm um den Hals und küßte ihn und freute sich, daß ihr alter Vater wiederkam. Sie fragte ihn auch, wo er so lange in der Welt gewesen wäre, da erzählte er ihr, er hätte sich verirrt und wäre beinahe gar nicht wiedergekommen, aber als er durch einen großen Wald gefahren wäre, hätte einer, halb wie ein Igel, halb wie ein Mensch, rittlings auf einem Hahn in einem hohen Baum gesessen und schöne Musik gemacht, der hätte ihm fortgeholfen und den Weg gezeigt, er aber hätte ihm dafür versprochen, was ihm am königlichen Hofe zuerst begegnete, und das wäre sie, und das täte ihm nun so leid. Da versprach sie ihm aber, sie wollte gerne mit ihm gehen, wann er käme, ihrem alten Vater zuliebe.

Hans mein Igel aber hütete seine Schweine, und die Schweine bekamen wieder Schweine, und wurden ihrer so viel, daß der ganze Wald voll war. Da wollte Hans mein Igel nicht länger im Walde leben, und ließ seinem Vater sagen, sie sollten alle Ställe im Dorf räumen, denn er käme mit einer so großen Herde, daß jeder schlachten könnte, der nur schlachten wollte. Da war sein Vater betrübt, als er das hörte, denn er dachte, Hans mein Igel wäre schon lange gestorben. Hans mein Igel aber setzte sich auf seinen Göckelhahn, trieb die Schweine vor sich her ins Dorf und ließ schlachten; hu! da war ein Gemetzel und ein Hacken, daß mans zwei Stunden weit hören konnte. Danach sagte Hans mein Igel »Väterchen, laßt mir meinen Göckelhahn noch einmal vor der Schmiede beschlagen, dann reit ich fort und komme mein Lebtag nicht wieder.« Da ließ der Vater den Göckelhahn beschlagen und war froh, daß Hans mein Igel nicht wiederkommen wollte.

Hans mein Igel ritt fort in das erste Königreich, da hatte der König befohlen, wenn einer käme auf einem Hahn geritten, und hätte einen Dudelsack bei sich, dann sollten alle auf ihn schießen, hauen und stechen, damit er nicht ins Schloß käme. Als nun Hans mein Igel dahergeritten kam, drangen sie mit den Bajonetten auf ihn ein, aber er gab dem Hahn die Sporen, flog auf, über das Tor hin vor des Königs Fenster, ließ er sich da nieder, und rief ihm zu, er sollt ihm geben, was er versprochen hätte, sonst so wollt er ihm und seiner Tochter das Leben nehmen. Da gab der König seiner Tochter gute Worte, sie möchte zu ihm hinausgehen, damit sie ihm und sich das Leben rettete. Da zog sie sich weiß an, und ihr Vater gab ihr einen Wagen mit sechs Pferden und herrliche Bedienten, Geld und Gut. Sie setzte sich ein, und Hans mein Igel mit seinem Hahn und Dudelsack neben sie, dann nahmen sie Abschied und zogen fort, und der König dachte, er kriegte sie nicht wieder zu sehen. Es ging aber anders, als er dachte, denn als sie ein Stück Wegs von der Stadt waren, da zog ihr Hans mein Igel die schönen Kleider aus, und stach sie mit seiner Igelhaut, bis sie ganz blutig war, sagte »das ist der Lohn für eure Falschheit, geh hin, ich will dich nicht,« und jagte sie damit nach Haus, und war sie beschimpft ihr Lebtag.

Hans mein Igel aber ritt weiter auf seinem Göckelhahn und mit seinem Dudelsack nach dem zweiten Königreich, wo er dem König auch den Weg gezeigt hatte. Der aber hatte bestellt, wenn einer käme wie Hans mein Igel, sollten sie das Gewehr präsentieren, ihn frei hereinführen, Vivat rufen, und ihn ins königliche Schloß bringen. Wie ihn nun die Königstochter sah, war sie erschrocken, weil er doch gar zu wunderlich aussah, sie dachte aber, es wäre nicht anders, sie hätte es ihrem Vater versprochen. Da ward Hans mein Igel von ihr bewillkommt, und ward mit ihr vermählt, und er mußte mit an die königliche Tafel gehen, und sie setzte sich zu seiner Seite, und sie aßen und tranken. Wies nun Abend ward, daß sie wollten schlafen gehen, da fürchtete sie sich sehr vor seinen Stacheln: er aber sprach, sie sollte sich nicht fürchten, es geschähe ihr kein Leid, und sagte zu dem alten König, er sollte vier Mann bestellen, die sollten wachen vor der Kammertüre und ein großes Feuer anmachen, und wann er in die Kammer einginge und sich ins Bett legen wollte, würde er aus seiner Igelshaut heraus kriechen und sie vor dem Bett liegen lassen: dann sollten die Männer hurtig herbeispringen und sie ins Feuer werfen, auch dabeibleiben, bis sie vom Feuer verzehrt wäre. Wie die Glocke nun elfe schlug, da ging er in die Kammer, streifte die Igelshaut ab und ließ sie vor dem Bette liegen: da kamen die Männer und holten sie geschwind und warfen sie ins Feuer; und als sie das Feuer verzehrt hatte, da war er erlöst, und lag da im Bett ganz als ein Mensch gestaltet, aber er war kohlschwarz wie gebrannt. Der König schickte zu seinem Arzt, der wusch ihn mit guten Salben und balsamierte ihn, da ward er weiß, und war ein schöner junger Herr. Wie das die Königstochter sah, war sie froh, und am andern Morgen stiegen sie mit Freuden auf, aßen und tranken, und ward die Vermählung erst recht gefeiert, und Hans mein Igel bekam das Königreich von dem alten König.

Wie etliche Jahre herum waren, fuhr er mit seiner Gemahlin zu seinem Vater und sagte, er wäre sein Sohn; der Vater aber sprach, er hätte keinen, er hätte nur einen gehabt, der wäre aber wie ein Igel mit Stacheln geboren worden, und wäre in die Welt gegangen. Da gab er sich zu erkennen, und der alte Vater freute sich und ging mit ihm in sein Königreich.

Mein Märchen ist aus,
und geht vor Gustchen sein Haus.

109. Das Totenhemdchen.

Es hatte eine Mutter ein Büblein von sieben Jahren, das war so schön und lieblich, daß es niemand ansehen konnte, ohne mit ihm gut zu sein, und sie hatte es auch lieber als alles auf der Welt. Nun geschah es, daß es plötzlich krank ward, und der liebe Gott es zu sich nahm; darüber konnte sich die Mutter nicht trösten und weinte Tag und Nacht. Bald darauf aber, nachdem es begraben war, zeigte sich das Kind nachts an den Plätzen, wo es sonst im Leben gesessen und gespielt hatte; weinte die Mutter, so weinte es auch, und wenn der Morgen kam, war es verschwunden. Als aber die Mutter gar nicht aufhören wollte zu weinen, kam es in einer Nacht mit seinem weißen Totenhemdchen, in welchem es in den Sarg gelegt war, und mit dem Kränzchen auf dem Kopf, setzte sich zu ihren Füßen auf das Bett und sprach »ach Mutter, höre doch auf zu weinen, sonst kann ich in meinem Sarge nicht einschlafen, denn mein Totenhemdchen wird nicht trocken von deinen Tränen, die alle darauf fallen.« Da erschrak die Mutter, als sie das hörte, und weinte nicht mehr. Und in der andern Nacht kam das Kindchen wieder, hielt in der Hand ein Lichtchen und sagte »siehst du, nun ist mein Hemdchen bald trocken, und ich habe Ruhe in meinem Grab.« Da befahl die Mutter dem lieben Gott ihr Leid und ertrug es still und geduldig, und das Kind kam nicht wieder, sondern schlief in seinem unterirdischen Bettchen.

110. Der Jude im Dorn.

Es war einmal ein reicher Mann, der hatte einen Knecht, der diente ihm fleißig und redlich, war alle Morgen der erste aus dem Bett und abends der letzte hinein, und wenns eine saure Arbeit gab, wo keiner anpacken wollte, so stellte er sich immer zuerst daran. Dabei klagte er nicht, sondern war mit allem zufrieden und war immer lustig. Als sein Jahr herum war, gab ihm der Herr keinen Lohn und dachte »das ist das Gescheitste, so spare ich etwas und er geht mir nicht weg, sondern bleibt hübsch im Dienst.« Der Knecht schwieg auch still, tat das zweite Jahr wie das erste seine Arbeit, und als er am Ende desselben abermals keinen Lohn bekam, ließ er sichs gefallen und blieb noch länger. Als auch das dritte Jahr herum war, bedachte sich der Herr, griff in die Tasche, holte aber nichts heraus. Da fing der Knecht endlich an und sprach »Herr, ich habe Euch drei Jahre redlich gedient, seid so gut und gebt mir, was mir von Rechts wegen zukommt: ich wollte fort und mich gerne weiter in der Welt umsehen.« Da antwortete der Geizhals »ja, mein lieber Knecht, du hast mir unverdrossen gedient, dafür sollst du mildiglich belohnet werden,« griff abermals in die Tasche und zählte dem Knecht drei Heller einzeln auf, »da hast du für jedes Jahr einen Heller, das ist ein großer und reichlicher Lohn, wie du ihn bei wenigen Herren empfangen hättest.« Der gute Knecht, der vom Geld wenig verstand, strich sein Kapital ein und dachte »nun hast du vollauf in der Tasche, was willst du sorgen und dich mit schwerer Arbeit länger plagen.« Da zog er fort, bergauf, bergab, sang und sprang nach Herzenslust. Nun trug es sich zu, als er an ein Buschwerk vorüberkam, daß ein kleines Männchen hervortrat und ihn anrief »wo hinaus, Bruder Lustig? ich sehe, du trägst nicht schwer an deinen Sorgen.« »Was soll ich traurig sein,« antwortete der Knecht, »ich habe vollauf, der Lohn von drei Jahren klingelt in meiner Tasche.« »Wieviel ist denn deines Schatzes?« fragte ihn das Männchen. »Wieviel? drei bare Heller, richtig gezählt.« »Höre,« sagte der Zwerg, »ich bin ein armer bedürftiger Mann, schenke mir deine drei Heller: ich kann nichts mehr arbeiten, du aber bist jung und kannst dir dein Brot leicht verdienen.« Und weil der Knecht ein gutes Herz hatte und Mitleid mit dem Männchen fühlte, so reichte er ihm seine drei Heller und sprach »in Gottes Namen, es wird mir doch nicht fehlen.« Da sprach das Männchen »weil ich dein gutes Herz sehe, so gewähre ich dir drei Wünsche, für jeden Heller einen, die sollen dir in Erfüllung gehen.« »Aha,« sprach der Knecht, »du bist einer, der blau pfeifen kann. Wohlan, wenns doch sein soll, so wünsche ich mir erstlich ein Vogelrohr, das alles trifft, wonach ich ziele; zweitens eine Fiedel, wenn ich darauf streiche, so muß alles tanzen, was den Klang hört; und drittens, wenn ich an jemand eine Bitte tue, so darf er sie nicht abschlagen.« »Das sollst du alles haben,« sprach das Männchen, griff in den Busch, und, denk einer, da lag schon Fiedel und Vogelrohr in Bereitschaft, als wenn sie bestellt wären. Er gab sie dem Knecht und sprach »was du dir immer erbitten wirst, kein Mensch auf der Welt soll dirs abschlagen.«

»Herz, was begehrst du nun?« sprach der Knecht zu sich selber und zog lustig weiter. Bald darauf begegnete er einem Juden mit einem langen Ziegenbart, der stand und horchte auf den Gesang eines Vogels, der hoch oben in der Spitze eines Baumes saß. »Gottes Wunder!« rief er aus, »so ein kleines Tier hat so eine grausam mächtige Stimme! wenns doch mein wäre! wer ihm doch Salz auf den Schwanz streuen könnte!« »Wenns weiter nichts ist,« sprach der Knecht, »der Vogel soll bald herunter sein,« legte an und traf aufs Haar, und der Vogel fiel herab in die Dornhecken. »Geh, Spitzbub,« sagte er zum Juden, »und hol dir den Vogel heraus.« »Mein,« sprach der Jude, »laß der Herr den Bub weg, so kommt ein Hund gelaufen; ich will mir den Vogel auflesen, weil Ihr ihn doch einmal getroffen habt,« legte sich auf die Erde und fing an, sich in den Busch hineinzuarbeiten. Wie er nun mitten in dem Dorn steckte, plagte der Mutwille den guten Knecht, daß er seine Fiedel abnahm und anfing zu geigen. Gleich fing auch der Jude an die Beine zu heben und in die Höhe zu springen: und je mehr der Knecht strich, desto besser ging der Tanz. Aber die Dörner zerrissen ihm den schäbigen Rock, kämmten ihm den Ziegenbart und stachen und zwickten ihn am ganzen Leib. »Mein,« rief der Jude, »was soll mir das Geigen! laß der Herr das Geigen, ich begehre nicht zu tanzen.« Aber der Knecht hörte nicht darauf und dachte »du hast die Leute genug geschunden, nun soll dirs die Dornhecke nicht besser machen,« und fing von neuem an zu geigen, daß der Jude immer höher aufspringen mußte, und die Fetzen von seinem Rock an den Stacheln hängen blieben. »Au weih geschrien!« rief der Jude, »geb ich doch dem Herrn, was er verlangt, wenn er nur das Geigen läßt, einen ganzen Beutel mit Gold.« »Wenn du so spendabel bist,« sprach der Knecht, »so will ich wohl mit meiner Musik aufhören, aber das muß ich dir nachrühmen, du machst deinen Tanz noch mit, daß es eine Art hat;« nahm darauf den Beutel und ging seiner Wege.

Der Jude blieb stehen und sah ihm nach und war still, bis der Knecht weit weg und ihm ganz aus den Augen war, dann schrie er aus Leibeskräften »du miserabler Musikant, du Bierfiedler: wart, wenn ich dich allein erwische! ich will dich jagen, daß du die Schuhsohlen verlieren sollst; du Lump, steck einen Groschen ins Maul, daß du sechs Heller wert bist,« und schimpfte weiter, was er nur losbringen konnte. Und als er sich damit etwas zugute getan und Luft gemacht hatte, lief er in die Stadt zum Richter. »Herr Richter, au weih geschrien! seht, wie mich auf offener Landstraße ein gottloser Mensch beraubt und übel zugerichtet hat: ein Stein auf dem Erdboden möcht sich erbarmen: die Kleider zerfetzt! der Leib zerstochen und zerkratzt! mein bißchen Armut samt dem Beutel genommen! lauter Dukaten, ein Stück schöner als das andere: um Gotteswillen, laßt den Menschen ins Gefängnis werfen.« Sprach der Richter »wars ein Soldat, der dich mit seinem Säbel so zugerichtet hat?« »Gott bewahr!« sagte der Jude, »einen nackten Degen hat er nicht gehabt, aber ein Rohr hat er gehabt auf dem Buckel hängen und eine Geige am Hals; der Bösewicht ist leicht zu erkennen.« Der Richter schickte seine Leute nach ihm aus, die fanden den guten Knecht, der ganz langsam weitergezogen war, und fanden auch den Beutel mit Gold bei ihm. Als er vor

Gericht gestellt wurde, sagte er »ich habe den Juden nicht angerührt und ihm das Geld nicht genommen, er hat mirs aus freien Stücken angeboten, damit ich nur aufhörte zu geigen, weil er meine Musik nicht vertragen konnte.« »Gott bewahr!« schrie der Jude, »der greift die Lügen wie Fliegen an der Wand.« Aber der Richter glaubte es auch nicht und sprach »das ist eine schlechte Entschuldigung, das tut kein Jude,« und verurteilte den guten Knecht, weil er auf offener Straße einen Raub begangen hätte, zum Galgen. Als er aber abgeführt ward, schrie ihm noch der Jude zu »du Bärenhäuter, du Hundemusikant, jetzt kriegst du deinen wohlverdienten Lohn.« Der Knecht stieg ganz ruhig mit dem Henker die Leiter hinauf, auf der letzten Sprosse aber drehte er sich um und sprach zum Richter »gewährt mir noch eine Bitte, eh ich sterbe.« »Ja,« sprach der Richter, »wenn du nicht um dein Leben bittest.« »Nicht ums Leben,« antwortete der Knecht, »ich bitte, laßt mich zu guter Letzt noch einmal auf meiner Geige spielen.« Der Jude erhob ein Zetergeschrei »um Gotteswillen, erlaubts nicht, erlaubts nicht.« Allein der Richter sprach »warum soll ich ihm die kurze Freude nicht gönnen: es ist ihm zugestanden, und dabei soll es sein Bewenden haben.« Auch konnte er es ihm nicht abschlagen wegen der Gabe, die dem Knecht verliehen war. Der Jude aber rief »au weih! au weih! bindet mich an, bindet mich fest.« Da nahm der gute Knecht seine Geige vom Hals, legte sie zurecht, und wie er den ersten Strich tat, fing alles an zu wabern und zu wanken, der Richter, die Schreiber und die Gerichtsdiener: und der Strick fiel dem aus der Hand, der den Juden festbinden wollte: beim zweiten Strich hoben alle die Beine, und der Henker ließ den guten Knecht los und machte sich zum Tanze fertig: bei dem dritten Strich sprang alles in die Höhe und fing an zu tanzen, und der Richter und der Jude waren vorn und sprangen am besten. Bald tanzte alles mit, was auf den Markt aus Neugierde herbeigekommen war, alte und junge, dicke und magere Leute untereinander: sogar die Hunde, die mitgelaufen waren, setzten sich auf die Hinterfüße und hüpften mit. Und je länger er spielte, desto höher sprangen die Tänzer, daß sie sich einander an die Köpfe stießen und anfingen jämmerlich zu schreien. Endlich rief der Richter ganz außer Atem »ich schenke dir dein Leben, höre nur auf zu geigen.« Der gute Knecht ließ sich bewegen, setzte die Geige ab, hing sie wieder um den Hals und stieg die Leiter herab. Da trat er zu dem Juden, der auf der Erde lag und nach Atem schnappte, und sagte »Spitzbube, jetzt gesteh, wo du das Geld her hast, oder ich nehme meine Geige vom Hals und fange wieder an zu spielen.« »Ich habs gestohlen, ich habs gestohlen,« schrie er, »du aber hasts redlich verdient.« Da ließ der Richter den Juden zum Galgen führen und als einen Dieb aufhängen.

111. Der gelernte Jäger.

Es war einmal ein junger Bursch, der hatte die Schlosserhantierung gelernt und sprach zu seinem Vater, er wollte jetzt in die Welt gehen und sich versuchen. »Ja,« sagte der Vater, »das bin ich zufrieden,« und gab ihm etwas Geld auf die Reise. Also zog er herum und suchte Arbeit. Auf eine Zeit, da wollt ihm das Schlosserwerk nicht mehr folgen und stand ihm auch nicht mehr an, aber er kriegte Lust zur Jägerei. Da begegnete ihm auf der Wanderschaft ein Jäger in grünem Kleide, der fragte, wo er herkäme und wo er hin wollte. Er wär ein Schlossergesell, sagte der Bursch, aber das Handwerk gefiele ihm nicht mehr, und hätte Lust zur Jägerei, ob er ihn als Lehrling annehmen wollte. »O ja, wenn du mit mir gehen willst.« Da ging der junge Bursch mit, vermietete sich etliche Jahre bei ihm und lernte die Jägerei. Danach wollte er sich weiter versuchen, und der Jäger gab ihm nichts zum Lohn als eine Windbüchse, die hatte aber die Eigenschaft, wenn er damit einen Schuß tat, so traf er ohnfehlbar. Da ging er fort und kam in einen sehr großen Wald, von dem konnte er in einem Tag das Ende nicht finden. Wies Abend war, setzte er sich auf einen hohen Baum, damit er aus den wilden Tieren käme. Gegen Mitternacht zu, deuchte ihn, schimmerte ein kleines Lichtchen von weitem, da sah er durch die Äste darauf hin und behielt in acht, wo es war. Doch nahm er erst noch seinen Hut und warf ihn nach dem Licht zu herunter, daß er danach gehen wollte, wann er herabgestiegen wäre, als nach einem Zeichen. Nun kletterte er herunter, ging auf seinen Hut los, setzte ihn wieder auf und zog geradewegs fort. Je weiter er ging, je größer ward das Licht, und wie er nahe dabeikam, sah er, daß es ein gewaltiges Feuer war, und saßen drei Riesen dabei und hatten einen Ochsen am Spieß und ließen ihn braten. Nun sprach der eine »ich muß doch schmecken, ob das Fleisch bald zu essen ist,« riß ein Stück herab und wollt es in den Mund stecken, aber der Jäger schoß es ihm aus der Hand. »Nun ja,« sprach der Riese, »da weht mir der Wind das Stück aus der Hand,« und nahm sich ein anderes. Wie er eben anbeißen wollte, schoß es ihm der Jäger abermals weg; da gab der Riese dem, der neben ihm saß, eine Ohrfeige und rief zornig »was reißt du mir mein Stück weg?« »Ich habe es nicht weggerissen,« sprach der andere, »es wird dirs ein Scharfschütz weggeschossen haben.« Der Riese nahm sich das dritte Stück, konnte es aber nicht in der Hand behalten, der Jäger schoß es ihm heraus. Da sprachen die Riesen »das muß ein guter Schütze sein, der den Bissen vor dem Maul wegschießt, so einer wäre uns nützlich,« und riefen laut »komm herbei, du Scharfschütze, setze dich zu uns ans Feuer und iß dich satt, wir wollen dir nichts tun; aber kommst du nicht, und wir holen dich mit Gewalt, so bist du verloren.« Da trat der Bursch herzu und sagte, er wäre ein gelernter Jäger, und wonach er mit seiner Büchse ziele, das treffe er auch sicher und gewiß. Da sprachen sie, wenn er mit ihnen gehen wollte, sollte ers gut haben, und erzählten ihm, vor dem Wald sei ein großes Wasser, dahinter ständ ein Turm, und in dem Turm säß eine schöne Königstochter, die wollten sie gern rauben. »Ja,« sprach er, »die will ich bald geschafft haben.« Sagten sie weiter »es ist aber noch etwas dabei, es liegt ein kleines Hündchen dort, das fängt gleich an zu bellen, wann sich jemand nähert, und sobald das bellt, wacht auch alles am königlichen Hofe auf: und deshalb können wir nicht hineinkommen; unterstehst du dich, das Hündchen totzuschießen?« »Ja,« sprach er, »das ist mir ein kleiner Spaß.« Danach setzte er sich auf ein Schiff und fuhr über das Wasser, und wie er bald beim Land war, kam das Hündlein gelaufen und wollte bellen, aber er kriegte seine Windbüchse und schoß es tot. Wie die Riesen das sahen, freuten sie sich und meinten, sie hätten die Königstochter schon gewiß, aber der Jäger wollte erst sehen, wie die Sache beschaffen war, und sprach, sie sollten haußen bleiben, bis er sie riefe. Da ging er in das Schloß, und es war mäuschenstill darin, und schlief alles. Wie er das erste Zimmer aufmachte, hing da ein Säbel an der Wand, der war von purem Silber, und war ein goldener Stern darauf und des Königs Name; daneben aber lag auf einem Tisch ein versiegelter Brief, den brach er auf, und es stand darin, wer den Säbel hätte, könnte alles ums Leben bringen, was ihm vorkäme. Da nahm er den Säbel von der Wand, hing ihn um und ging weiter: da kam er in das Zimmer, wo die Königstochter lag und schlief: und sie war so schön, daß er still stand und sie betrachtete und den Atem anhielt. Er dachte bei sich selbst »wie darf ich eine unschuldige Jungfrau in die Gewalt der wilden Riesen bringen, die haben Böses im Sinn.« Er schaute sich weiter um, da standen unter dem Bett ein paar Pantoffeln, auf dem rechten stand ihres Vaters Name mit einem Stern und auf dem linken ihr eigener Name mit einem Stern. Sie hatte auch ein großes Halstuch um, von Seide, mit Gold ausgestickt, auf der rechten Seite ihres Vaters Name, auf der linken ihr Name, alles mit goldenen Buchstaben. Da nahm der Jäger eine Schere und schnitt den rechten Schlippen ab und tat ihn in seinen Ranzen, und dann nahm er auch den rechten Pantoffel mit des Königs Namen und steckte ihn hinein. Nun lag die Jungfrau noch immer und schlief, und sie war ganz in ihr Hemd eingenäht: da schnitt er auch ein Stückchen von dem Hemd ab und steckte es zu dem andern, doch tat er das alles, ohne sie anzurühren. Dann ging er fort und ließ sie ungestört schlafen, und als er wieder ans Tor kam, standen die Riesen noch draußen, warteten auf ihn und dachten, er würde die Königstochter bringen. Er rief ihnen aber zu, sie sollten hereinkommen, die Jungfrau wäre schon in seiner Gewalt: die Türe könnte er ihnen aber nicht aufmachen, aber da wäre ein Loch, durch welches sie kriechen müßten. Nun kam der erste näher, da wickelte der Jäger des Riesen Haar um seine Hand, zog den Kopf herein und hieb ihn mit seinem Säbel in einem Streich ab, und duns (zog) ihn dann vollends hinein. Dann rief er den zweiten und hieb ihm gleichfalls das Haupt ab, und endlich auch dem dritten, und war froh, daß er die schöne Jungfrau von ihren Feinden befreit hatte, und schnitt ihnen die Zungen aus und steckte sie in seinen Ranzen. Da dachte er »ich will heim gehen zu meinem Vater und ihm zeigen, was ich schon getan habe, dann will ich in der Welt herumziehen; das Glück, das mir Gott bescheren will, wird mich schon erreichen.«

Der König in dem Schloß aber, als er aufwachte, erblickte er die drei Riesen, die da tot lagen. Dann ging er in die Schlafkammer seiner Tochter, weckte sie auf und fragte, wer das wohl gewesen wäre, der die Riesen ums Leben gebracht hätte. Da sagte sie »lieber Vater, ich weiß es nicht, ich habe geschlafen.« Wie sie nun aufstand und ihre Pantoffeln anziehen wollte, da war der rechte weg, und wie sie ihr Halstuch betrachtete, war es durchschnitten und fehlte der rechte Schlippen, und wie sie ihr Hemd ansah, war ein Stückchen heraus. Der König ließ den ganzen Hof zusammenkommen, Soldaten und alles, was da war, und fragte, wer seine Tochter befreit und die Riesen ums Leben gebracht hätte. Nun hatte er einen Hauptmann, der war einäugig und ein häßlicher Mensch, der sagte, er hätte es getan. Da sprach der alte König, so er das vollbracht hätte, sollte er seine Tochter auch heiraten. Die Jungfrau aber sagte »lieber Vater, dafür, daß ich den heiraten soll, will ich lieber in die Welt gehen, so weit als mich meine Beine tragen.« Da sprach der König, wenn sie den nicht heiraten wollte, sollte sie die königlichen Kleider ausziehen und Bauernkleider antun und fortgehen; und sie sollte zu einem Töpfer gehen und einen Handel mit irdenem Geschirr anfangen. Da tat sie ihre königlichen Kleider aus und ging zu einem Töpfer, und borgte sich einen Kram irden Werk; sie versprach ihm auch, wenn sies am Abend verkauft hätte, wollte sie es bezahlen. Nun sagte der König, sie sollte sich an eine Ecke damit setzen und es verkaufen. Dann bestellte er etliche Bauerwagen, die sollten mitten durchfahren, daß alles in tausend Stücke ginge. Wie nun die Königstochter ihren Kram auf die Straße hingestellt hatte, kamen die Wagen und zerbrachen ihn zu lauter Scherben. Sie fing an zu weinen und sprach »ach Gott, wie will ich nun dem Töpfer bezahlen.« Der König aber hatte sie damit zwingen wollen, den Hauptmann zu heiraten, statt dessen ging sie wieder zum Töpfer und fragte ihn, ob er ihr noch einmal borgen wollte. Er antwortete nein, sie sollte erst das vorige bezahlen. Da ging sie zu ihrem Vater, schrie und jammerte und sagte, sie wollte in die Welt hineingehen. Da sprach er »ich will dir draußen in dem Wald ein Häuschen bauen lassen, darin sollst du dein Lebtag sitzen und für jedermann kochen, du darfst aber kein Geld nehmen.« Als das Häuschen fertig war, ward vor die Türe ein Schild gehängt, darauf stand geschrieben »heute umsonst, morgen für Geld.« Da saß sie lange Zeit, und sprach es sich in der Welt herum, da säße eine Jungfrau, die kochte umsonst, und das stände vor der Türe an einem Schild. Das hörte auch der Jäger und dachte »das wär etwas für dich, du bist doch arm und hast kein Geld.« Er nahm also seine Windbüchse und seinen Ranzen, worin noch alles steckte, was er damals im Schloß als Wahrzeichen mitgenommen hatte, ging in den Wald und fand auch das Häuschen mit dem Schild »heute umsonst, morgen für Geld.« Er hatte aber den Degen umhängen, womit er den drei Riesen den Kopf abgehauen hatte, trat so in das Häuschen hinein und ließ sich etwas zu essen geben. Er freute sich über das schöne Mädchen, es war aber auch bildschön. Sie fragte, wo er herkäme und hin wollte, da sagte er »ich reise in der Welt herum.« Da fragte sie ihn, wo er den Degen her hätte, da stände ja ihres Vaters Name darauf. Fragte er, ob sie des Königs Tochter wäre. »Ja,«

antwortete sie. »Mit diesem Säbel,« sprach er, »habe ich drei Riesen den Kopf abgehauen,« und holte zum Zeichen ihre Zungen aus dem Ranzen, dann zeigte er ihr auch den Pantoffel, den Schlippen vom Halstuch und das Stück vom Hemd. Da war sie voll Freude und sagte, er wäre derjenige, der sie erlöst hätte. Darauf gingen sie zusammen zum alten König und holten ihn herbei, und sie führte ihn in ihre Kammer und sagte ihm, der Jäger wäre der rechte, der sie von den Riesen erlöst hätte. Und wie der alte König die Wahrzeichen alle sah, da konnte er nicht mehr zweifeln und sagte, es wäre ihm lieb, daß er wüßte, wie alles zugegangen wäre, und er sollte sie nun auch zur Gemahlin haben; darüber freute sich die Jungfrau von Herzen. Darauf kleideten sie ihn, als wenn er ein fremder Herr wäre, und der König ließ ein Gastmahl anstellen. Als sie nun zu Tisch gingen, kam der Hauptmann auf die linke Seite der Königstochter zu sitzen, der Jäger aber auf die rechte: und der Hauptmann meinte, das wäre ein fremder Herr und wäre zum Besuch gekommen. Wie sie gegessen und getrunken hatten, sprach der alte König zum Hauptmann, er wollte ihm etwas aufgeben, das sollte er erraten: wenn einer spräche, er hätte drei Riesen ums Leben gebracht, und er gefragt würde, wo die Zungen der Riesen wären, und er müßte zusehen, und wären keine in ihren Köpfen, wie das zuginge? Da sagte der Hauptmann »sie werden keine gehabt haben.« »Nicht so,« sagte der König, »jedes Getier hat eine Zunge,« und fragte weiter, was der wert wäre, daß ihm widerführe. Antwortete der Hauptmann »der gehört in Stücken zerrissen zu werden.« Da sagte der König, er hätte sich selber sein Urteil gesprochen, und ward der Hauptmann gefänglich gesetzt und dann in vier Stücke zerrissen, die Königstochter aber mit dem Jäger vermählt. Danach holte er seinen Vater und seine Mutter herbei, und die lebten in Freude bei ihrem Sohn, und nach des alten Königs Tod bekam er das Reich.

112. Der Dreschflegel vom Himmel.

Es zog einmal ein Bauer mit einem Paar Ochsen zum Pflügen aus. Als er auf den Acker kam, da fingen den beiden Tieren die Hörner an zu wachsen, wuchsen fort, und als er nach Haus wollte, waren sie so groß, daß er nicht mit zum Tor hinein konnte. Zu gutem Glück kam gerade ein Metzger daher, dem überließ er sie, und schlossen sie den Handel dergestalt, daß er sollte dem Metzger ein Maß Rübsamen bringen, der wollt ihm dann für jedes Korn einen Brabanter Taler aufzählen. Das heiß ich gut verkauft! Der Bauer ging nun heim, und trug das Maß Rübsamen auf dem Rücken herbei; unterwegs verlor er aber aus dem Sack ein Körnchen. Der Metzger bezahlte ihn, wie gehandelt war, richtig aus; hätte der Bauer das Korn nicht verloren, so hätte er einen Brabanter Taler mehr gehabt. Indessen, wie er wieder des Wegs zurückkam, war aus dem Korn ein Baum gewachsen, der reichte bis an den Himmel. Da dachte der Bauer »weil die Gelegenheit da ist, mußt du doch sehen, was die Engel da droben machen, und ihnen einmal unter die Augen gucken.« Also stieg er hinauf und sah, daß die Engel oben Hafer droschen, und schaute das mit an: wie er so schaute, merkte er, daß der Baum, worauf er stand, anfing zu wackeln, guckte hinunter und sah, daß ihn eben einer umhauen wollte. »Wenn du da herabstürztest, das wär ein böses Ding,« dachte er, und in der Not wußt er sich nicht besser zu helfen, als daß er die Spreu vom Hafer nahm, die haufenweis da lag, und daraus einen Strick drehte; auch griff er nach einer Hacke und einem Dreschflegel, die da herum im Himmel lagen, und ließ sich an dem Seil herunter. Er kam aber unten auf der Erde gerade in ein tiefes tiefes Loch, und da war es ein rechtes Glück, daß er die Hacke hatte, denn er hackte sich damit eine Treppe, stieg in die Höhe und brachte den Dreschflegel zum Wahrzeichen mit, so daß niemand an seiner Erzählung mehr zweifeln konnte.

113. De beiden Künigeskinner.

Et was mol en Künig west, de hadde en kleinen Jungen kregen, in den sin Teiken (Zeichen) hadde stahn, he sull von einen Hirsch ümmebracht weren, wenn he sestein Johr alt wäre. Ase he nu so wit anewassen was, do giengen de Jägers mol mit ünne up de Jagd. In den Holte, do kümmt de Künigssohn bie de anneren denne (von den andern weg), up einmol süht he do ein grooten Hirsch, den wull he scheiten, he kunn en awerst nig dreppen; up't lest is de Hirsch so lange für ünne herut laupen, bis gans ut den Holte, do steiht do up einmol so ein grot lank Mann stad des Hirsches, de segd »nu dat is gut, dat ik dik hewe; ik hewe schon sess paar gleserne Schlitschau hinner die kaput jaget un hewe dik nig kriegen könnt.« Do nümmet he ün mit sik un schlippet em dur ein grot Water bis für en grot Künigschlott, da mut he mit an'n Disk un eten wat. Ase set tosammen wat geeten hed, segd de Künig »ik hewe drei Döchter, bie der ölesten mußt du en Nacht waken, von des Obends niegen Uhr bis Morgen sesse, un ik kumme jedesmol, wenn de Klocke schlätt, sülwens un rope, un wenn du mie dann kine Antwort givst, so werst du morgen ümmebracht, wenn du awerst mie immer Antwort givst, so salst du se tor Frugge hewen.« Ase do die jungen Lude up de Schlopkammer kämen, do stund der en steineren Christoffel, do segd de Künigsdochter to emme »um niegen Uhr kummet min Teite (Vater), alle Stunne, bis et dreie schlätt, wenn he froget, so giwet gi em Antwort statt des Künigssuhns.« Do nickede de steinerne Christoffel mit den Koppe gans schwinne un dann jümmer lanksamer, bis he to leste wier stille stand. Den anneren Morgen, da segd de Künig to emme »du hest dine Sacken gut macket, awerst mine Dochter kann ik nig hergiewen, du möstest dann en Nacht bie de tweiden Dochter wacken, dann will ik mie mal drup bedenken, ob du mine ölleste Dochter tor Frugge hewen kannst; awerst ik kumme olle Stunne sülwenst, un wenn ik die rope, so antworte mie, un wenn ik die rope un du antwortest nig, so soll fleiten din Blaud für mie.« Un do gengen de beiden up de Schlopkammer, do stand do noch en gröteren steineren Christoffel, dato seg de Künigsdochter »wenn min Teite frögt, so antworte du.« Do nickede de grote steinerne Christoffel wier mit den Koppe gans schwinne un dann jümmer lanksamer, bis he to leste wier stille stand. Und de Künigssuhn legte sik up den Dörsüll (Türschwelle), legte de Hand unner den Kopp und schläp inne. Den anneren Morgen seh de Künig to ünne »du hast dine Sacken twaren gut macket, awerst mine Dochter kann ik nig hergiewen, du möstest süs bie der jungesten Künigsdochter en Nacht wacken, dann will ik mie bedenken, ob du mine tweide Dochter tor Frugge hewen kannst; awerst ik komme olle Stunne sülwenst, un wenn ik die rope, so antworte mie, un wenn ik die rope un du antwortest nig, so soll fleiten din Blaud für mie.« Do giengen se wier tohope (zusammen) up ehre Schlopkammer, do was do noch en viel grötern un viel längern Christoffel ase bie de twei ersten. Dato segte de Künigsdochter »wenn min Teite röpet, so antworte du,« do nickede de grote lange steinerne Christoffel wohl ene halwe Stunne mit den Koppe, bis de Kopp tolest wier stille stand. Und de Künigssuhn legte sik up de Dörsüll un schläp inne. Den annern Morgen, do segd de Künig »du hast twaren gut wacket, awerst ik kann die nau mine Dochter nig giewen, ik hewe so en groten Wall, wenn du mie den von hüte morgen sesse bis obends sesse afhoggest, so will ik mie drup bedenken.« Do dehe (tat, d.i. gab) he ünne en gleserne Exe, en glesernen Kiel un en gleserne Holthacke midde.

Wie he in dat Holt kummen is, do hoggete he einmal to, do was de Exe entwei: do nam he den Kiel un schlett einmal mit de Holthacke daruppe, do ist et so kurt un so klein ase Grutt (Sand). Do was he so bedröwet un glövte, nu möste he sterwen, un he geit sitten un grient (weint). Asset nu Middag is, do segd de Künig »eine von juck Mäken mott ünne wat to etten bringen.« »Nee,« segged de beiden öllesten, »wie willt ün nicks bringen, wo he dat leste bie wacket het, de kann ün auck wat bringen.« Do mutt de jungeste weg un bringen ünne wat to etten. Ase in den Walle kummet, do frägt se ün, wie et ünne ginge. »O,« sehe he, »et ginge ün gans schlechte.« Do sehe se, he sull herkommen un etten eest en bitken; »ene,« sehe he, »dat künne he nig, he möste jo doch sterwen, etten wull he nig mehr.« Do gav se ünne so viel gute Woore, he möchte et doch versöken: do kümmt he un ett wat. Ase he wat getten hett, do sehe se »ik will die eest en bitken lusen, dann werst du annerst to Sinnen.« Do se ün luset, do werd he so möhe un schlöppet in, und do nümmet se ehren Doock un binnet en Knupp do in, un schlätt ün dreimol up de Eere un segd »Arweggers, herut!« Do würen gliek so viele Eerdmännekens herfur kummen un hadden froget, wat de Künigsdochter befelde. Do seh se »in Tied von drei Stunnen mutt de grote Wall afhoggen un olle dat Holt in Höpen settet sien.« Do giengen de Eerdmännekens herum un boen ehre ganse Verwanschap up, da se ehnen an de Arweit helpen sullen. Do fiengen se gliek an, un ase de drei Stunne ümme würen, do is olles to Enne (zu Ende) west: un do keimen se wier to der Künigsdochter un sehent ehr. Do nümmet se wier ehren witten Doock un segd »Arweggers, nah Hus!« Do siet se olle wier wege west. Do de Künigssuhn upwacket, so werd he so frau, do segd se »wenn et nu sesse schloen het, so kumme nah Hus.« Dat het he auck bevolget, un do frägt de Künig »hest du den Wall aawe (ab)?« »Jo,« segd de Künigssuhn. Ase se do an een Diske sittet, do seh de Künig »ik kann di nau mine Dochter nie tor Frugge giewen, he möste eest nau wat umme se dohen.« Don frägt he, wat dat denn sien sulle. »Ik hewe so en grot Dieck,« seh de Künig, »do most du den annern Morgen hünne un most en utschloen, dat he so blank is ase en Spegel, un et müttet von ollerhand Fiske dorinne sien.« Den anneren Morgen, do gav ünne de Künig ene gleserne Schute (Schüppe) un segd »umme sess Uhr mot de Dieck ferrig sien.« Do geit he weg, ase he bie den Dieck kummet, do stecket he mit de Schute in de Muhe (Moor, Sumpf), do brack se af: do stecket he mit de Hacken in de Muhe, un et was wier kaput. Do werd he gans bedröwet. Den Middag brachte de jungeste Dochter ünne wat to etten, do frägt se, wo et ünne gienge. Do seh de Künigssuhn, et gienge ünne gans schlechte, he sull sienen Kopp wohl mißen mutten: »dat Geschirr is mie wir klein gohen.«

»O,« seh se, »he sull kummen un etten eest wat, dann werst du anneren Sinnes.« »Nee,« segte he, »etten kunn he nig, he wer gar to bedröwet.« Do givt se ünne viel gude Woore, bis he kummet un ett watt. Do luset se ünn wier, un he schloppet in: se nümmet von niggen en Doock, schlett en Knupp do inne und kloppet mit den Knuppe dreimol up de Eere un segt »Arweggers, herut!« Do kummt gliek so viele Eerdmännekens un froget olle, wat ehr Begeren wür. In Tied von drei Stunne mosten se den Dieck gans utschloen hewen, un he möste so blank sien, dann man sik inne speigelen künne, un von ollerhand Fiske mosten dorinne sien. Do giengen de Eerdmännekens hünn un boen ehre Verwanschap up, dat se ünnen helpen sullen; un et is auck in twei Stunnen ferrig west. Do kummet se wier un seged »wie hät dohen, so us befolen is.« Do nümmet de Künigsdochter den Dook un schlett wier dreimol up de Eere un segd »Arweggers, to Hus!« Do siet se olle wier weg. Ase do de Künigssuhn upwacket, do is de Dieck ferrig. Do geit de Künigsdochter auck weg un segd, wenn et sesse wäre, dann sull he nah Hus kummen. Ase he do nah Hus kummet, do frägt de Künig »hes du den Dieck ferrig?« »Jo,« seh de Künigssuhn. Dat wür schöne. Do se do wier to Diske sittet, do seh de Künig »du hast den Dieck twaren ferrig, awerst ik kann die mine Dochter noch nie giewen, du most eest nau eins dohen.« »Wat is dat denn?« frögte de Künigssohn. He hedde so en grot Berg, do würen lauter Dorenbuske anne, de mosten alle afhoggen weren, un bowen up moste he en grot Schlott buggen, da moste so wacker sien ase't nu en Menske denken kunne, un olle Ingedömse, de in den Schlott gehorden, de möşten der olle inne sien. Do he nu den anneren Morgen up steit, do gav ünne de Künig en glesernen Exen un en glesernen Boren mie: et mott awerst um sess Uhr ferrig sien. Do he an den eersten Dorenbuske mit de Exen anhogget, do gieng se so kurt un so klein, dat de Stücker rund um ünne herfloen, un de Boren kunn he auck nig brucken. Do war he gans bedröwet un toffte (wartete) up sine Leiweste, op de nie keime un ünn ut de Naut hülpe. Ase't do Middag is, do kummet se un bringet wat to etten: do geit he ehr in de Möte (entgegen) un vertellt ehr olles un ett wat, un lett sik von ehr lusen un schloppet in. Do nümmet se wier den Knupp un schlett domit up de Eere un segd »Arweggers, herut!« Do kummet wier so viel Eerdmännekens un froget, wat ehr Begeren wür. Do seh se »in Tied von drei Stunnen müttet ju den gansen Busk afhoggen, un bowen uppe den Berge, do mot en Schlott stohen, dat mot so wacker sien, ase't nur ener denken kann, un olle Ingedömse muttet do inne sien.« Do gienge se hünne un boen ehre Verwanschap up, dat se helpen sullen, un ase de Tied umme was, do was alles ferrig. Do kümmet se to der Künigsdochter un segget dat, un de Künigsdochter nümmet den Doock und schlett dreimol domit up de Eere un segd »Arweggers, to Hus!« Do siet se gliek olle wier weg west. Do nu de Künigssuhn upwacket, un olles soh, do was he so frau ase en Vugel in der Luft. Do et do sesse schloen hadde, do giengen se tohaupe nah Hus. Do segd de Künig »is dat Schlott auck ferrig?« »Jo,« seh de Künigssuhn. Ase do to Diske sittet, do segd de Künig »mine jungeste Dochter kann ik nie giewen, befur de twei öllesten frigget het.« Do wor de Künigssuhn un de

Künigsdochter gans bedröwet, un de Künigssuhn wuste sik gar nig to bergen (helfen). Do kummet he mol bie Nachte to der Künigsdochter un löppet dermit furt. Ase do en bitken wegsiet, do kicket sik de Dochter mol umme un süht ehren Vader hinner sik. »O,« seh se, »wo sull wie dat macken? min Vader is hinner us un will us ummeholen: ik will die grade to'n Dörenbusk macken un mie tor Rose, un ik will mie ümmer midden in den Busk waaren (schützen).« Ase do de Vader an de Stelle kummet, do steit do en Dörenbusk un ene Rose do anne: do will he de Rose afbrecken, do kummet de Dören un stecket ün in de Finger, dat he wier nah Hus gehen mut. Do frägt sine Frugge, worumme he se nig hädde middebrocht. Do seh he, he wür der balt bie west, awerst he hedde se uppen mol ut den Gesichte verloren, un do hädde do en Dörenbusk un ene Rose stohen. Do seh de Künigin »heddest du ment (nur) de Rose afbrocken, de Busk hedde sullen wohl kummen.« Do geit he wier weg un will de Rose herholen. Unnerdes waren awerst de beiden schon wiet öwer Feld, un de Künig löppet der hinner her. Do kicket sik de Dochter wier umme un süht ehren Vader kummen: do seh se »o, wo sull wie et nu macken? ik will die grade tor Kerke macken un mie tom Pastoer: do will ik up de Kanzel stohn un predigen.« Ase do de Künig an de Stelle kummet, do steiht do ene Kerke, un up de Kanzel is en Pastoer un priediget: do hort he de Priedig to un geit wier nah Hus. Do frägt de Küniginne, worumme he se nig midde brocht hedde, da segd he »nee, ik hewe se so lange nachlaupen, un as ik glovte, ik wer der bold bie, do steit do en Kerke un up de Kanzel en Pastoer, de priedigte.« »Du häddest sullen ment den Pastoer bringen,« seh de Fru, »de Kerke hädde sullen wohl kummen: dat ik die auck (wenn ich dich auch) schicke, dat kann nig mer helpen, ik mut sülwenst hünne gohen.« Ase se do ene Wiele wege is un de beiden von fern süht, do kicket sik de Künigsdochter umme un süht ehre Moder kummen un segd »nu sie wie unglücksk, nu kummet miene Moder sülwenst: ik will die grade tom Dieck machen un mie tom Fisk.« Do de Moder up de Stelle kummet, do is do en grot Dieck, un in de Midde sprank en Fisk herumme un kickete mit den Kopp ut den Water un was gans lustig. Do wull se geren den Fisk krigen, awerst se kunn ünn gar nig fangen. Do werd se gans böse un drinket den gansen Dieck ut, dat se den Fisk kriegen will, awerst do werd se so üwel, dat se sick spiggen mott un spigget den gansen Dieck wier ut. Do seh se »ik sehe do wohl, dat et olle nig mer helpen kann:« sei mogten nu wier to ehr kummen. Do gohet se dann auck wier hünne, un de Küniginne givt der Dochter drei Wallnütte und segd »do kannst du die mit helpen, wenn du in dine högste Naud bist.« Un do giengen de jungen Lüde wier tohaupe weg. De se do wohl tein Stunne gohen hadden, do kummet se an dat Schlott, wovon de Künigssuhn was, un dobie was en Dorp. Ase se do anne keimen, do segd de Künigssuhn »blief hie, mine Leiweste, ik will eest up dat Schlott gohen, un dann will ik mit den Wagen un Bedeinten kummen un will die afholen.« Ase he do up dat Schlott kummet, do werd se olle so frau, dat se den Künigssuhn nu wier hett: do vertellt he, he hedde ene Brut, un de wür jetzt in den Dorpe, se wullen mit den Wagen hintrecken un se holen. Do spannt se auck gliek an, un viele

Bedeinten setten sich up den Wagen. Ase do de Künigssuhn instiegen wull, do gav ün sine Moder en Kus, do hadde he alles vergeten, wat schehen was, un auck wat he dohen will. Do befal de Moder, se sullen wier utspannen, un do giengen se olle wier in't Hus. Dat Mäken awerst sitt im Dorpe un luert un luert un meint, he sull se afholen, et kummet awerst keiner. Do vermaiet (vermietet) sik de Künigsdochter in de Muhle, de hoerde bie dat Schlott, do moste se olle Nohmiddage bie den Watter sitten un Stunze schüren (Gefäße reinigen). Do kummet de Küniginne mol von den Schlotte gegohen, un gohet an den Water spatzeiern, un seihet dat wackere Mäken do sitten, do segd se »wat is dat für en wacker Mäken! wat geföllt mie dat gut!« Do kicket se et olle an, awerst keen Menske hadde et kand. Do geit wohl ene lange Tied vorbie, dat dat Mäken eerlick un getrugge bie den Müller deint. Unnerdes hadde de Küniginne ene Frugge für ehren Suhn socht, de is gans feren ut der Weld west. Ase do de Brut ankümmet, do söllt se gliek tohaupe giewen weren. Et laupet so viele Lüde tosamen, de dat olle seihen willt, do segd dat Mäken to den Müller, he mögte ehr doch auck Verlöv giewen. Do seh de Müller »goh menten hünne.« Ase't do weg will, do macket et ene van den drei Wallnütten up, do legt do so en wacker Kleid inne, dat trecket et an un gienk domie in de Kerke gigen den Altor stohen. Up enmol kummt de Brut un de Brüme (Bräutigam), un settet sik für den Altor, un ase de Pastoer se do insegnen wull, do kicket sik de Brut van der Halwe (seitwärts), un süht et do stohen, do steit se wier up, un segd, se wull sik nie giewen loten, bis se auck so en wacker Kleid hädde ase de Dame. Do giengen se wier nah Hus un läten de Dame froen, ob se dat Kleid wohl verkofte. Nee, verkaupen dau seit nig, awerst verdeinen, dat mögte wohl sien. Do fragten se ehr, wat se denn dohen sullen. Do segd se, wenn se van Nachte fur dat Dohr van den Künigssuhn schlapen döffte, dann wull se et wohl dohen. Do seget se jo, dat sul se menten dohen. Do muttet de Bedeinten den Künigssuhn en Schlopdrunk ingiewen, un do legt se sik up den Süll un günselt (winselt) de heile Nacht, se hädde den Wall für ün afhoggen loten, se hädde de Dieck für ün utschloen, se hädde dat Schlott für ün bugget, se hädde ünne ton Dörenbusk macket, dann wier tor Kerke un tolest tom Dieck, un he hädde se so geschwinne vergeten. De Künigssuhn hadde nicks davon hört, de Bedeinten awerst würen upwacket un hadden tolustert un hadden nie wust, wat et sull bedüen. Den anneren Morgen, ase se upstohen würen, do trock de Brut dat Kleid an, un fort mit den Brümen nah der Kerke. Unnerdes macket dat wackere Mäken de tweide Wallnutt up, un do is nau en schöner Kleid inne, dat tüt et wier an un geit domie in de Kerke gigen den Altor stohen, do geit et dann ewen wie dat vürge Mol. Un dat Mäken liegt wier en Nacht für den Süll, de nah des Künigssuhns Stobe geit, un de Bedeinten süllt ün wier en Schlopdrunk ingiewen; de Bedeinten kummet awerst un giewet ünne wat to wacken, domie legt he sik to Bedde: un de Müllersmaged fur den Dörsüll günselt wier so viel un segd, wat se dohen hädde. Dat hört olle de Künigssuhn un werd gans bedröwet, un et föllt ünne olle wier bie, wat vergangen was. Do will he nah ehr gohen, awerst sine Moder hadde de Dör toschlotten. Den annern Morgen awerst gieng he gliek to siner Leiwesten un vertellte ehr olles, wie et mit ünne togangen wür, un se mögte ünne doch nig beuse sin, dat he se so lange vergetten hädde. Do macket de Künigsdochter de dridde Wallnut up, do is nau en viel wackerer Kleid inne: dat trecket sie an un fört mit ehrem Brümen nah de Kerke, un do keimen so viele Kinner, de geiwen ünne Blomen un hellen ünne bunte Bänner fur de Föte, un se leiten sik insegnen un hellen ene lustige Hochtied; awerst de falske Moder und Brut mosten weg. Un we dat lest vertellt het, den is de Mund noch wärm.

114. Vom klugen Schneiderlein.

Es war einmal eine Prinzessin gewaltig stolz; kam ein Freier, so gab sie ihm etwas zu raten auf, und wenn ers nicht erraten konnte, so ward er mit Spott fortgeschickt. Sie ließ auch bekanntmachen, wer ihr Rätsel löste, sollte sich mit ihr vermählen, und möchte kommen, wer da wollte. Endlich fanden sich auch drei Schneider zusammen, davon meinten die zwei ältesten, sie hätten so manchen feinen Stich getan und hättens getroffen, da könnts ihnen nicht fehlen, sie müßtens auch hier treffen; der dritte war ein kleiner unnützer Springinsfeld, der nicht einmal sein Handwerk verstand, aber meinte, er müßte dabei Glück haben, denn woher sollts ihm sonst kommen. Da sprachen die zwei andern zu ihm »bleib nur zu Haus, du wirst mit deinem bißchen Verstande nicht weit kommen.« Das Schneiderlein ließ sich aber nicht irre machen und sagte, es hätte einmal seinen Kopf darauf gesetzt und wollte sich schon helfen, und ging dahin, als wäre die ganze Welt sein.

Da meldeten sich alle drei bei der Prinzessin und sagten, sie sollte ihnen ihre Rätsel vorlegen: es wären die rechten Leute angekommen, die hätten einen feinen Verstand, daß man ihn wohl in eine Nadel fädeln könnte. Da sprach die Prinzessin »ich habe zweierlei Haar auf dem Kopf, von was für Farben ist das?« »Wenns weiter nichts ist,« sagte der erste, »es wird schwarz und weiß sein, wie Tuch, das man Kümmel und Salz nennt.« Die Prinzessin sprach »falsch geraten, antworte der zweite.« Da sagte der zweite »ists nicht schwarz und weiß, so ists braun und rot, wie meines Herrn Vaters Bratenrock.« »Falsch geraten,« sagte die Prinzessin, »antworte der dritte, dem seh ichs an, der weiß es sicherlich.« Da trat das Schneiderlein keck hervor und sprach »die Prinzessin hat ein silbernes und ein goldenes Haar auf dem Kopf, und das sind die zweierlei Farben.« Wie die Prinzessin das hörte, ward sie blaß, und wäre vor Schrecken beinah hingefallen, denn das Schneiderlein hatte es getroffen, und sie hatte fest geglaubt, das würde kein Mensch auf der Welt herausbringen. Als ihr das Herz wiederkam, sprach sie »damit hast du mich noch nicht gewonnen, du mußt noch eins tun, unten im Stall liegt ein Bär, bei dem sollst du die Nacht zubringen; wenn ich dann morgen aufstehe, und du bist noch lebendig, so sollst du mich heiraten.« Sie dachte aber, damit wollte sie das Schneiderlein loswerden, denn der Bär hatte noch keinen Menschen lebendig gelassen, der ihm unter die Tatzen gekommen war. Das Schneiderlein ließ sich nicht abschrecken, war ganz vergnügt und sprach »frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen.«

Als nun der Abend kam, ward mein Schneiderlein hinunter zum Bären gebracht. Der Bär wollt auch gleich auf den kleinen Kerl los und ihm mit seiner Tatze einen guten Willkommen geben. »Sachte, sachte,« sprach das Schneiderlein, »ich will dich schon zur Ruhe bringen.« Da holte es ganz gemächlich, als hätt es keine Sorgen, welsche Nüsse aus der Tasche, biß sie auf und aß die Kerne. Wie der Bär das sah, kriegte er Lust und wollte auch Nüsse haben. Das Schneiderlein griff in die Tasche und reichte ihm eine Handvoll; es waren aber keine Nüsse, sondern Wackersteine. Der Bär steckte sie ins Maul, konnte aber nichts aufbringen, er mochte beißen, wie er wollte. »Ei,« dachte er, »was bist du für ein dummer Klotz! kannst nicht einmal die Nüsse aufbeißen,« und sprach zum Schneiderlein »mein, beiß mir die Nüsse auf.« »Da siehst du, was du für ein Kerl bist,« sprach das Schneiderlein, »hast so ein großes Maul und kannst die kleine Nuß nicht aufbeißen.« Da nahm es die Steine, war hurtig, steckte dafür eine Nuß in den Mund und knack, war sie entzwei. »Ich muß das Ding noch einmal probieren,« sprach der Bär, »wenn ichs so ansehe, ich mein, ich müßts auch können.« Da gab ihm das Schneiderlein abermals Wackersteine, und der Bär arbeitete und biß aus allen Leibeskräften hinein. Aber du glaubst auch nicht, daß er sie aufgebracht hat. Wie das vorbei war, holte das Schneiderlein eine Violine unter dem Rock hervor und spielte sich ein Stückchen darauf. Als der Bär die Musik vernahm, konnte er es nicht lassen und fing an zu tanzen, und als er ein Weilchen getanzt hatte, gefiel ihm das Ding so wohl, daß er zum Schneiderlein sprach »hör, ist das Geigen schwer?« »Kinderleicht, siehst du, mit der Linken leg ich die Finger auf und mit der Rechten streich ich mit dem Bogen drauf los, da gehts lustig, hopsasa, vivallalera!« »So geigen,« sprach der Bär, »das möcht ich auch verstehen, damit ich tanzen könnte, sooft ich Lust hätte. Was meinst du dazu? Willst du mir Unterricht darin geben?« »Von Herzen gern,« sagte das Schneiderlein, »wenn du Geschick dazu hast. Aber weis einmal deine Tatzen her, die sind gewaltig lang, ich muß dir die Nägel ein wenig abschneiden.« Da ward ein Schraubstock herbeigeholt, und der Bär legte seine Tatzen darauf, das Schneiderlein aber schraubte sie fest und sprach »nun warte, bis ich mit der Schere komme,« ließ den Bären brummen, soviel er wollte, legte sich in die Ecke auf ein Bund Stroh und schlief ein.

Die Prinzessin, als sie am Abend den Bären so gewaltig brummen hörte, glaubte nicht anders, als er brummte vor Freuden und hätte dem Schneider den Garaus gemacht. Am Morgen stand sie ganz unbesorgt und vergnügt auf, wie sie aber nach dem Stall guckt, so steht das Schneiderlein ganz munter davor und ist gesund wie ein Fisch im Wasser. Da konnte sie nun kein Wort mehr dagegen sagen, weil sies öffentlich versprochen hatte, und der König ließ einen Wagen kommen, darin mußte sie mit dem Schneiderlein zur Kirche fahren, und sollte sie da vermählt werden. Wie sie eingestiegen waren, gingen die beiden andern Schneider, die ein falsches Herz hatten und ihm sein Glück nicht gönnten, in den Stall und schraubten den Bären los. Der Bär in voller Wut rannte hinter dem Wagen her. Die Prinzessin hörte ihn schnauben und brummen: es ward ihr angst und sie rief »ach, der Bär ist hinter uns und will dich holen.« Das Schneiderlein war fix, stellte sich auf den Kopf, steckte die Beine zum Fenster hinaus und rief »siehst du den Schraubstock? wann du nicht gehst, so sollst du wieder hinein.« Wie der Bär das sah, drehte er um und lief fort. Mein Schneiderlein fuhr da ruhig in die Kirche, und die Prinzessin ward ihm an die Hand getraut, und lebte er mit ihr vergnügt wie eine Heidlerche. Wers nicht glaubt, bezahlt einen Taler.

115. Die klare Sonne bringts an den Tag.

Ein Schneidergesell reiste in der Welt auf sein Handwerk herum, und konnte er einmal keine Arbeit finden, und war die Armut bei ihm so groß, daß er keinen Heller Zehrgeld hatte. In der Zeit begegnete ihm auf dem Weg ein Jude, und da dachte er, der hätte viel Geld bei sich, und stieß Gott aus seinem Herzen, ging auf ihn los und sprach »gib mir dein Geld, oder ich schlag dich tot.« Da sagte der Jude »schenkt mir doch das Leben, Geld hab ich keins und nicht mehr als acht Heller.« Der Schneider aber sprach »du hast doch Geld, und das soll auch heraus,« brauchte Gewalt und schlug ihn so lange, bis er nah am Tod war. Und wie der Jude nun sterben wollte, sprach er das letzte Wort »die klare Sonne wird es an den Tag bringen!« und starb damit. Der Schneidergesell griff ihm in die Tasche und suchte nach Geld, er fand aber nicht mehr als die acht Heller, wie der Jude gesagt hatte. Da packte er ihn auf, trug ihn hinter einen Busch und zog weiter auf sein Handwerk. Wie er nun lange Zeit gereist war, kam er in eine Stadt bei einem Meister in Arbeit, der hatte eine schöne Tochter, in die verliebte er sich und heiratete sie und lebte in einer guten vergnügten Ehe.

Über lang, als sie schon zwei Kinder hatten, starben Schwiegervater und Schwiegermutter, und die jungen Leute hatten den Haushalt allein. Eines Morgens, wie der Mann auf dem Tisch vor dem Fenster saß, brachte ihm die Frau den Kaffee, und als er ihn in die Unterschale ausgegossen hatte und eben trinken wollte, da schien die Sonne darauf, und der Widerschein blinkte oben an der Wand so hin und her und machte Kringel daran. Da sah der Schneider hinauf und sprach »ja, die wills gern an den Tag bringen und kanns nicht!« Die Frau sprach »ei, lieber Mann, was ist denn das? was meinst du damit?« Er antwortete »das darf ich dir nicht sagen.« Sie aber sprach »wenn du mich lieb hast, mußt du mirs sagen,« und gab ihm die allerbesten Worte, es sollts kein Mensch wieder erfahren, und ließ ihm keine Ruhe. Da erzählte er, vor langen Jahren, wie er auf der Wanderschaft ganz abgerissen und ohne Geld gewesen, habe er einen Juden erschlagen, und der Jude habe in der letzten Todesangst die Worte gesprochen »die klare Sonne wirds an den Tag bringen!« Nun hätts die Sonne eben gern an den Tag bringen wollen, und hätt an der Wand geblinkt und Kringel gemacht, sie hätts aber nicht gekonnt. Danach bat er sie noch besonders, sie dürfte es niemand sagen, sonst käm er um sein Leben, das versprach sie auch. Als er sich aber zur Arbeit gesetzt hatte, ging sie zu ihrer Gevatterin und vertraute ihr die Geschichte, sie dürfte sie aber keinem Menschen wiedersagen; ehe aber drei Tage vergingen, wußte es die ganze Stadt, und der Schneider kam vor das Gericht und ward gerichtet. Da brachte es doch die klare Sonne an den Tag.

116. Das blaue Licht.

Es war einmal ein Soldat, der hatte dem König lange Jahre treu gedient: als aber der Krieg zu Ende war und der Soldat, der vielen Wunden wegen, die er empfangen hatte, nicht weiter dienen konnte, sprach der König zu ihm »du kannst heim gehen, ich brauche dich nicht mehr: Geld bekommst du weiter nicht, denn Lohn erhält nur der, welcher mir Dienste dafür leistet.« Da wußte der Soldat nicht, womit er sein Leben fristen sollte: ging voll Sorgen fort und ging den ganzen Tag, bis er abends in einen Wald kam. Als die Finsternis einbrach, sah er ein Licht, dem näherte er sich und kam zu einem Haus, darin wohnte eine Hexe. »Gib mir doch ein Nachtlager und ein wenig Essen und Trinken,« sprach er zu ihr, »ich verschmachte sonst.« »Oho!« antwortete sie, »wer gibt einem verlaufenen Soldaten etwas? doch will ich barmherzig sein und dich aufnehmen, wenn du tust, was ich verlange.« »Was verlangst du?« fragte der Soldat. »Daß du mir morgen meinen Garten umgräbst.« Der Soldat willigte ein und arbeitete den folgenden Tag aus allen Kräften, konnte aber vor Abend nicht fertig werden. »Ich sehe wohl,« sprach die Hexe, »daß du heute nicht weiter kannst: ich will dich noch eine Nacht behalten, dafür sollst du mir morgen ein Fuder Holz spalten und klein machen.« Der Soldat brauchte dazu den ganzen Tag, und abends machte ihm die Hexe den Vorschlag, noch eine Nacht zu bleiben. »Du sollst mir morgen nur eine geringe Arbeit tun, hinter meinem Hause ist ein alter wasserleerer Brunnen, in den ist mir mein Licht gefallen, es brennt blau und verlischt nicht, das sollst du mir wieder heraufholen.« Den andern Tag führte ihn die Alte zu dem Brunnen und ließ ihn in einem Korb hinab. Er fand das blaue Licht und machte ein Zeichen, daß sie ihn wieder hinaufziehen sollte. Sie zog ihn auch in die Höhe, als er aber dem Rand nahe war, reichte sie die Hand hinab und wollte ihm das blaue Licht abnehmen. »Nein,« sagte er und merkte ihre bösen Gedanken, »das Licht gebe ich dir nicht eher, als bis ich mit beiden Füßen auf dem Erdboden stehe.« Da geriet die Hexe in Wut, ließ ihn wieder hinab in den Brunnen fallen und ging fort.

Der arme Soldat fiel, ohne Schaden zu nehmen, auf den feuchten Boden, und das blaue Licht brannte fort, aber was konnte ihm das helfen? er sah wohl, daß er dem Tod nicht entgehen würde. Er saß eine Weile ganz traurig, da griff er zufällig in seine Tasche und fand seine Tabakspfeife, die noch halb gestopft war. »Das soll mein letztes Vergnügen sein,« dachte er, zog sie heraus, zündete sie an dem blauen Licht an und fing an zu rauchen. Als der Dampf in der Höhle umhergezogen war, stand auf einmal ein kleines schwarzes Männchen vor ihm und fragte »Herr, was befiehlst du?« »Was habe ich dir zu befehlen?« erwiderte der Soldat ganz verwundert. »Ich muß alles tun,« sagte das Männchen, »was du verlangst.« »Gut,« sprach der Soldat, »so hilf mir zuerst aus dem Brunnen.« Das Männchen nahm ihn bei der Hand und führte ihn durch einen unterirdischen Gang, vergaß aber nicht, das blaue Licht mitzunehmen. Es zeigte ihm unterwegs die Schätze, welche die Hexe zusammengebracht und da versteckt hatte, und der Soldat nahm so viel Gold, als er tragen konnte. Als er oben war, sprach er zu dem Männchen »nun geh hin, bind die alte Hexe und führe sie vor das Gericht.« Nicht lange, so kam sie auf einem wilder Kater mit furchtbarem Geschrei schnell wie der Wind vorbeigeritten, und es dauerte abermals nicht lang, so war das Männchen zurück, »es ist alles ausgerichtet,« sprach es, »und die Hexe hängt schon am Galgen – Herr, was befiehlst du weiter?« fragte der Kleine. »In dem Augenblick nichts,« antwortete der Soldat, »du kannst nach Haus gehen: sei nur gleich bei der Hand, wenn ich dich rufe.« »Es ist nichts nötig,« sprach das Männchen, »als daß du deine Pfeife an dem blauen Licht anzündest, dann stehe ich gleich vor dir.« Darauf verschwand es vor seinen Augen.

Der Soldat kehrte in die Stadt zurück, aus der er gekommen war. Er ging in den besten Gasthof und ließ sich schöne Kleider machen, dann befahl er dem Wirt, ihm ein Zimmer so prächtig als möglich einzurichten. Als es fertig war und der Soldat es bezogen hatte, rief er das schwarze Männchen und sprach »ich habe dem König treu gedient, er aber hat mich fortgeschickt und mich hungern lassen, dafür will ich jetzt Rache nehmen.« »Was soll ich tun?« fragte der Kleine. »Spät abends, wenn die Königstochter im Bett liegt, so bring sie schlafend hierher, sie soll Mägdedienste bei mir tun.« Das Männchen sprach »für mich ist das ein leichtes, für dich aber ein gefährliches Ding, wenn das herauskommt, wird es dir schlimm ergehen.« Als es zwölf geschlagen hatte, sprang die Türe auf, und das Männchen trug die Königstochter herein. »Aha, bist du da?« rief der Soldat, »frisch an die Arbeit! geh, hol den Besen und kehr die Stube.« Als sie fertig war, hieß er sie zu seinem Sessel kommen, streckte ihr die Füße entgegen und sprach »zieh mir die Stiefel aus,« warf sie ihr dann ins Gesicht, und sie mußte sie aufheben, reinigen und glänzend machen. Sie tat aber alles, was er ihr befahl, ohne Widerstreben, stumm und mit halbgeschlossenen Augen. Bei dem ersten Hahnschrei trug sie das Männchen wieder in das königliche Schloß und in ihr Bett zurück.

Am andern Morgen, als die Königstochter aufgestanden war, ging sie zu ihrem Vater und erzählte ihm, sie hätte einen wunderlichen Traum gehabt, »ich ward durch die Straßen mit Blitzesschnelle fortgetragen und in das Zimmer eines Soldaten gebracht, dem mußte ich als Magd dienen und aufwarten und alle gemeine Arbeit tun, die Stube kehren und die Stiefel putzen. Es war nur ein Traum, und doch bin ich so müde, als wenn ich wirklich alles getan hätte.« »Der Traum könnte wahr gewesen sein,« sprach der König, »ich will dir einen Rat geben, stecke deine Tasche voll Erbsen und mache ein klein Loch in die Tasche, wirst du wieder abgeholt, so fallen sie heraus und lassen die Spur auf der Straße.« Als der König so sprach, stand das Männchen unsichtbar dabei und hörte alles mit an. Nachts, als es die schlafende Königstochter wieder durch die Straßen trug, fielen zwar einzelne Erbsen aus der Tasche, aber sie konnten keine Spur machen, denn das listige Männchen hatte vorher in allen Straßen Erbsen verstreut. Die Königstochter aber mußte wieder bis zum Hahnenschrei Mägdedienste tun.

Der König schickte am folgenden Morgen seine Leute aus, welche die Spur suchen sollten, aber es war vergeblich, denn in allen Straßen saßen die armen Kinder und lasen Erbsen auf und sagten »es hat heut nacht Erbsen geregnet.« »Wir müssen etwas anderes aussinnen,« sprach der König, »behalt deine Schuh an, wenn du dich zu Bett legst, und ehe du von dort zurückkehrst, verstecke einen davon; ich will ihn schon finden.« Das schwarze Männchen vernahm den Anschlag, und als der Soldat abends verlangte, er sollte die Königstochter wieder herbeitragen, riet es ihm ab und sagte, gegen diese List wüßte es kein Mittel, und wenn der Schuh bei ihm gefunden würde, so könnte es ihm schlimm ergehen. »Tue, was ich dir sage,« erwiderte der Soldat, und die Königstochter mußte auch in der dritten Nacht wie eine Magd arbeiten; sie versteckte aber, ehe sie zurückgetragen wurde, einen Schuh unter das Bett.

Am andern Morgen ließ der König in der ganzen Stadt den Schuh seiner Tochter suchen: er ward bei dem Soldaten gefunden und der Soldat selbst, der sich auf Bitten des Kleinen zum Tor hinausgemacht hatte, ward bald eingeholt und ins Gefängnis geworfen. Er hatte sein Bestes bei der Flucht vergessen, das blaue Licht und das Gold, und hatte nur noch einen Dukaten in der Tasche. Als er nun mit Ketten belastet an dem Fenster seines Gefängnisses stand, sah er einen seiner Kameraden vorbeigehen. Er klopfte an die Scheibe, und als er herbeikam, sagte er »sei so gut und hol mir das kleine Bündelchen, das ich in dem Gasthaus habe liegen lassen, ich gebe dir dafür einen Dukaten.« Der Kamerad lief hin, und brachte ihm das Verlangte. Sobald der Soldat wieder allein war, steckte er seine Pfeife an und ließ das schwarze Männchen kommen. »Sei ohne Furcht,« sprach es zu seinem Herrn, »geh hin, wo sie dich hinführen, und laß alles geschehen, nimm nur das blaue Licht mit.« Am andern Tag ward Gericht über den Soldaten gehalten, und obgleich er nichts Böses getan hatte, verurteilte ihn der Richter doch zum Tode. Als er nun hinausgeführt wurde, bat er den König um eine letzte Gnade. »Was für eine?« fragte der König. »Daß ich auf dem Weg noch eine Pfeife rauchen darf.« »Du kannst drei rauchen,« antwortete der König, »aber glaube nicht, daß ich dir das Leben schenke.« Da zog der Soldat seine Pfeife heraus und zündete sie an dem blauen Licht an, und wie ein paar Ringel vom Rauch aufgestiegen waren, so stand schon das Männchen da, hatte einen kleinen Knüppel in der Hand und sprach »was befiehlt mein Herr?« »Schlag mir da die falschen Richter und ihre Häscher zu Boden, und verschone auch den König nicht, der mich so schlecht behandelt hat.« Da fuhr das Männchen wie der Blitz, zickzack, hin und her, und wen es mit seinem Knüppel nur anrührte, der fiel schon zu Boden und getraute sich nicht mehr zu regen. Dem König ward angst, er legte sich auf das Bitten, und um nur das Leben zu behalten, gab er dem Soldaten das Reich und seine Tochter zur Frau.

117. Das eigensinnige Kind.

Es war einmal ein Kind eigensinnig und tat nicht, was seine Mutter haben wollte. Darum hatte der liebe Gott kein Wohlgefallen an ihm und ließ es krank werden, und kein Arzt konnte ihm helfen, und in kurzem lag es auf dem Totenbettchen. Als es nun ins Grab versenkt und die Erde über es hingedeckt war, so kam auf einmal sein Ärmchen wieder hervor und reichte in die Höhe, und wenn sie es hineinlegten und frische Erde darüber taten, so half das nicht, und das Ärmchen kam immer wieder heraus. Da mußte die Mutter selbst zum Grabe gehen und mit der Rute aufs Ärmchen schlagen, und wie sie das getan hatte, zog es sich hinein, und das Kind hatte nun erst Ruhe unter der Erde.

118. Die drei Feldscherer.

Drei Feldscherer reisten in der Welt, die meinten, ihre Kunst ausgelernt zu haben, und kamen in ein Wirtshaus, wo sie übernachten wollten. Der Wirt fragte, wo sie her wären und hinaus wollten. »Wir ziehen auf unsere Kunst in der Welt herum.« »Zeigt mir doch einmal, was ihr könnt,« sagte der Wirt. Da sprach der erste, er wollte seine Hand abschneiden und morgen früh wieder anheilen: der zweite sprach, er wollte sein Herz ausreißen und morgen früh wieder anheilen: der dritte sprach, er wollte seine Augen ausstechen und morgen früh wieder einheilen. »Könnt ihr das,« sprach der Wirt, »so habt ihr ausgelernt.« Sie hatten aber eine Salbe, was sie damit bestrichen, das heilte zusammen, und das Fläschchen, wo sie drin war, trugen sie beständig bei sich. Da schnitten sie Hand, Herz und Auge vom Leibe, wie sie gesagt hatten, legtens zusammen auf einen Teller und gabens dem Wirt: der Wirt gabs einem Mädchen, das sollts in den Schrank stellen und wohl aufheben. Das Mädchen aber hatte einen heimlichen Schatz, der war ein Soldat. Wie nun der Wirt, die drei Feldscherer und alle Leute im Haus schliefen, kam der Soldat und wollte was zu essen haben. Da schloß das Mädchen den Schrank auf und holte ihm etwas, und über der großen Liebe vergaß es, die Schranktüre zuzumachen, setzte sich zum Liebsten an Tisch, und sie schwätzten miteinander. Wie es so vergnügt saß und an kein Unglück dachte, kam die Katze hereingeschlichen, fand den Schrank offen, nahm die Hand, das Herz und die Augen der drei Feldscherer und lief damit hinaus. Als nun der Soldat gegessen hatte und das Mädchen das Gerät aufheben und den Schrank zuschließen wollte, da sah es wohl, daß der Teller, den ihm der Wirt aufzuheben gegeben hatte, ledig war. Da sagte es erschrocken zu seinem Schatz »ach, was will ich armes Mädchen anfangen! Die Hand ist fort, das Herz und die Augen sind auch fort, wie wird mirs morgen früh ergehen!« »Sei still,« sprach der Soldat, »ich will dir aus der Not helfen: es hängt ein Dieb draußen am Galgen, dem will ich die Hand abschneiden; welche Hand wars denn?« »Die rechte.« Da gab ihm das Mädchen ein scharfes Messer, und er ging hin, schnitt dem armen Sünder die rechte Hand ab und brachte sie herbei. Darauf packte er die Katze und stach ihr die Augen aus; nun fehlte nur noch das Herz. »Habt ihr nicht geschlachtet und liegt das Schweinefleisch nicht im Keller?« »Ja,« sagte das Mädchen. »Nun, das ist gut,« sagte der Soldat, ging hinunter und holte ein Schweineherz. Das Mädchen tat alles zusammen auf den Teller und stellte ihn in den Schrank, und als ihr Liebster darauf Abschied genommen hatte, legte es sich ruhig ins Bett.

Morgens, als die Feldscherer aufstanden, sagten sie dem Mädchen, es sollte ihnen den Teller holen, darauf Hand, Herz und Augen lägen. Da brachte es ihn aus dem Schrank, und der erste hielt sich die Diebshand an und bestrich sie mit seiner Salbe, alsbald war sie ihm angewachsen. Der zweite nahm die Katzenaugen und heilte sie ein: der dritte machte das Schweineherz fest. Der Wirt aber stand dabei, bewunderte ihre Kunst und sagte, dergleichen hätt er noch nicht gesehen, er wollte sie bei jedermann rühmen und empfehlen. Darauf bezahlten sie ihre Zeche und reisten weiter.

Wie sie so dahingingen, so blieb der mit dem Schweineherzen gar nicht bei ihnen, sondern wo eine Ecke war, lief er hin und schnüffelte darin herum, wie Schweine tun. Die andern wollten ihn an dem Rockschlippen zurückhalten, aber das half nichts, er riß sich los und lief hin, wo der dickste Unrat lag. Der zweite stellte sich auch wunderlich an, rieb die Augen und sagte zu dem andern »Kamerad, was ist das? das sind meine Augen nicht, ich sehe ja nichts, leite mich doch einer, daß ich nicht falle.« Da gingen sie mit Mühe fort bis zum Abend, wo sie zu einer andern Herberge kamen. Sie traten zusammen in die Wirtsstube, da saß in einer Ecke ein reicher Herr vorm Tisch und zählte Geld. Der mit der Diebshand ging um ihn herum, zuckte ein paarmal mit dem Arm, endlich, wie der Herr sich umwendete, griff er in den Haufen hinein und nahm eine Handvoll Geld heraus. Der eine sahs und sprach »Kamerad, was machst du? stehlen darfst du nicht, schäm dich!« »Ei,« sagte er, »was kann ich dafür! es zuckt mir in der Hand, ich muß zugreifen, ich mag wollen oder nicht.« Sie legten sich danach schlafen, und wie sie daliegen, ists so finster, daß man keine Hand vor Augen sehen kann. Auf einmal erwachte der mit den Katzenaugen, weckte die andern und sprach »Brüder, schaut einmal auf, seht ihr die weißen Mäuschen, die da herumlaufen?« Die zwei richteten sich auf, konnten aber nichts sehen. Da sprach er »es ist mit uns nicht richtig, wir haben das Unsrige nicht wiedergekriegt, wir müssen zurück nach dem Wirt, der hat uns betrogen.« Also machten sie sich am andern Morgen dahin auf und sagten dem Wirt, sie hätten ihr richtig Werk nicht wiedergekriegt, der eine hätte eine Diebshand, der zweite Katzenaugen und der dritte ein Schweineherz. Der Wirt sprach, daran müßte das Mädchen schuld sein, und wollte es rufen, aber wie das die drei hatte kommen sehen, war es zum Hinterpförtchen fortgelaufen, und kam nicht wieder. Da sprachen die drei, er sollte ihnen viel Geld geben, sonst ließen sie ihm den roten Hahn übers Haus fliegen: da gab er, was er hatte und nur aufbringen konnte, und die drei zogen damit fort. Es war für ihr Lebtag genug, sie hätten aber doch lieber ihr richtig Werk gehabt.

119. Die sieben Schwaben.

Einmal waren sieben Schwaben beisammen, der erste war der Herr Schulz, der zweite der Jackli, der dritte der Marli, der vierte der Jergli, der fünfte der Michal, der sechste der Hans, der siebente der Veitli; die hatten alle siebene sich vorgenommen, die Welt zu durchziehen, Abenteuer zu suchen und große Taten zu vollbringen. Damit sie aber auch mit bewaffneter Hand und sicher gingen, sahen sies für gut an, daß sie sich zwar nur einen einzigen, aber recht starken und langen Spieß machen ließen. Diesen Spieß faßten sie alle siebene zusammen an, vorn ging der kühnste und männlichste, das mußte der Herr Schulz sein, und dann folgten die andern nach der Reihe, und der Veitli war der letzte. Nun geschah es, als sie im Heumonat eines Tags einen weiten Weg gegangen waren, auch noch ein gut Stück bis in das Dorf hatten, wo sie über Nacht bleiben mußten, daß in der Dämmerung auf einer Wiese ein großer Roßkäfer oder eine Hornisse nicht weit von ihnen hinter einer Staude vorbeiflog und feindlich brummelte. Der Herr Schulz erschrak, daß er fast den Spieß hätte fallen lassen und ihm der Angstschweiß am ganzen Leibe ausbrach. »Horcht, horcht,« rief er seinen Gesellen, »Gott, ich höre eine Trommel!« Der Jackli, der hinter ihm den Spieß hielt, und dem ich weiß nicht was für ein Geruch in die Nase kam, sprach »etwas ist ohne Zweifel vorhanden, denn ich schmeck das Pulver und den Zündstrick.« Bei diesen Worten hub der Herr Schulz an, die Flucht zu ergreifen, und sprang im Hui über einen Zaun, weil er aber gerade auf die Zinken eines Rechen sprang, der vom Heumachen da liegen geblieben war, so fuhr ihm der Stiel ins Gesicht und gab ihm einen ungewaschenen Schlag. »O wei, o wei,« schrie der Herr Schulz, »nimm mich gefangen, ich ergeb mich, ich ergeb mich!« Die andern sechs hüpften auch alle einer über den andern herzu und schrien »gibst du dich, so geb ich mich auch, gibst du dich, so geb ich mich auch.« Endlich, wie kein Feind da war, der sie binden und fortführen wollte, merkten sie, daß sie betrogen waren: und damit die Geschichte nicht unter die Leute käme, und sie nicht genarrt und gespottet würden, verschwuren sie sich untereinander, so lang davon stillzuschweigen, bis einer unverhofft das Maul auftäte.

Hierauf zogen sie weiter. Die zweite Gefährlichkeit, die sie erlebten, kann aber mit der ersten nicht verglichen werden. Nach etlichen Tagen trug sie ihr Weg durch ein Brachfeld, da saß ein Hase in der Sonne und schlief, streckte die Ohren in die Höhe, und hatte die großen gläsernen Augen starr aufstehen. Da erschraken sie bei dem Anblick des grausamen und wilden Tieres insgesamt und hielten Rat, was zu tun das wenigst Gefährliche wäre. Denn so sie fliehen wollten, war zu besorgen, das Ungeheuer setzte ihnen nach und verschlänge sie alle mit Haut und Haar. Also sprachen sie »wir müssen einen großen und gefährlichen Kampf bestehen, frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen!« faßten alle siebene den Spieß an, der Herr Schulz vorn und der Veitli hinten. Der Herr Schulz wollte den Spieß noch immer anhalten, der Veitli aber war hinten ganz mutig geworden, wollte losbrechen und rief

»stoß zu in aller Schwabe Name,
sonst wünsch i, daß ihr möcht erlahme.«

Aber der Hans wußt ihn zu treffen und sprach

»beim Element, du hascht gut schwätze,
bischt stets der letscht beim Drachehetze.«

Der Michal rief

»es wird nit fehle um ein Haar,
so ischt es wohl der Teufel gar.«

Drauf kam an den Jergli die Reihe, der sprach

»ischt er es nit, so ischts sei Muter
oder des Teufels Stiefbruder.«

Der Marli hatte da einen guten Gedanken und sagte zum Veitli

»gang, Veitli, gang, gang du voran,
i will dahinte vor di stahn.«

Der Veitli hörte aber nicht drauf, und der Jackli sagte

»der Schulz, der muß der erschte sei,
denn ihm gebührt die Ehr allei.«

Da nahm sich der Herr Schulz ein Herz und sprach gravitätisch

»so zieht denn herzhaft in den Streit,
hieran erkennt man tapfre Leut.«

Da gingen sie insgesamt auf den Drachen los. Der Herr Schulz segnete sich und rief Gott um Beistand an: wie aber das alles nicht helfen wollte und er dem Feind immer näher kam, schrie er in großer Angst »hau; hurlehau! hau! hauhau!« Davon erwachte der Has, erschrak und sprang eilig davon. Als ihn der Herr Schulz so feldflüchtig sah, da rief er voll Freude

»potz, Veitli, lueg, lueg, was isch das?
das Ungehüer ischt a Has.«

Der Schwabenbund suchte aber weiter Abenteuer und kam an die Mosel, ein mosiges, stilles und tiefes Wasser, darüber nicht viel Brücken sind, sondern man an mehrern Orten sich muß in Schiffen überfahren lassen. Weil die sieben Schwaben dessen unberichtet waren, riefen sie einem Mann, der jenseits des Wassers seine Arbeit vollbrachte, zu, wie man doch hinüberkommen könnte. Der Mann verstand wegen der Weite und wegen ihrer Sprache nicht, was sie wollten, und fragte auf sein Trierisch »wat? wat!« Da meinte der Herr Schulz, er spräche nicht anders als »wate, wate durchs Wasser,« und hub an, weil er der vorderste war, sich auf den Weg zu machen und in die Mosel hineinzugehen. Nicht lang, so versank er in den Schlamm und in die antreibenden tiefen Wellen, seinen Hut aber jagte der Wind hinüber an das jenseitige Ufer, und ein Frosch setzte sich dabei und quakte »wat, wat, wat.« Die sechs andern hörten das drüben und sprachen »unser Gesell, der Herr Schulz, ruft uns, kann er hinüberwaten, warum wir nicht auch?« Sprangen darum eilig alle zusammen in das Wasser und ertranken, also daß ein Frosch ihrer sechse ums Leben brachte, und niemand von dem Schwabenbund wieder nach Haus kam.

120. Die drei Handwerksburschen.

Es waren drei Handwerksburschen, die hatten es verabredet, auf ihrer Wanderung beisammen zu bleiben und immer in einer Stadt zu arbeiten. Auf eine Zeit aber fanden sie bei ihren Meistern kein Verdienst mehr, so daß sie endlich ganz abgerissen waren und nichts zu leben hatten. Da sprach der eine »was sollen wir anfangen? hier bleiben können wir nicht länger, wir wollen wieder wandern, und wenn wir in der Stadt, wo wir hinkommen, keine Arbeit finden, so wollen wir beim Herbergsvater ausmachen, daß wir ihm schreiben, wo wir uns aufhalten, und einer vom andern Nachricht haben kann, und dann wollen wir uns trennen;« das schien den andern auch das beste. Sie zogen fort, da kam ihnen auf dem Weg ein reich gekleideter Mann entgegen, der fragte, wer sie wären. »Wir sind Handwerksleute und suchen Arbeit: wir haben uns bisher zusammengehalten, wenn wir aber keine mehr finden, so wollen wir uns trennen.« »Das hat keine Not,« sprach der Mann, »wenn ihr tun wollt, was ich euch sage, solls euch an Geld und Arbeit nicht fehlen; ja ihr sollt große Herren werden und in Kutschen fahren.« Der eine sprach »wenns unserer Seele und Seligkeit nicht schadet, so wollen wirs wohl tun.« »Nein,« antwortete der Mann, »ich habe keinen Teil an euch.« Der andere aber hatte nach seinen Füßen gesehen, und als er da einen Pferdefuß und einen Menschenfuß erblickte, wollte er sich nicht mit ihm einlassen. Der Teufel aber sprach »gebt euch zufrieden, es ist nicht auf euch abgesehen, sondern auf eines anderen Seele, der schon halb mein ist, und dessen Maß nur vollaufen soll.« Weil sie nun sicher waren, willigten sie ein, und der Teufel sagte ihnen, was er verlangte, der erste sollte auf jede Frage antworten »wir alle drei,« der zweite »ums Geld,« der dritte »und das war recht.« Das sollten sie immer hintereinander sagen, weiter aber dürften sie kein Wort sprechen, und überträten sie das Gebot, so wäre gleich alles Geld verschwunden: solange sie es aber befolgten, sollten ihre Taschen immer voll sein. Zum Anfang gab er ihnen auch gleich soviel, als sie tragen konnten, und hieß sie in die Stadt in das und das Wirtshaus gehen. Sie gingen hinein, der Wirt kam ihnen entgegen und fragte »wollt ihr etwas zu essen?« Der erste antwortete »wir alle drei.« »Ja,« sagte der Wirt, »das mein ich auch.« Der zweite »ums Geld.« »Das versteht sich,« sagte der Wirt. Der dritte »und das war recht.« »Jawohl wars recht,« sagte der Wirt. Es ward ihnen nun gut Essen und Trinken gebracht und wohl aufgewartet. Nach dem Essen mußte die Bezahlung geschehen, da hielt der Wirt dem einen die Rechnung hin, der sprach »wir alle drei,« der zweite »ums Geld,« der dritte »und das war recht.« »Freilich ists recht,« sagte der Wirt, »alle drei bezahlen, und ohne Geld kann ich nichts geben.« Sie bezahlten aber noch mehr, als er gefordert hatte. Die Gäste sahen das mit an und sprachen »die Leute müssen toll sein.« »Ja, das sind sie auch,« sagte der Wirt, »sie sind nicht recht klug.« So blieben sie eine Zeitlang in dem Wirtshaus und sprachen kein ander Wort als »wir alle drei, ums Geld, und das war recht.« Sie sahen aber und wußten alles, was darin vorging. Es trug sich zu, daß ein großer Kaufmann kam mit vielem Geld, der sprach »Herr Wirt, heb er mir mein Geld auf, da sind die drei närrischen Handwerksbursche, die möchten mirs stehlen.« Das tat der Wirt. Wie er den Mantelsack in seine Stube trug, fühlte er, daß er schwer von Gold war. Darauf gab er den drei Handwerkern unten ein Lager, der Kaufmann aber kam oben hin in eine besondere Stube. Als Mitternacht war und der Wirt dachte, sie schliefen alle, kam er mit seiner Frau, und sie hatten eine Holzaxt und schlugen den reichen Kaufmann tot; nach vollbrachtem Mord legten sie sich wieder schlafen. Wies nun Tag war, gabs großen Lärm, der Kaufmann lag tot im Bett und schwamm in seinem Blut. Da liefen alle Gäste zusammen, der Wirt aber sprach »das haben die drei tollen Handwerker getan.« Die Gäste bestätigten es und sagten »niemand anders kanns gewesen sein.« Der Wirt aber ließ sie rufen und sagte zu ihnen »habt ihr den Kaufmann getötet?« »Wir alle drei,« sagte der erste, »ums Geld,« der zweite, »und das war recht,« der dritte. »Da hört ihrs nun,« sprach der Wirt, »sie gestehens selber.« Sie wurden also ins Gefängnis gebracht, und sollten gerichtet werden. Wie sie nun sahen, daß es so ernsthaft ging, ward ihnen doch angst, aber nachts kam der Teufel und sprach »haltet nur noch einen Tag aus, und verscherzt euer Glück nicht, es soll euch kein Haar gekrümmt werden.« Am andern Morgen wurden sie vor Gericht geführt: da sprach der Richter »seid ihr die Mörder?« »Wir alle drei.« »Warum habt ihr den Kaufmann erschlagen?« »Ums Geld.« »Ihr Bösewichter,« sagte der Richter, »habt ihr euch nicht der Sünde gescheut?« »Und das war recht.« »Sie haben bekannt und sind noch halsstarrig dazu,« sprach der Richter, »führt sie gleich zum Tod.« Also wurden sie hinausgebracht, und der Wirt mußte mit in den Kreis treten. Wie sie nun von den Henkersknechten gefaßt und oben aufs Gerüst geführt wurden, wo der Scharfrichter mit bloßem Schwerte stand, kam auf einmal eine Kutsche mit vier blutroten Füchsen bespannt, und fuhr, daß das Feuer aus den Steinen sprang, aus dem Fenster aber winkte einer mit einem weißen Tuche. Da sprach der Scharfrichter »es kommt Gnade,« und ward aus dem Wagen »Gnade! Gnade!« gerufen. Da trat der Teufel heraus als ein sehr vornehmer Herr, prächtig gekleidet, und sprach »ihr drei seid unschuldig; ihr dürft nun sprechen, sagt heraus, was ihr gesehen und gehört habt.« Da sprach der älteste »wir haben den Kaufmann nicht getötet, der Mörder steht da im Kreis,« und deutete auf den Wirt, »zum Wahrzeichen geht hin in seinen Keller, da hängen noch viele andere, die er ums Leben gebracht.« Da schickte der Richter die Henkersknechte hin, die fanden es, wies gesagt war, und als sie dem Richter das berichtet hatten, ließ er den Wirt hinaufführen und ihm das Haupt abschlagen. Da sprach der Teufel zu den dreien »nun hab ich die Seele, die ich haben wollte, ihr seid aber frei und habt Geld für euer Lebtag.«

121. Der Königssohn, der sich vor nichts fürchtet.

Es war einmal ein Königssohn, dem gefiels nicht mehr daheim in seines Vaters Haus, und weil er vor nichts Furcht hatte, so dachte er »ich will in die weite Welt gehen, da wird mir Zeit und Weile nicht lang, und ich werde wunderliche Dinge genug sehen.« Also nahm er von seinen Eltern Abschied und ging fort, immerzu, von Morgen bis Abend, und es war ihm einerlei, wo hinaus ihn der Weg führte. Es trug sich zu, daß er vor eines Riesen Haus kam, und weil er müde war, setzte er sich vor die Türe und ruhte. Und als er seine Augen so hin- und hergehen ließ, sah er auf dem Hof des Riesen Spielwerk liegen: das waren ein paar mächtige Kugeln und Kegel, so groß als ein Mensch. Über ein Weilchen bekam er Lust, stellte die Kegel auf und schob mit den Kugeln danach, schrie und rief, wenn die Kegel fielen, und war guter Dinge. Der Riese hörte den Lärm, streckte seinen Kopf zum Fenster heraus und erblickte einen Menschen, der nicht größer war als andere, und doch mit seinen Kegeln spielte. »Würmchen,« rief er, »was kegelst du mit meinen Kegeln? wer hat dir die Stärke dazu gegeben?« Der Königssohn schaute auf, sah den Riesen an und sprach »o du Klotz, du meinst wohl, du hättest allein starke Arme? ich kann alles, wozu ich Lust habe.« Der Riese kam herab, sah dem Kegeln ganz verwundert zu und sprach »Menschenkind, wenn du der Art bist, so geh und hol mir einen Apfel vom Baum des Lebens.« »Was willst du damit?« sprach der Königssohn. »Ich will den Apfel nicht für mich,« antwortete der Riese, »aber ich habe eine Braut, die verlangt danach; ich bin weit in der Welt umhergegangen und kann den Baum nicht finden.« »Ich will ihn schon finden,« sagte der Königssohn, »und ich weiß nicht, was mich abhalten soll, den Apfel herunterzuholen.« Der Riese sprach »du meinst wohl, das wäre so leicht? der Garten, worin der Baum steht, ist von einem eisernen Gitter umgeben, und vor dem Gitter liegen wilde Tiere, eins neben dem andern, die halten Wache und lassen keinen Menschen hinein.« »Mich werden sie schon einlassen,« sagte der Königssohn. »Ja, gelangst du auch in den Garten und siehst den Apfel am Baum hängen, so ist er doch noch nicht dein: es hängt ein Ring davor, durch den muß einer die Hand stecken, wenn er den Apfel erreichen und abbrechen will, und das ist noch keinem geglückt.« »Mir solls schon glücken,« sprach der Königssohn.

Da nahm er Abschied von dem Riesen, ging fort über Berg und Tal, durch Felder und Wälder, bis er endlich den Wundergarten fand. Die Tiere lagen ringsumher, aber sie hatten die Köpfe gesenkt und schliefen. Sie erwachten auch nicht, als er herankam, sondern er trat über sie weg, stieg über das Gitter und kam glücklich in den Garten. Da stand mitten inne der Baum des Lebens, und die roten Äpfel leuchteten an den Ästen. Er kletterte an dem Stamm in die Höhe, und wie er nach einem Apfel reichen wollte, sah er einen Ring davor hängen, aber er steckte seine Hand ohne Mühe hindurch und brach den Apfel. Der Ring schloß sich fest an seinen Arm, und er fühlte, wie auf einmal eine gewaltige Kraft durch seine Adern drang. Als er mit dem Apfel von dem Baum wieder herabgestiegen war, wollte er nicht über das Gitter klettern, sondern faßte das große Tor und brauchte nur einmal daran zu schütteln, so sprang es mit Krachen auf. Da ging er hinaus, und der Löwe, der davor gelegen hatte, war wach geworden und sprang ihm nach, aber nicht in Wut und Wildheit, sondern er folgte ihm demütig als seinem Herrn.

Der Königssohn brachte dem Riesen den versprochenen Apfel und sprach »siehst du, ich habe ihn ohne Mühe geholt.« Der Riese war froh, daß sein Wunsch so bald erfüllt war, eilte zu seiner Braut und gab ihr den Apfel, den sie verlangt hatte. Es war eine schöne und kluge Jungfrau, und da sie den Ring nicht an seinem Arm sah, sprach sie »ich glaube nicht eher, daß du den Apfel geholt hast, als bis ich den Ring an deinem Arm erblicke.« Der Riese sagte »ich brauche nur heim zu gehen und ihn zu holen,« und meinte, es wäre ein leichtes, dem schwachen Menschen mit Gewalt wegzunehmen, was er nicht gutwillig geben wollte. Er forderte also den Ring von ihm, aber der Königssohn weigerte sich, »Wo der Apfel ist, muß auch der Ring sein,« sprach der Riese, »gibst du ihn nicht gutwillig, so mußt du mit mir darum kämpfen.«

Sie rangen lange Zeit miteinander, aber der Riese konnte dem Königssohn, den die Zauberkraft des Ringes stärkte, nichts anhaben. Da sann der Riese auf eine List und sprach »mir ist warm geworden bei dem Kampf, und dir auch, wir wollen im Flusse baden und uns abkühlen, eh wir wieder anfangen.« Der Königssohn, der von Falschheit nichts wußte, ging mit ihm zu dem Wasser, streifte mit seinen Kleidern auch den Ring vom Arm und sprang in den Fluß. Alsbald griff der Riese nach dem Ring und lief damit fort, aber der Löwe, der den Diebstahl bemerkt hatte, setzte dem Riesen nach, riß den Ring ihm aus der Hand und brachte ihn seinem Herrn zurück. Da stellte sich der Riese hinter einen Eichbaum, und als der Königssohn beschäftigt war, seine Kleider wieder anzuziehen, überfiel er ihn und stach ihm beide Augen aus.

Nun stand da der arme Königssohn, war blind und wußte sich nicht zu helfen. Da kam der Riese wieder herbei, faßte ihn bei der Hand wie jemand, der ihn leiten wollte, und führte ihn auf die Spitze eines hohen Felsens. Dann ließ er ihn stehen und dachte »noch ein paar Schritte weiter, so stürzt er sich tot, und ich kann ihm den Ring abziehen.« Aber der treue Löwe hatte seinen Herrn nicht verlassen, hielt ihn am Kleide fest und zog ihn allmählich wieder zurück. Als der Riese kam und den Toten berauben wollte, sah er, daß seine List vergeblich gewesen war. »Ist denn ein so schwaches Menschenkind nicht zu verderben!« sprach er zornig zu sich selbst, faßte den Königssohn und führte ihn auf einem andern Weg nochmals zu dem Abgrund: aber der Löwe, der die böse Absicht merkte, half seinem Herrn auch hier aus der Gefahr. Als sie nahe zum Rand gekommen waren, ließ der Riese die Hand des Blinden fahren und wollte ihn allein zurücklassen, aber der Löwe stieß den Riesen, daß er hinabstürzte und zerschmettert auf den Boden fiel.

Das treue Tier zog seinen Herrn wieder von dem Abgrund zurück und leitete ihn zu einem Baum, an dem ein klarer Bach floß. Der Königssohn setzte sich da nieder, der Löwe aber legte sich und spritzte mit seiner Tatze ihm das Wasser ins Antlitz. Kaum hatten ein paar Tröpfchen die Augenhöhlen benetzt, so konnte er wieder etwas sehen und bemerkte ein Vöglein, das flog ganz nah vorbei, stieß sich aber an einem Baumstamm: hierauf ließ es sich in das Wasser herab und badete sich darin, dann flog es auf, strich ohne anzustoßen zwischen den Bäumen hin, als hätte es sein Gesicht wiederbekommen. Da erkannte der Königssohn den Wink Gottes, neigte sich herab zu dem Wasser und wusch und badete sich darin das Gesicht. Und als er sich aufrichtete, hatte er seine Augen wieder so hell und rein, wie sie nie gewesen waren.

Der Königssohn dankte Gott für die große Gnade und zog mit seinem Löwen weiter in der Welt herum. Nun trug es sich zu, daß er vor ein Schloß kam, welches verwünscht war. In dem Tor stand eine Jungfrau von schöner Gestalt und feinem Antlitz, aber sie war ganz schwarz. Sie redete ihn an und sprach »ach könntest du mich erlösen aus dem bösen Zauber, der über mich geworfen ist.« »Was soll ich tun?« sprach der Königssohn. Die Jungfrau antwortete »drei Nächte mußt du in dem großen Saal des verwünschten Schlosses zubringen, aber es darf keine Furcht in dein Herz kommen. Wenn sie dich auf das ärgste quälen und du hältst es aus, ohne einen Laut von dir zu geben, so bin ich erlöst; das Leben dürfen sie dir nicht nehmen.« Da sprach der Königssohn »ich fürchte mich nicht, ich wills mit Gottes Hilfe versuchen.« Also ging er fröhlich in das Schloß, und als es dunkel ward, setzte er sich in den großen Saal und wartete. Es war aber still bis Mitternacht, da fing plötzlich ein großer Lärm an, und aus allen Ecken und Winkeln kamen kleine Teufel herbei. Sie taten, als ob sie ihn nicht sähen, setzten sich mitten in die Stube, machten ein Feuer an und fingen an zu spielen. Wenn einer verlor, sprach er »es ist nicht richtig, es ist einer da, der nicht zu uns gehört, der ist schuld, daß ich verliere.« »Wart, ich komme, du hinter dem Ofen,« sagte ein anderer. Das Schreien ward immer größer, so daß es niemand ohne Schrecken hätte anhören können. Der Königssohn blieb ganz ruhig sitzen und hatte keine Furcht: doch endlich sprangen die Teufel von der Erde auf und fielen über ihn her, und es waren so viele, daß er sich ihrer nicht erwehren konnte. Sie zerrten ihn auf dem Boden herum, zwickten, stachen, schlugen und quälten ihn, aber er gab keinen Laut von sich. Gegen Morgen verschwanden sie, und er war so abgemattet, daß er kaum seine Glieder regen konnte: als aber der Tag anbrach, da trat die schwarze Jungfrau zu ihm herein. Sie trug in ihrer Hand eine kleine Flasche, worin Wasser des Lebens war, damit wusch sie ihn, und alsbald fühlte er, wie alle Schmerzen verschwanden und frische Kraft in seine Adern drang. Sie sprach »eine Nacht hast du glücklich ausgehalten, aber noch zwei stehen dir bevor.« Da ging sie wieder weg, und im Weggehen bemerkte er, daß ihre Füße weiß geworden waren. In der folgenden Nacht kamen die Teufel und fingen ihr Spiel aufs neue an: sie fielen über den Königssohn her und schlugen ihn viel härter als in der vorigen Nacht, daß sein Leib voll Wunden war. Doch da er alles still ertrug, mußten sie von ihm lassen, und als die Morgenröte anbrach, erschien die Jungfrau und heilte ihn mit dem Lebenswasser. Und als sie wegging, sah er mit Freuden, daß sie schon weiß geworden war bis zu den Fingerspitzen. Nun hatte er nur noch eine Nacht auszuhalten, aber die war die schlimmste. Der Teufelsspuk kam wieder: »bist du noch da?« schrien sie, »du sollst gepeinigt werden, daß dir der Atem stehen bleibt.« Sie stachen und schlugen ihn, warfen ihn hin und her und zogen ihn an Armen und Beinen, als wollten sie ihn zerreißen: aber er duldete alles und gab keinen Laut von sich. Endlich verschwanden die Teufel, aber er lag da ohnmächtig und regte sich nicht: er konnte auch nicht die Augen aufheben, um die Jungfrau zu sehen, die hereinkam und ihn mit dem Wasser des Lebens benetzte und begoß. Aber auf einmal war er von allen Schmerzen befreit und fühlte sich frisch und gesund, als wäre er aus einem Schlaf erwacht, und wie er die Augen aufschlug, so sah er die Jungfrau neben sich stehen, die war schneeweiß und schön wie der helle Tag. »Steh auf,« sprach sie, »und schwing dein Schwert dreimal über die Treppe, so ist alles erlöst.« Und als er das getan hatte, da war das ganze Schloß vom Zauber befreit, und die Jungfrau war eine reiche Königstochter. Die Diener kamen und sagten, im großen Saale wäre die Tafel schon zubereitet und die Speisen aufgetragen. Da setzten sie sich nieder, aßen und tranken zu sammen, und abends ward in großen Freuden die Hochzeit gefeiert.

122. Der Krautesel.

Es war einmal ein junger Jäger, der ging in den Wald auf Anstand. Er hatte ein frisches und fröhliches Herz, und als er daherging und auf dem Blatt pfiff, kam ein altes häßliches Mütterchen, das redete ihn an und sprach »guten Tag, lieber Jäger, du bist wohl lustig und vergnügt, aber ich leide Hunger und Durst, gib mir doch ein Almosen.« Da dauerte den Jäger das arme Mütterchen, daß er in seine Tasche griff und ihr nach seinem Vermögen etwas reichte. Nun wollte er weitergehen, aber die alte Frau hielt ihn an und sprach »höre, lieber Jäger, was ich dir sage, für dein gutes Herz will ich dir ein Geschenk machen: geh nur immer deiner Wege, über ein Weilchen wirst du an einen Baum kommen, darauf sitzen neun Vögel, die haben einen Mantel in den Krallen und raufen sich darum. Da lege du deine Büchse an und schieß mitten drunter: den Mantel werden sie dir wohl fallen lassen, aber auch einer von den Vögeln wird getroffen sein und tot herabstürzen. Den Mantel nimm mit dir, es ist ein Wunschmantel, wenn du ihn um die Schultern wirfst, brauchst du dich nur an einen Ort zu wünschen, und im Augenblick bist du dort. Aus dem toten Vogel nimm das Herz heraus, und verschluck es ganz, dann wirst du allen und jeden Morgen früh beim Auf stehen ein Goldstück unter deinem Kopfkissen finden.«

Der Jäger dankte der weisen Frau und dachte bei sich »schöne Dinge, die sie mir versprochen hat, wenns nur auch all so einträfe.« Doch wie er etwa hundert Schritte gegangen war, hörte er über sich in den Ästen ein Geschrei und Gezwitscher, daß er aufschauete: da sah er einen Haufen Vögel, die rissen mit den Schnäbeln und Füßen ein Tuch herum, schrien, zerrten und balgten sich, als wollts ein jeder allein haben. »Nun,« sprach der Jäger, »das ist wunderlich, es kommt ja gerade so, wie das Mütterchen gesagt hat,« nahm die Büchse von der Schulter, legte an und tat seinen Schuß mitten hinein, daß die Federn herumflogen. Alsbald nahm das Getier mit großem Schreien die Flucht, aber einer fiel tot herab, und der Mantel sank ebenfalls herunter. Da tat der Jäger, wie ihm die Alte geheißen hatte, schnitt den Vogel auf, suchte das Herz, schluckte es hinunter und nahm den Mantel mit nach Haus.

Am andern Morgen, als er aufwachte, fiel ihm die Verheißung ein, und er wollte sehen, ob sie auch eingetroffen wäre. Wie er aber sein Kopfkissen in die Höhe hob, da schimmerte ihm das Goldstück entgegen, und am andern Morgen fand er wieder eins, und so weiter jedesmal, wenn er aufstand. Er sammelte sich einen Haufen Gold, endlich aber dachte er »was hilft mir all mein Gold, wenn ich daheim bleibe? ich will ausziehen und mich in der Welt umsehen.«

Da nahm er von seinen Eltern Abschied, hing seinen Jägerranzen und seine Flinte um und zog in die Welt. Es trug sich zu, daß er eines Tages durch einen dicken Wald kam, und wie der zu Ende war, lag in der Ebene vor ihm ein ansehnliches Schloß. In einem Fenster desselben stand eine Alte mit einer wunderschönen Jungfrau und schaute herab. Die Alte aber war eine Hexe und sprach zu dem Mädchen »dort kommt einer aus dem Wald, der hat einen wunderbaren Schatz im Leib, den müssen wir darum berücken, mein Herzenstöchterchen: uns steht das besser an als ihm. Er hat ein Vogelherz bei sich, deshalb liegt jeden Morgen ein Goldstück unter seinem Kopfkissen.« Sie erzählt' ihr, wie es damit beschaffen wäre, und wie sie darum zu spielen hätte, und zuletzt drohte sie und sprach mit zornigen Augen »und wenn du mir nicht gehorchst, so bist du unglücklich.« Als nun der Jäger näher kam, erblickte er das Mädchen und sprach zu sich »ich bin nun so lang herumgezogen, ich will einmal ausruhen und in das schöne Schloß einkehren, Geld hab ich ja vollauf.« Eigentlich aber war die Ursache, daß er ein Auge auf das schöne Bild geworfen hatte.

Er trat in das Haus ein und ward freundlich empfangen und höflich bewirtet. Es dauerte nicht lange, da war er so in das Hexenmädchen verliebt, daß er an nichts anders mehr dachte und nur nach ihren Augen sah, und was sie verlangte, das tat er gerne. Da sprach die Alte »nun müssen wir das Vogelherz haben, er wird nichts spüren, wenn es ihm fehlt.« Sie richteten einen Trank zu, und wie der gekocht war, tat sie ihn in einen Becher und gab ihn dem Mädchen, das mußte ihn dem Jäger reichen. Sprach es »nun, mein Liebster, trink mir zu.« Da nahm er den Becher, und wie er den Trank geschluckt hatte, brach er das Herz des Vogels aus dem Leibe. Das Mädchen mußte es heimlich fortschaffen und dann selbst verschlucken, denn die Alte wollte es haben. Von nun an fand er kein Gold mehr unter seinem Kopfkissen, sondern es lag unter dem Kissen des Mädchens, wo es die Alte jeden Morgen holte: aber er war so verliebt und vernarrt, daß er an nichts anders dachte, als sich mit dem Mädchen die Zeit zu vertreiben.

Da sprach die alte Hexe »das Vogelherz haben wir, aber den Wunschmantel müssen wir ihm auch abnehmen.« Antwortete das Mädchen »den wollen wir ihm lassen, er hat ja doch seinen Reichtum verloren.« Da ward die Alte bös und sprach »so ein Mantel ist ein wunderbares Ding, das selten auf der Welt gefunden wird, den soll und muß ich haben.« Sie gab dem Mädchen Anschläge und sagte, wenn es ihr nicht gehorchte, sollte es ihm schlimm ergehen. Da tat es nach dem Geheiß der Alten, stellte sich einmal ans Fenster und schaute in die weite Gegend, als wäre es ganz traurig. Fragte der Jäger »was stehst du so traurig?« »Ach, mein Schatz,« gab es zur Antwort, »da gegenüber liegt der Granatenberg, wo die köstlichen Edelsteine wachsen. Ich trage so groß Verlangen danach, daß, wenn ich daran denke, ich ganz traurig bin; aber wer kann sie holen! Nur die Vögel, die fliegen, kommen hin, ein Mensch nimmermehr.« »Hast du weiter nichts zu klagen,« sagte der Jäger, »den Kummer will ich dir bald vom Herzen nehmen.« Damit faßte er sie unter seinen Mantel und wünschte sich hinüber auf den Granatenberg, und im Augenblick saßen sie auch beide drauf. Da schimmerte das edele Gestein von allen Seiten, daß es eine Freude war anzusehen, und sie lasen die schönsten und kostbarsten Stücke zusammen. Nun hatte es aber die Alte durch ihre Hexenkunst bewirkt, daß dem Jäger die Augen schwer wurden. Er sprach zu dem Mädchen »wir wollen ein wenig niedersitzen und ruhen, ich bin so müde, daß ich mich nicht mehr auf den

Füßen erhalten kann.« Da setzten sie sich, und er legte sein Haupt in ihren Schoß und schlief ein. Wie er entschlafen war, da band es ihm den Mantel von den Schultern und hing ihn sich selbst um, las die Granaten und Steine auf und wünschte sich damit nach Haus.

Als aber der Jäger seinen Schlaf ausgetan hatte und aufwachte, sah er, daß seine Liebste ihn betrogen und auf dem wilden Gebirg allein gelassen hatte. »O,« sprach er, »wie ist die Untreue so groß auf der Welt!« saß da in Sorge und Herzeleid und wußte nicht, was er anfangen sollte. Der Berg aber gehörte wilden und ungeheuern Riesen, die darauf wohnten und ihr Wesen trieben, und er saß nicht lange, so sah er ihrer drei daherschreiten. Da legte er sich nieder, als wäre er in tiefen Schlaf versunken. Nun kamen die Riesen herbei, und der erste stieß ihn mit dem Fuß an und sprach »was liegt da für ein Erdwurm und beschaut sich inwendig?« Der zweite sprach »tritt ihn tot.« Der dritte aber sprach verächtlich »das wäre der Mühe wert! laßt ihn nur leben, hier kann er nicht bleiben, und wenn er höher steigt bis auf die Bergspitze, so packen ihn die Wolken und tragen ihn fort.« Unter diesem Gespräch gingen sie vorüber, der Jäger aber hatte auf ihre Worte gemerkt, und sobald sie fort waren, stand er auf und klimmte den Berggipfel hinauf. Als er ein Weilchen da gesessen hatte, so schwebte eine Wolke heran, ergriff ihn, trug ihn fort und zog eine Zeitlang am Himmel her, dann senkte sie sich und ließ sich über einen großen, rings mit Mauern umgebenen Krautgarten nieder, also daß er zwischen Kohl und Gemüsen sanft auf den Boden kam.

Da sah der Jäger sich um und sprach »wenn ich nur etwas zu essen hätte, ich bin so hungrig, und mit dem Weiterkommen wirds schwer fallen; aber hier seh ich keinen Apfel und keine Birne und keinerlei Obst, überall nichts als Krautwerk.« Endlich dachte er »zur Not kann ich von dem Salat essen, der schmeckt nicht sonderlich, wird mich aber erfrischen.« Also suchte er sich ein schönes Haupt aus und aß davon, aber kaum hatte er ein paar Bissen hinabgeschluckt, so war ihm so wunderlich zumute, und er fühlte sich ganz verändert. Es wuchsen ihm vier Beine, ein dicker Kopf und zwei lange Ohren, und er sah mit Schrecken, daß er in einen Esel verwandelt war. Doch weil er dabei immer noch großen Hunger spürte und ihm der saftige Salat nach seiner jetzigen Natur gut schmeckte, so aß er mit großer Gier immerzu. Endlich gelangte er an eine andere Art Salat, aber kaum hatte er etwas davon verschluckt, so fühlte er aufs neue eine Veränderung, und kehrte in seine menschliche Gestalt zurück.

Nun legte sich der Jäger nieder und schlief seine Müdigkeit aus. Als er am andern Morgen erwachte, brach er ein Haupt von dem bösen und eins von dem guten Salat ab und dachte »das soll mir zu dem Meinigen wieder helfen und die Treulosigkeit bestrafen.« Dann steckte er die Häupter zu sich, kletterte über die Mauer und ging fort, das Schloß seiner Liebsten zu suchen. Als er ein paar Tage herumgestrichen war, fand er es glücklicherweise wieder. Da bräunte er sich schnell sein Gesicht, daß ihn seine eigene Mutter nicht erkannt hätte, ging in das Schloß und bat um eine Herberge. »Ich bin so müde,« sprach er, »und kann nicht weiter.« Fragte die Hexe »Landsmann, wer seid Ihr, und was ist Euer Geschäft?« Er antwortete »ich bin ein Bote des Königs und war ausgeschickt, den köstlichsten Salat zu suchen, der unter der Sonne wächst. Ich bin auch so glücklich gewesen, ihn zu finden, und trage ihn bei mir, aber die Sonnenhitze brennt gar zu stark, daß mir das zarte Kraut zu welken droht und ich nicht weiß, ob ich es weiterbringen werde.«

Als die Alte von dem köstlichen Salat hörte, ward sie lüstern und sprach »lieber Landsmann, laßt mich doch den wunderbaren Salat versuchen.« »Warum nicht?« antwortete er, »ich habe zwei Häupter mitgebracht und will Euch eins geben,« machte seinen Sack auf und reichte ihr das böse hin. Die Hexe dachte an nichts Arges, und der Mund wässerte ihr so sehr nach dem neuen Gericht, daß sie selbst in die Küche ging und es zubereitete. Als es fertig war, konnte sie nicht warten, bis es auf dem Tisch stand, sondern sie nahm gleich ein paar Blätter und steckte sie in den Mund, kaum aber waren sie verschluckt, so war auch die menschliche Gestalt verloren, und sie lief als eine Eselin hinab in den Hof. Nun kam die Magd in die Küche, sah den fertigen Salat da stehen und wollte ihn auftragen, unterwegs aber überfiel sie, nach alter Gewohnheit, die Lust zu versuchen, und sie aß ein paar Blätter. Alsbald zeigte sich die Wunderkraft, und sie ward ebenfalls zu einer Eselin und lief hinaus zu der Alten, und die Schüssel mit Salat fiel auf die Erde. Der Bote saß in der Zeit bei dem schönen Mädchen, und als niemand mit dem Salat kam, und es doch auch lüstern danach war, sprach es »ich weiß nicht, wo der Salat bleibt.« Da dachte der Jäger »das Kraut wird schon gewirkt haben,« und sprach »ich will nach der Küche gehen und mich erkundigen.« Wie er hinabkam, sah er die zwei Eselinnen im Hof herumlaufen, der Salat aber lag auf der Erde. »Schon recht,« sprach er, »die zwei haben ihr Teil weg,« und hob die übrigen Blätter auf, legte sie auf die Schüssel und brachte sie dem Mädchen. »Ich bring Euch selbst das köstliche Essen,« sprach er, »damit Ihr nicht länger zu warten braucht.« Da aß sie davon und war alsbald wie die übrigen ihrer menschlichen Gestalt beraubt und lief als eine Eselin in den Hof.

Nachdem sich der Jäger sein Angesicht gewaschen hatte, also daß ihn die Verwandelten erkennen konnten, ging er hinab in den Hof und sprach »jetzt sollt ihr den Lohn für eure Untreue empfangen.« Er band sie alle drei an ein Seil und trieb sie fort, bis er zu einer Mühle kam. Er klopfte an das Fenster, der Müller steckte den Kopf heraus und fragte, was sein Begehren wäre. »Ich habe drei böse Tiere,« antwortete er, »die ich nicht länger behalten mag. Wollt Ihr sie bei Euch nehmen, Futter und Lager geben, und sie halten, wie ich Euch sage, so zahl ich dafür, was Ihr verlangt.« Sprach der Müller »warum das nicht? wie soll ich sie aber halten?« Da sagte der Jäger, der alten Eselin, und das war die Hexe, sollte er täglich dreimal Schläge und einmal zu fressen geben; der jüngern, welche die Magd war, einmal Schläge und dreimal Futter; und der jüngsten, welche das Mädchen war, keinmal Schläge und dreimal zu fressen; denn er konnte es doch nicht über das Herz bringen, daß das Mädchen sollte geschlagen werden. Darauf ging er zurück in das Schloß, und was er nötig hatte, das fand er alles darin.

Nach ein paar Tagen kam der Müller und sprach, er müßte melden, daß die alte Eselin, die nur Schläge bekommen hätte und nur einmal zu fressen, gestorben sei. »Die zwei andern,« sagte er weiter, »sind zwar nicht gestorben und kriegen auch dreimal zu fressen, aber sie sind so traurig, daß es nicht lange mit ihnen dauern kann.« Da erbarmte sich der Jäger, ließ den Zorn fahren und sprach zum Müller, er sollte sie wieder hertreiben. Und wie sie kamen, gab er ihnen von dem guten Salat zu fressen, daß sie wieder zu Menschen wurden. Da fiel das schöne Mädchen vor ihm auf die Knie und sprach »ach, mein Liebster, verzeiht mir, was ich Böses an Euch getan, meine Mutter hatte mich dazu gezwungen; es ist gegen meinen Willen geschehen, denn ich habe Euch von Herzen lieb. Euer Wunschmantel hängt in einem Schrank, und für das Vogelherz will ich einen Brechtrunk einnehmen.« Da ward er anderes Sinnes und sprach »behalt es nur, es ist doch einerlei, denn ich will dich zu meiner treuen Ehegemahlin annehmen.« Und da ward Hochzeit gehalten, und sie lebten vergnügt miteinander bis an ihren Tod.

123. Die Alte im Wald.

Es fuhr einmal ein armes Dienstmädchen mit seiner Herrschaft durch einen großen Wald, und als sie mitten darin waren, kamen Räuber aus dem Dickicht hervor und ermordeten, wen sie fanden. Da kamen alle miteinander um bis auf das Mädchen, das war in der Angst aus dem Wagen gesprungen und hatte sich hinter einen Baum verborgen. Wie die Räuber mit ihrer Beute fort waren, trat es herbei und sah das große Unglück. Da fing es an bitterlich zu weinen und sagte »was soll ich armes Mädchen nun anfangen, ich weiß mich nicht aus dem Wald herauszufinden, keine Menschenseele wohnt darin, so muß ich gewiß verhungern.« Es ging herum, suchte einen Weg, konnte aber keinen finden. Als es Abend war, setzte es sich unter einen Baum, befahl sich Gott, und wollte da sitzen bleiben und nicht weggehen, möchte geschehen, was immer wollte. Als es aber eine Weile da gesessen hatte, kam ein weiß Täubchen zu ihm geflogen und hatte ein kleines goldenes Schlüsselchen im Schnabel. Das Schlüsselchen legte es ihm in die Hand und sprach »siehst du dort den großen Baum, daran ist ein kleines Schloß, das schließ mit dem Schlüsselchen auf, so wirst du Speise genug finden und keinen Hunger mehr leiden.« Da ging es zu dem Baum und schloß ihn auf und fand Milch in einem kleinen Schüsselchen und Weißbrot zum Einbrocken dabei, daß es sich satt essen konnte. Als es satt war, sprach es »jetzt ist es Zeit, wo die Hühner daheim auffliegen, ich bin so müde, könnt ich mich doch auch in mein Bett legen.« Da kam das Täubchen wieder geflogen und brachte ein anderes goldenes Schlüsselchen im Schnabel und sagte »schließ dort den Baum auf, so wirst du ein Bett finden.« Da schloß es auf und fand ein schönes weiches Bettchen: da betete es zum lieben Gott, er möchte es behüten in der Nacht, legte sich und schlief ein. Am Morgen kam das Täubchen zum drittenmal, brachte wieder ein Schlüsselchen und sprach »schließ dort den Baum auf, da wirst du Kleider finden,« und wie es aufschloß, fand es Kleider mit Gold und Edelsteinen besetzt, so herrlich, wie sie keine Königstochter hat. Also lebte es da eine Zeitlang, und kam das Täubchen alle Tage und sorgte für alles, was es bedurfte, und war das ein stilles, gutes Leben.

Einmal aber kam das Täubchen und sprach »willst du mir etwas zuliebe tun?« »Von Herzen gerne,« sagte das Mädchen. Da sprach das Täubchen, »ich will dich zu einem kleinen Häuschen führen, da geh hinein, mittendrein am Herd wird eine alte Frau sitzen und »guten Tag« sagen. Aber gib ihr beileibe keine Antwort, sie mag auch anfangen, was sie will, sondern geh zu ihrer rechten Hand weiter, da ist eine Türe, die mach auf, so wirst du in eine Stube kommen, wo eine Menge von Ringen allerlei Art auf dem Tisch liegt, darunter sind prächtige mit glitzerigen Steinen, die laß aber liegen und suche einen schlichten heraus, der auch darunter sein muß, und bring ihn zu mir her, so geschwind du kannst.« Das Mädchen ging zu dem Häuschen und trat zu der Türe ein: da saß eine Alte, die machte große Augen, wie sie es erblickte, und sprach »guten Tag, mein Kind.« Es gab ihr aber keine Antwort und ging auf die Türe zu. »Wo hinaus?« rief sie und faßte es beim Rock und wollte es festhalten, »das ist mein Haus, da darf niemand herein, wenn ichs nicht haben will.« Aber das Mädchen schwieg still, machte sich von ihr los und ging gerade in die Stube hinein. Da lag nun auf dem Tisch eine übergroße Menge von Ringen, die glitzten und glimmerten ihm vor den Augen: es warf sie herum und suchte nach dem schlichten, konnte ihn aber nicht finden. Wie es so suchte, sah es die Alte, wie sie daherschlich und einen Vogelkäfig in der Hand hatte und damit fortwollte. Da ging es auf sie zu und nahm ihr den Käfig aus der Hand, und wie es ihn aufhob und hineinsah, saß ein Vogel darin, der hatte den schlichten Ring im Schnabel. Da nahm es den Ring und lief ganz froh damit zum Haus hinaus und dachte, das weiße Täubchen würde kommen und den Ring holen, aber es kam nicht. Da lehnte es sich an einen Baum und wollte auf das Täubchen warten, und wie es so stand, da war es, als würde der Baum weich und biegsam und senkte seine Zweige herab. Und auf einmal schlangen sich die Zweige um es herum, und waren zwei Arme, und wie es sich umsah, war der Baum ein schöner Mann, der es umfaßte und herzlich küßte und sagte »du hast mich erlöst und aus der Gewalt der Alten befreit, die eine böse Hexe ist. Sie hatte mich in einen Baum verwandelt, und alle Tage ein paar Stunden war ich eine weiße Taube, und solang sie den Ring besaß, konnte ich meine menschliche Gestalt nicht wiedererhalten.« Da waren auch seine Bedienten und Pferde von dem Zauber frei, die sie auch in Bäume verwandelt hatte, und standen neben ihm. Da fuhren sie fort in sein Reich, denn er war eines Königs Sohn, und sie heirateten sich und lebten glücklich.

124. Die drei Brüder.

Es war ein Mann, der hatte drei Söhne und weiter nichts im Vermögen als das Haus, worin er wohnte. Nun hätte jeder gerne nach seinem Tode das Haus gehabt, dem Vater war aber einer so lieb als der andere, da wußte er nicht, wie ers anfangen sollte, daß er keinem zu nahe tät; verkaufen wollte er das Haus auch nicht, weils von seinen Voreltern war, sonst hätte er das Geld unter sie geteilt. Da fiel ihm endlich ein Rat ein, und er sprach zu seinen Söhnen »geht in die Welt und versucht euch, und lerne jeder sein Handwerk, wenn ihr dann wiederkommt, wer das beste Meisterstück macht, der soll das Haus haben.«

Das waren die Söhne zufrieden, und der älteste wollte ein Hufschmied, der zweite ein Barbier, der dritte aber ein Fechtmeister werden. Darauf bestimmten sie eine Zeit, wo sie wieder nach Haus zusammenkommen wollten, und zogen fort. Es traf sich auch, daß jeder einen tüchtigen Meister fand, wo er was Rechtschaffenes lernte. Der Schmied mußte des Königs Pferde beschlagen und dachte »nun kann dirs nicht fehlen, du kriegst das Haus.« Der Barbier rasierte lauter vornehme Herren und meinte auch, das Haus wäre schon sein. Der Fechtmeister kriegte manchen Hieb, biß aber die Zähne zusammen und ließ sichs nicht verdrießen, denn er dachte bei sich »fürchtest du dich vor einem Hieb, so kriegst du das Haus nimmermehr.« Als nun die gesetzte Zeit herum war, kamen sie bei ihrem Vater wieder zusammen: sie wußten aber nicht, wie sie die beste Gelegenheit finden sollten, ihre Kunst zu zeigen, saßen beisammen und ratschlagten. Wie sie so saßen, kam auf einmal ein Hase übers Feld dahergelaufen. »Ei,« sagte der Barbier, »der kommt wie gerufen,« nahm Becken und Seife, schaumte so lange, bis der Hase in die Nähe kam, dann seifte er ihn in vollem Laufe ein, und rasierte ihm auch in vollem Laufe ein Stutzbärtchen, und dabei schnitt er ihn nicht und tat ihm an keinem Haare weh. »Das gefällt mir,« sagte der Vater, »wenn sich die andern nicht gewaltig angreifen, so ist das Haus dein.« Es währte nicht lang, so kam ein Herr in einem Wagen dahergerennt in vollem Jagen. »Nun sollt Ihr sehen, Vater, was ich kann,« sprach der Hufschmied, sprang dem Wagen nach, riß dem Pferd, das in einem fortjagte, die vier Hufeisen ab und schlug ihm auch im Jagen vier neue wieder an. »Du bist ein ganzer Kerl,« sprach der Vater, »du machst deine Sachen so gut wie dein Bruder; ich weiß nicht, wem ich das Haus geben soll.« Da sprach der dritte »Vater, laßt mich auch einmal gewähren,« und weil es anfing zu regnen, zog er seinen Degen und schwenkte ihn in Kreuzhieben über seinen Kopf, daß kein Tropfen auf ihn fiel: und als der Regen stärker ward, und endlich so stark, als ob man mit Mulden vom Himmel gösse, schwang er den Degen immer schneller und blieb so trocken, als säß er unter Dach und Fach. Wie der Vater das sah, erstaunte er und sprach »du hast das beste Meisterstück gemacht, das Haus ist dein.«

Die beiden andern Brüder waren damit zufrieden, wie sie vorher gelobt hatten, und weil sie sich einander so lieb hatten, blieben sie alle drei zusammen im Haus und trieben ihr Handwerk; und da sie so gut ausgelernt hatten und so geschickt waren, verdienten sie viel Geld. So lebten sie vergnügt bis in ihr Alter zusammen, und als der eine krank ward und starb, grämten sich die zwei andern so sehr darüber, daß sie auch krank wurden und bald starben. Da wurden sie, weil sie so geschickt gewesen waren und sich so lieb gehabt hatten, alle drei zusammen in ein Grab gelegt.

125. Der Teufel und seine Großmutter.

Es war ein großer Krieg, und der König hatte viel Soldaten, gab ihnen aber wenig Sold, so daß sie nicht davon leben konnten. Da taten sich drei zusammen und wollten ausreißen. Einer sprach zum andern »wenn wir erwischt werden, so hängt man uns an den Galgenbaum: wie wollen wirs machen?« Sprach der andere »seht dort das große Kornfeld, wenn wir uns da verstecken, so findet uns kein Mensch: das Heer darf nicht hinein und muß morgen weiterziehen.« Sie krochen in das Korn, aber das Heer zog nicht weiter, sondern blieb rund herum liegen. Sie saßen zwei Tage und zwei Nächte im Korn und hatten so großen Hunger, daß sie beinah gestorben wären: gingen sie aber heraus, so war ihnen der Tod gewiß. Da sprachen sie »was hilft uns unser Ausreißen, wir müssen hier elendig sterben.« Indem kam ein feuriger Drache durch die Luft geflogen, der senkte sich zu ihnen herab und fragte sie, warum sie sich da versteckt hätten. Sie antworteten »wir sind drei Soldaten, und sind ausgerissen, weil unser Sold gering war, nun müssen wir hier Hungers sterben, wenn wir liegen bleiben, oder wir müssen am Galgen baumeln, wenn wir herausgehen.« »Wollt ihr mir sieben Jahre dienen,« sagte der Drache, »so will ich euch mitten durchs Heer führen, daß euch niemand erwischen soll.« »Wir haben keine Wahl und müssens annehmen,« antworteten sie. Da packte sie der Drache in seine Klauen, führte sie durch die Luft über das Heer hinweg und setzte sie weit davon wieder auf die Erde; der Drache war aber niemand als der Teufel. Er gab ihnen ein kleines Peitschchen und sprach »peitscht und knallt ihr damit, so wird so viel Geld vor euch herumspringen, als ihr verlangt: ihr könnt dann wie große Herren leben, Pferde halten und in Wagen fahren: nach Verlauf der sieben Jahre aber seid ihr mein eigen.« Dann hielt er ihnen ein Buch vor, in das mußten sie sich alle drei unterschreiben. »Doch will ich euch,« sprach er, »erst noch ein Rätsel aufgeben, könnt ihr das raten, sollt ihr frei sein und aus meiner Gewalt entlassen.« Da flog der Drache von ihnen weg, und sie reisten fort mit ihren Peitschchen, hatten Geld die Fülle, ließen sich Herrenkleider machen und zogen in der Welt herum. Wo sie waren, lebten sie in Freuden und Herrlichkeit, fuhren mit Pferden und Wagen, aßen und tranken, taten aber nichts Böses. Die Zeit verstrich ihnen schnell, und als es mit den sieben Jahren zu Ende ging, ward zweien gewaltig angst und bang, der dritte aber nahms auf die leichte Schulter und sprach »Brüder, fürchtet nichts, ich bin nicht auf den Kopf gefallen, ich errate das Rätsel.« Sie gingen hinaus aufs Feld, saßen da, und die zwei machten betrübte Gesichter. Da kam eine alte Frau daher, die fragte, warum sie so traurig wären. »Ach, was liegt Euch daran, Ihr könnt uns doch nicht helfen.« »Wer weiß,« antwortete sie, »vertraut mir nur euren Kummer.« Da erzählten sie ihr, sie wären des Teufels Diener gewesen, fast sieben Jahre lang, der hätte ihnen Geld wie Heu geschafft, sie hätten sich ihm aber verschrieben, und wären ihm verfallen, wenn sie nach den sieben Jahren nicht ein Rätsel auflösen könnten. Die Alte sprach »soll euch geholfen werden, so muß einer von euch in den Wald gehen, da wird er an eine eingestürzte Felsenwand kommen, die aussieht wie ein Häuschen, in das muß er eintreten, dann wird er Hilfe finden.« Die zwei Traurigen dachten »das wird uns doch nicht retten,« und blieben sitzen, der dritte aber, der Lustige, machte sich auf und ging so weit in den Wald, bis er die Felsenhütte fand. In dem Häuschen aber saß eine steinalte Frau, die war des Teufels Großmutter, und fragte ihn, woher er käme und was er hier wollte. Er erzählte ihr alles, was geschehen war, und weil er ihr wohl gefiel, hatte sie Erbarmen und sagte, sie wollte ihm helfen. Sie hob einen großen Stein auf, der über einem Keller lag, und sagte »da verstecke dich, du kannst alles hören, was hier gesprochen wird, sitz nur still und rege dich nicht: wann der Drache kommt, will ich ihn wegen der Rätsel befragen: mir sagt er alles; und dann achte auf das, was er antwortet.« Um zwölf Uhr nachts kam der Drache angeflogen und verlangte sein Essen. Die Großmutter deckte den Tisch und trug Trank und Speise auf, daß er vergnügt war, und sie aßen und tranken zusammen. Da fragte sie ihn im Gespräch, wies den Tag ergangen wäre, und wie viel Seelen er kriegt hätte. »Es wollte mir heute nicht recht glücken,« antwortete er, »aber ich habe drei Soldaten gepackt, die sind mir sicher.« »Ja, drei Soldaten,« sagte sie, »die haben etwas an sich, die können dir noch entkommen.« Sprach der Teufel höhnisch »die sind mein, denen gebe ich noch ein Rätsel auf, das sie nimmermehr raten können.« »Was ist das für ein Rätsel?« fragte sie. »Das will ich dir sagen: in der großen Nordsee liegt eine tote Meerkatze, das soll ihr Braten sein: und von einem Walfisch die Rippe, das soll ihr silberner Löffel sein: und ein alter hohler Pferdefuß, das soll ihr Weinglas sein.« Als der Teufel zu Bett gegangen war, hob die alte Großmutter den Stein auf und ließ den Soldaten heraus. »Hast du auch alles wohl in acht genommen?« »Ja,« sprach er, »ich weiß genug und will mir schon helfen.« Darauf mußte er auf einem andern Weg durchs Fenster heimlich und in aller Eile zu seinen Gesellen zurückgehen. Er erzählte ihnen, wie der Teufel von der alten Großmutter wäre überlistet worden, und wie er die Auflösung des Rätsels von ihm vernommen hätte. Da waren sie alle fröhlich und guter Dinge, nahmen die Peitsche und schlugen sich so viel Geld, daß es auf der Erde herumsprang. Als die sieben Jahre völlig herum waren, kam der Teufel mit dem Buche, zeigte die Unterschriften und sprach »ich will euch mit in die Hölle nehmen, da sollt ihr eine Mahlzeit haben: könnt ihr mir raten, was ihr für einen Braten werdet zu essen kriegen, so sollt ihr frei und los sein und dürft auch das Peitschchen behalten.« Da fing der erste Soldat an »in der großen Nordsee liegt eine tote Meerkatze, das wird wohl der Braten sein.« Der Teufel ärgerte sich, machte »hm! hm! hm!« und fragte den zweiten »was soll aber euer Löffel sein?« »Von einem Walfisch die Rippe, das soll unser silberner Löffel sein.« Der Teufel schnitt ein Gesicht, knurrte wieder dreimal »hm! hm! hm!« und sprach zum dritten »wißt ihr auch, was euer Weinglas sein soll?« »Ein alter Pferdefuß, das soll unser Weinglas sein.« Da flog der Teufel mit einem lauten Schrei fort und hatte keine Gewalt mehr über sie: aber die drei behielten das Peitschchen, schlugen Geld hervor, soviel sie wollten, und lebten vergnügt bis an ihr Ende.

126. Ferenand getrü und Ferenand ungetrü.

Et was mal en Mann un ‘ne Fru west, de hadden, so lange se rick wören, kene Kinner, as se awerst arm woren, da kregen se en kleinen Jungen. Se kunnen awerst kenen Paen dato kregen, da segde de Mann, he wulle mal na den annern Ohre (Orte) gahn un tosehn, ob he da enen krege. Wie he so gienk, begegnete ünn en armen Mann, de frog en, wo he hünne wulle, he segde, he wulle hünn un tosehn, dat he ‘n Paen kriegte, he sie arm, und da wulle ünn ken Minske to Gevaher stahn. »O,« segde de arme Mann, »gi sied arm, un ik sie arm, ik will guhe (euer) Gevaher weren; ik sie awerst so arm, ik kann dem Kinne nix giwen, gahet hen un segget de Bähmoer (Wehmutter), se sulle man mit den Kinne na der Kerken kummen.« Ase se nu tohaupe an der Kerken kummet, da is de Bettler schaun darinne, de givt dem Kinne den Namen Ferenand getrü.

Wie he nu ut der Kerken gahet, da segd de Bettler »nu gahet man na Hus, ik kann guh (euch) nix giwen, un gi süllt mi ok nix giwen.« De Bähmoer awerst gav he ‘n Schlüttel und segd er, se mögt en, wenn se na Hus käme, dem Vaer giwen, de sull’n verwahren, bis dat Kind vertein Johr old wöre, dann sull et up de Heide gahn, da wöre ‘n Schlott, dato paßte de Schlüttel, wat darin wöre, dat sulle em hören. Wie dat Kind nu sewen Johr alt wor un düet (tüchtig) wassen wor, gienk et mal spilen mit annern Jungens, da hadde de eine noch mehr vom Paen kriegt ase de annere, he awerst kunne nix seggen, un da grinde he un gienk nah Hus un segde tom Vaer »hewe ik denn gar nix vom Paen kriegt?« »O ja,« segde de Vaer, »du hest en Schlüttel kriegt, wenn up de Heide ‘n Schlott steit, so gah man hen un schlut et up.« Da gienk he hen, awerst et was kein Schlott to hören un to sehen. Wier na sewen Jahren, ase he vertein Johr old is, geit he nochmals hen, da steit en Schlott darup. Wie he et upschloten het, da is der nix enne ase ‘n Perd, ‘n Schümmel. Da werd de Junge so vuller Früden, dat he dat Perd hadde, dat he sik darup sett un to sinen Vaer jegd (jagt). »Nu hew ik auck ‘n Schümmel, nu will ik auck reisen,« segd he.

Da treckt he weg, un wie he unnerweges is, ligd da ‘ne Schriffedder up ‘n Wegge, he will se eist (erst) upnümmen, da denkt he awerst wier bie sich »o, du süst se auck liggen laten, du findst ja wull, wo du hen kümmst, ‘ne Schriffedder, wenn du eine bruckest.« Wie he so weggeit, do roppt et hinner üm »Ferenand getrü, nimm se mit.« He süt sik ümme, süt awerst keinen, da geit he wier torugge un nümmt se up. Wie he wier ‘ne Wile rien (geritten) is, kümmt he bie ‘n Water vorbie, so ligd da en Fisk am Oewer (Ufer) un snappet un happet na Luft; so segd he »töv, min lewe Fisk, ik will die helpen, dat du in’t Water kümmst,« un gript ‘n bie’n Schwans un werpt ‘n in’t Water. Da steckt de Fisk den Kopp ut den Water un segd »nu du mie ut den Kot holpen hest, will ik die ‘ne Flötenpiepen giwen, wenn du in de Naud bist, so flöte derup, dann will ik die helpen, un wenn du mal wat in Water hest fallen laten, so flöte man, so will ik et die herut reicken.« Nu ritt he weg, da kümmt so ‘n Minsk to üm, de frägt ‘n, wo he hen wull. »O, na den neggsten Ohre.« Wu he dann heite? »Ferenand getrü.« »Sü, da hewe wie ja fast den sülwigen Namen, ik heite Ferenand ungetrü.« Da trecket se beide na den neggsten Ohre in dat Wertshus.

Nu was et schlimm, dat de Ferenand ungetrü allet wuste, wat ‘n annerer dacht hadde un doen wulle; dat wust he döre so allerhand slimme Kunste. Et was awerst im Wertshuse so ‘n wacker Mäken, dat hadde ‘n schier (klares) Angesicht un drog sik so hübsch, dat verleiv sik in den Ferenand getrü, denn et was ‘n hübschen Minschen west, un frog’n, wo he hen to wulle. »O, he wulle so herümmer reisen.« Da segd se, so sull he doch nur da bliewen, et wöre hier to Lanne ‘n Künig, de neime wull geren ‘n Bedeenten oder ‘n Vorrüter: dabie sulle he in Diensten gahn. He andworde, he kunne nig gud so to einen hingahen un been sik an. Da segde dat Mäken »o, dat will ik dann schon dauen.« Un so gienk se auck straks hen na den Künig und sehde ünn, se wüste ünn ‘n hübschen Bedeenten. Dat was de wol tofreen un leit ‘n to sik kummen un wull ‘n tom Bedeenten macken. He wull awerst leewer Vorrüter sin, denn wo sin Perd wöre, da möst he auck sin; da mackt ‘n de Künig tom Vorrüter. Wie düt de Ferenand ungetrü gewahr wore, da segd he to den Mäken »töv, helpest du den an un mie nig?« »O,« segd dat Mäken, »ik will ‘n auck anhelpen.« Se dachte »den most du die tom Frünne wahren, denn he is nig to truen.« Se geit alse vorm Künig stahn un beed ‘n als Bedeenten an; dat is de Künig tofreen.

Wenn he nu also det Morgens den Heren antrock, da jammerte de jümmer »o wenn ik doch eist mine Leiveste bie mie hädde.« De Ferenand ungetrü was awerst dem Ferenand getrü jümmer uppsettsig, wie asso de Künig mal wier so jammerte, da segd he »Sie haben ja den Vorreiter, den schicken Sie hin, der muß sie herbeischaffen, und wenn er es nicht tut, so muß ihm der Kopf vor die Füße gelegt werden.« Da leit de Künig den Ferenand getrü to sik kummen un sehde üm, he hädde da un da ‘ne Leiveste, de sull he ünn herschappen, wenn he dat nig deie, sull he sterwen.

De Ferenand getrü gienk in Stall to sinen Schümmel un grinde un jammerte. »O wat sin ik ‘n unglücksch Minschenkind.« Do röppet jeimes hinner üm »Ferdinand getreu, was weinst du?« He süt sik um, süt awerst neimes, un jammerd jümmer fort »o min lewe Schümmelken, nu mot ik die verlaten, nu mot ik sterwen.« Da röppet et wier »Ferdinand getreu, was weinst du?« Do merket he eist, dat dat sin Schümmelken dei, dat Fragen. »Döst du dat, min Schümmelken, kannst du küren (reden)?« Un segd wier »ik sull da un da hen, un sull de Brut halen, west du nig, wie ik dat wol anfange?« Do antwoerd dat Schümmelken »gah du na den Künig un segg, wenn he die giwen wulle, wat du hewen möstest, so wullest du se ünn schappen: wenn he die ‘n Schipp vull Fleisk un ‘n Schipp vull Brod giwen wulle, so sull et gelingen; da wöde grauten Riesen up den Water, wenn du denen ken Fleisk midde brächtes, so terreitn sie die: un da wören de grauten Vüggel, de pickeden die de Ogen ut den Koppe, wenn du ken Brod vor se häddest.« Da lett de Künig alle Slächter im Lanne slachten un alle Becker backen, dat de Schippe vull werdt. Wie se vull sied, sagd dat Schümmelken tom Ferenand getrü »nu gah man up mie sitten un treck mit mie in ‘t Schipp,

wenn dann de Riesen kümmet, so segg

»still, still, meine lieben Riesechen,
ich hab euch wohl bedacht,
ich hab euch was mitgebracht.«

Un wenn de Vüggel kümmet, so segst du wier

»still, still, meine lieben Vögelchen,
ich hab euch wohl bedacht,
ich hab euch was mitgebracht.«

Dann doet sie die nix, un wenn du dann bie dat Schlott kümmst, dann helpet die de Riesen, dann gah up dat Schlott un nümm ‘n paar Riesen mit, da ligd de Prinzessin un schlöppet; du darfst se awerst nig upwecken, sonnern de Riesen mött se mit den Bedde upnümmen un in dat Schipp dregen.« Und da geschah nun alles, wie das Schimmelchen gesagt hatte, und den Riesen und den Vögeln gab der Ferenand getrü, was er ihnen mitgebracht hatte, dafür wurden die Riesen willig und trugen die Prinzessin in ihrem Bett zum König. Un ase se tom Künig kümmet, segd se, se künne nig liwen, se möste ere Schriften hewen, de wören up eren Schlotte liggen bliwen. Da werd de Ferenand getrü up Anstifften det Ferenand ungetrü roopen, un de Künig bedütt ünn, he sulle de Schriften van dem Schlotte halen, süst sull he sterwen. Da geit he wier in Stall un grind und segd »o min lewe Schümmelken, nu sull ik noch ‘n mal weg, wie süll wie dat macken?« Da segd de Schümmel, se sullen dat Schipp man wier vull laen (laden). Da geht es wieder wie das vorigemal, und die Riesen und die Vögel werden von dem Fleisch gesättigt und besänftigt. Ase se bie dat Schlott kümmet, segd de Schümmel to ünn, he sulle man herin gahn, in den Schlapzimmer der Prinzessin up den Diske, da lägen de Schriften. Da geit Ferenand getrü hün un langet se. Ase se up ‘n Water sind, da let he sine Schriffedder in’t Water fallen, da segd de Schümmel »nu kann ik die awerst nig helpen.« Da fällt’n dat bie mit de Flötepiepen, he fänkt an to flöten, da kümmt de Fisk un het de Fedder im Mule un langet se’m hen. Nu bringet he de Schriften na dem Schlotte, wo de Hochtid hallen werd.

De Künigin mogte awerst den Künig nig lien, weil he keine Nese hadde, sonnern se mogte den Ferenand getrü geren lien. Wie nu mal alle Herens vom Hove tosammen sied, so segd de Künigin, se könne auck Kunststücke macken, se künne einen den Kopp afhoggen und wier upsetten, et sull nur mant einer versöcken. Da wull awerst kener de eiste sien, da mott Ferenand getrü daran, wier up Anstifften von Ferenand ungetrü, den hogget se den Kopp af un sett’n ünn auck wier up, et is auck glick wier tau heilt, dat et ut sach, ase hädde he ‘n roen Faen (Faden) üm ‘n Hals. Da segd de Künig to ehr »mein Kind, wo hast du denn das gelernt?« »Ja,« segd se, »die Kunst versteh ich, soll ich es an dir auch einmal versuchen?« »O ja,« segd he. Do hogget se en awerst den Kopp af un sett’n en nig wier upp, se doet, as ob

se’n nig darup kriegen künne, und as ob he nig fest sitten wulle. Da werd de Künig begrawen, se awerst frigget den Ferenand getrü.

He ride awerst jümmer sinen Schümmel, un ase he mal darup sat, da segd he to em, he sulle mal up ‘ne annere Heide, de he em wist, trecken un da dreimal mit em herumme jagen. Wie he dat dahen hadde, da geit de Schümmel up de Hinnerbeine stahn un verwannelt sik in ‘n Künigssuhn.

127. Der Eisenofen.

Zur Zeit, wo das Wünschen noch geholfen hat, ward ein Königssohn von einer alten Hexe verwünscht, daß er im Walde in einem großen Eisenofen sitzen sollte. Da brachte er viele Jahre zu, und konnte ihn niemand erlösen. Einmal kam eine Königstochter in den Wald, die hatte sich irre gegangen und konnte ihres Vaters Reich nicht wiederfinden: neun Tage war sie so herumgegangen und stand zuletzt vor dem eisernen Kasten. Da kam eine Stimme heraus und fragte sie »wo kommst du her, und wo willst du hin?« Sie antwortete »ich habe meines Vaters Königreich verloren und kann nicht wieder nach Haus kommen.« Da sprachs aus dem Eisenofen »ich will dir wieder nach Hause verhelfen, und zwar in einer kurzen Zeit, wenn du willst unterschreiben zu tun, was ich verlange. Ich bin ein größerer Königssohn als du eine Königstochter, und will dich heiraten.« Da erschrak sie und dachte »lieber Gott, was soll ich mit dem Eisenofen anfangen!« Weil sie aber gerne wieder zu ihrem Vater heim wollte, unterschrieb sie sich doch zu tun, was er verlangte. Er sprach aber »du sollst wiederkommen, ein Messer mitbringen und ein Loch in das Eisen schrappen.« Dann gab er ihr jemand zum Gefährten, der ging nebenher und sprach nicht: er brachte sie aber in zwei Stunden nach Haus. Nun war große Freude im Schloß, als die Königstochter wiederkam, und der alte König fiel ihr um den Hals und küßte sie. Sie war aber sehr betrübt und sprach »lieber Vater, wie mirs gegangen hat! ich wäre nicht wieder nach Haus gekommen aus dem großen wilden Walde, wenn ich nicht wäre bei einen eisernen Ofen gekommen, dem habe ich mich müssen dafür unterschreiben, daß ich wollte wieder zu ihm zurückkehren, ihn erlösen und heiraten.« Da erschrak der alte König so sehr, daß er beinahe in eine Ohnmacht gefallen wäre, denn er hatte nur die einzige Tochter. Beratschlagten sich also, sie wollten die Müllerstochter, die schön wäre, an ihre Stelle nehmen; führten die hinaus, gaben ihr ein Messer und sagten, sie sollte an dem Eisenofen schaben. Sie schrappte auch vierundzwanzig Stunden lang, konnte aber nicht das geringste herabbringen. Wie nun der Tag anbrach, riefs in dem Eisenofen »mich deucht, es ist Tag draußen.« Da antwortete sie »das deucht mich auch, ich meine, ich höre meines Vaters Mühle rappeln.« »So bist du eine Müllerstochter, dann geh gleich hinaus und laß die Königstochter herkommen.« Da ging sie hin und sagte dem alten König, der draußen wollte sie nicht, er wollte seine Tochter. Da erschrak der alte König und die Tochter weinte. Sie hatten aber noch eine Schweinehirtentochter, die war noch schöner als die Müllerstochter, der wollten sie ein Stück Geld geben, damit sie für die Königstochter zum eisernen Ofen ginge. Also ward sie hinausgebracht und mußte auch vierundzwanzig Stunden lang schrappen; sie brachte aber nichts davon. Wie nun der Tag anbrach, riefs im Ofen »mich deucht, es ist Tag draußen.« Da antwortete sie »das deucht mich auch, ich meine, ich höre meines Vaters Hörnchen tüten.« »So bist du eine Schweinehirtentochter, geh gleich fort und laß die Königstochter kommen: und sag ihr, es sollt ihr widerfahren, was ich ihr versprochen hätte, und wenn sie nicht käme, sollte im ganzen Reich alles zerfallen und einstürzen und kein Stein auf dem andern bleiben.« Als die Königstochter das hörte, fing sie an zu weinen: es war aber nun nicht anders, sie mußte ihr Versprechen halten. Da nahm sie Abschied von ihrem Vater, steckte ein Messer ein und ging zu dem Eisenofen in den Wald hinaus. Wie sie nun angekommen war, hub sie an zu schrappen, und das Eisen gab nach, und wie zwei Stunden vorbei waren, hatte sie schon ein kleines Loch geschabt. Da guckte sie hinein und sah einen so schönen Jüngling, ach, der glimmerte in Gold und Edelsteinen, daß er ihr recht in der Seele gefiel. Nun, da schrappte sie noch weiter fort und machte das Loch so groß, daß er heraus konnte. Da sprach er »du bist mein und ich bin dein, du bist meine Braut und hast mich erlöst.« Er wollte sie mit sich in sein Reich führen, aber sie bat sich aus, daß sie noch einmal dürfte zu ihrem Vater gehen, und der Königssohn erlaubte es ihr, doch sollte sie nicht mehr mit ihrem Vater sprechen als drei Worte, und dann sollte sie wiederkommen. Also ging sie heim, sie sprach aber mehr als drei Worte: da verschwand alsbald der Eisenofen und ward weit weg gerückt über gläserne Berge und schneidende Schwerter; doch der Königssohn war erlöst, und nicht mehr darin eingeschlossen. Danach nahm sie Abschied von ihrem Vater und nahm etwas Geld mit, aber nicht viel, ging wieder in den großen Wald und suchte den Eisenofen, allein der war nicht zu finden. Neun Tage suchte sie, da ward ihr Hunger so groß, daß sie sich nicht zu helfen wußte, denn sie hatte nichts mehr zu leben. Und als es Abend ward, setzte sie sich auf einen kleinen Baum und gedachte darauf die Nacht hinzubringen, weil sie sich vor den wilden Tieren fürchtete. Als nun Mitternacht herankam, sah sie von fern ein kleines Lichtchen und dachte »ach, da wär ich wohl erlöst,« stieg vom Baum und ging dem Lichtchen nach, auf dem Weg aber betete sie. Da kam sie zu einem kleinen alten Häuschen, und war viel Gras darum gewachsen, und stand ein kleines Häufchen Holz davor. Dachte sie »ach, wo kommst du hier hin!« guckte durchs Fenster hinein, so sah sie nichts darin als dicke und kleine Itschen (Kröten), aber einen Tisch, schön gedeckt mit Wein und Braten, und Teller und Becher waren von Silber. Da nahm sie sich das Herz und klopfte an. Alsbald rief die Dicke

»Jungfer grün und klein,
Hutzelbein,
Hutzelbeins Hündchen,
hutzel hin und her,
laß geschwind sehen, wer draußen wär.«

Da kam eine kleine Itsche herbeigegangen und machte ihr auf. Wie sie eintrat, hießen alle sie willkommen, und sie mußte sich setzen. Sie fragten »wo kommt Ihr her? wo wollt Ihr hin?« Da erzählte sie alles, wie es ihr gegangen wäre, und weil sie das Gebot übertreten hätte, nicht mehr als drei Worte zu sprechen, wäre der Ofen weg samt dem Königssohn: nun wollte sie so lange suchen und über Berg und Tal wandern, bis sie ihn fände. Da sprach die alte Dicke

»Jungfer grün und klein,
Hutzelbein,
Hutzelbeins Hündchen,
hutzel hin und her,
bring mir die große Schachtel her.«

Da ging die kleine hin und brachte die Schachtel herbeigetragen. Hernach gaben sie ihr Essen und Trinken, und brachten sie zu einem schönen gemachten Bett, das war wie Seide und Sammet, da legte sie sich hinein und schlief in Gottes Namen. Als der Tag kam, stieg sie auf, und gab ihr die alte Itsche drei Nadeln aus der großen Schachtel, die sollte sie mitnehmen; sie würden ihr nötig tun, denn sie müßte über einen hohen gläsernen Berg und über drei schneidende Schwerter und über ein großes Wasser: wenn sie das durchsetzte, würde sie ihren Liebsten wiederkriegen. Nun gab sie hiermit drei Teile (Stücke), die sollte sie recht in acht nehmen, nämlich drei große Nadeln, ein Pflugrad und drei Nüsse. Hiermit reiste sie ab, und wie sie vor den gläsernen Berg kam, der so glatt war, steckte sie die drei Nadeln als hinter die Füße und dann wieder vorwärts, und gelangte so hinüber, und als sie hinüber war, steckte sie sie an einen Ort, den sie wohl in acht nahm. Danach kam sie vor die drei schneidenden Schwerter, da stellte sie sich auf ihr Pflugrad und rollte hinüber. Endlich kam sie vor ein großes Wasser, und wie sie übergefahren war, in ein großes schönes Schloß. Sie ging hinein und hielt um einen Dienst an, sie wär eine arme Magd und wollte sich gerne vermieten; sie wußte aber, daß der Königssohn drinne war, den sie erlöst hatte aus dem eisernen Ofen im großen Wald. Also ward sie angenommen zum Küchenmädchen für geringen Lohn. Nun hatte der Königssohn schon wieder eine andere an der Seite, die wollte er heiraten, denn er dachte, sie wäre längst gestorben. Abends, wie sie aufgewaschen hatte und fertig war, fühlte sie in die Tasche und fand die drei Nüsse, welche ihr die alte Itsche gegeben hatte. Biß eine auf und wollte den Kern essen, siehe, da war ein stolzes königliches Kleid drin. Wies nun die Braut hörte, kam sie und hielt um das Kleid an und wollte es kaufen und sagte, es wäre kein Kleid für eine Dienstmagd. Da sprach sie nein, sie wollts nicht verkaufen, doch wann sie ihr einerlei (ein Ding) wollte erlauben, so sollte sies haben, nämlich eine Nacht in der Kammer ihres Bräutigams zu schlafen. Die Braut erlaubt es ihr, weil das Kleid so schön war und sie noch keins so hatte. Wies nun Abend war, sagte sie zu ihrem Bräutigam »das närrische Mädchen will in deiner Kammer schlafen.« »Wenn dus zufrieden bist, bin ichs auch,« sprach er. Sie gab aber dem Mann ein Glas Wein, in das sie einen Schlaftrunk getan hatte. Also gingen beide in die Kammer schlafen, und er schlief so fest, daß sie ihn nicht erwecken konnte. Sie weinte die ganze Nacht und rief »ich habe dich erlöst aus dem wilden Wald und aus einem eisernen Ofen, ich habe dich gesucht und bin gegangen über einen gläsernen Berg, über drei schneidende Schwerter und über ein großes Wasser, ehe ich dich gefunden habe, und willst mich doch nicht hören.« Die Bedienten saßen vor der Stubentüre und hörten, wie sie so die ganze Nacht weinte, und sagtens am Morgen ihrem Herrn. Und wie sie im andern Abend aufgewaschen hatte, biß sie die zweite Nuß auf, da war noch ein weit schöneres Kleid drin; wie das die Braut sah, wollte sie es kaufen. Aber Geld wollte das Mädchen nicht und bat sich aus, daß es noch einmal in der Kammer des Bräutigams schlafen dürfte. Die Braut gab ihm aber einen Schlaftrunk, und er schlief so fest, daß er nichts hören konnte. Das Küchenmädchen weinte aber die ganze Nacht und rief »ich habe dich erlöst aus einem Walde und aus einem eisernen Ofen, ich habe dich gesucht und bin gegangen über einen gläsernen Berg, über drei schneidende Schwerter und über ein großes Wasser, ehe ich dich gefunden habe, und du willst mich doch nicht hören.« Die Bedienten saßen vor der Stubentüre und hörten, wie sie so die ganze Nacht weinte, und sagtens am Morgen ihrem Herrn. Und als sie am dritten Abend aufgewaschen hatte, biß sie die dritte Nuß auf, da war ein noch schöneres Kleid drin, das starrte von purem Gold. Wie die Braut das sah, wollte sie es haben, das Mädchen aber gab es nur hin, wenn es zum drittenmal dürfte in der Kammer des Bräutigams schlafen. Der Königssohn aber hütete sich und ließ den Schlaftrunk vorbeilaufen. Wie sie nun anfing zu weinen und zu rufen »liebster Schatz, ich habe dich erlöst aus dem grausamen wilden Walde und aus einem eisernen Ofen,« so sprang der Königssohn auf und sprach »du bist die rechte, du bist mein, und ich bin dein.« Darauf setzte er sich noch in der Nacht mit ihr in einen Wagen, und der falschen Braut nahmen sie die Kleider weg, daß sie nicht aufstehen konnte. Als sie zu dem großen Wasser kamen, da schifften sie hinüber, und vor den drei schneidenden Schwertern, da setzten sie sich aufs Pflugrad, und vor dem gläsernen Berg, da steckten sie die drei Nadeln hinein. So gelangten sie endlich zu dem alten kleinen Häuschen, aber wie sie hineintraten, wars ein großes Schloß: die Itschen waren alle erlöst und lauter Königskinder und waren in voller Freude. Da ward Vermählung gehalten, und sie blieben in dem Schloß, das war viel größer als ihres Vaters Schloß. Weil aber der Alte jammerte, daß er allein bleiben sollte, so fuhren sie weg und holten ihn zu sich, und hatten zwei Königreiche und lebten in gutem Ehestand.

Da kam eine Maus,
Das Märchen war aus.

128. Die faule Spinnerin.

Auf einem Dorfe lebte ein Mann und eine Frau, und die Frau war so faul, daß sie immer nichts arbeiten wollte: und was ihr der Mann zu spinnen gab, das spann sie nicht fertig, und was sie auch spann, haspelte sie nicht, sondern ließ alles auf dem Klauel gewickelt liegen. Schalt sie nun der Mann, so war sie mit ihrem Maul doch vornen und sprach »ei, wie sollt ich haspeln, da ich keinen Haspel habe, geh du erst in den Wald und schaff mir einen.« »Wenns daran liegt,« sagte der Mann, »so will ich in den Wald gehen und Haspelholz holen.« Da fürchtete sich die Frau, wenn er das Holz hätte, daß er daraus einen Haspel machte, und sie abhaspeln und dann wieder frisch spinnen müßte. Sie besann sich ein bißchen, da kam ihr ein guter Einfall, und sie lief dem Manne heimlich nach in den Wald. Wie er nun auf einen Baum gestiegen war, das Holz auszulesen und zu hauen, schlich sie darunter in das Gebüsch, wo er sie nicht sehen konnte und rief hinauf

»wer Haspelholz haut, der stirbt,
wer da haspelt, der verdirbt.«

Der Mann horchte, legte die Axt eine Weile nieder und dachte nach, was das wohl zu bedeuten hätte. »Ei was,« sprach er endlich, »was wirds gewesen sein! es hat dir in den Ohren geklungen, mache dir keine unnötige Furcht.« Also ergriff er die Axt von neuem und wollte zuhauen, da riefs wieder von unten herauf

»wer Haspelholz haut, der stirbt,
wer da haspelt, der verdirbt.«

Er hielt ein, kriegte angst und bang und sann dem Ding nach. Wie aber ein Weilchen vorbei war, kam ihm das Herz wieder, und er langte zum drittenmal nach der Axt und wollte zuhauen. Aber zum drittenmal riefs und sprachs laut

»wer Haspelholz haut, der stirbt,
wer da haspelt, der verdirbt.«

Da hatte ers genug, und alle Lust war ihm vergangen, so daß er eilends den Baum herunterstieg und sich auf den Heimweg machte. Die Frau lief, was sie konnte, auf Nebenwegen, damit sie eher nach Haus käme. Wie er nun in die Stube trat, tat sie unschuldig, als wäre nichts vorgefallen, und sagte »nun, bringst du ein gutes Haspelholz?« »Nein,« sprach er, »ich sehe wohl, es geht mit dem Haspeln nicht,« erzählte ihr, was ihm im Walde begegnet war, und ließ sie von nun an damit in Ruhe.

Bald hernach fing der Mann doch wieder an, sich über die Unordnung im Hause zu ärgern. »Frau,« sagte er, »es ist doch eine Schande, daß das gesponnene Garn da auf dem Klauel liegen bleibt.« »Weißt du was,« sprach sie, »weil wir doch zu keinem Haspel kommen, so stell dich auf den Boden und ich steh unten, da will ich dir den Klauel hinaufwerfen, und du wirfst ihn herunter, so gibts doch einen Strang.« »Ja, das geht,« sagte der Mann. Also taten sie das, und wie sie fertig waren, sprach er »das Garn ist nun gesträngt, nun muß es auch gekocht werden.« Der Frau ward wieder angst, sie sprach zwar »ja wir wollens gleich morgen früh kochen,« dachte aber bei sich auf einen neuen Streich. Frühmorgens stand sie auf, machte Feuer an und stellte den Kessel bei, allein statt des Garns legte sie einen Klumpen Werg hinein, und ließ es immerzu kochen. Darauf ging sie zum Manne, der noch zu Bette lag, und sprach zu ihm »ich muß einmal ausgehen, steh derweil auf und sieh nach dem Garn, das im Kessel überm Feuer steht: aber du mußts beizeit tun, gib wohl acht, denn wo der Hahn kräht, und du sähest nicht nach, wird das Garn zu Werg.« Der Mann war bei der Hand und wollte nichts versäumen, stand eilends auf, so schnell er konnte, und ging in die Küche. Wie er aber zum Kessel kam und hineinsah, so erblickte er mit Schrecken nichts als einen Klumpen Werg. Da schwieg der arme Mann mäuschenstill, dachte, er hätts versehen und wäre schuld daran, und sprach in Zukunft gar nicht mehr von Garn und Spinnen. Aber das mußt du selbst sagen, es war eine garstige Frau.

129. Die vier kunstreichen Brüder.

Es war ein armer Mann, der hatte vier Söhne, wie die herangewachsen waren, sprach er zu ihnen »liebe Kinder, ihr müßt jetzt hinaus in die Welt, ich habe nichts, das ich euch geben könnte; macht euch auf und geht in die Fremde, lernt ein Handwerk und seht, wie ihr euch durchschlagt.« Da ergriffen die vier Brüder den Wanderstab, nahmen Abschied von ihrem Vater und zogen zusammen zum Tor hinaus. Als sie eine Zeitlang gewandert waren, kamen sie an einen Kreuzweg, der nach vier verschiedenen Gegenden führte. Da sprach der älteste »hier müssen wir uns trennen, aber heut über vier Jahre wollen wir an dieser Stelle wieder zusammentreffen und in der Zeit unser Glück versuchen.«

Nun ging jeder seinen Weg, und dem ältesten begegnete ein Mann, der fragte ihn, wo er hinaus wollte und was er vorhätte. »Ich will ein Handwerk lernen,« antwortete er. Da sprach der Mann »geh mit mir und werde ein Dieb.« »Nein,« antwortete er, »das gilt für kein ehrliches Handwerk mehr, und das Ende vom Lied ist, daß einer als Schwengel in der Feldglocke gebraucht wird.« »O,« sprach der Mann, »vor dem Galgen brauchst du dich nicht zu fürchten: ich will dich bloß lehren, wie du holst, was sonst kein Mensch kriegen kann, und wo dir niemand auf die Spur kommt.« Da ließ er sich überreden, ward bei dem Manne ein gelernter Dieb und ward so geschickt, daß vor ihm nichts sicher war, was er einmal haben wollte. Der zweite Bruder begegnete einem Mann, der dieselbe Frage an ihn tat, was er in der Welt lernen wollte. »Ich weiß es noch nicht,« antwortete er. »So geh mit mir und werde ein Sterngucker: nichts besser als das, es bleibt einem nichts verborgen.« Er ließ sich das gefallen und ward ein so geschickter Sterngucker, daß sein Meister, als er ausgelernt hatte und weiterziehen wollte, ihm ein Fernrohr gab und zu ihm sprach »damit kannst du sehen, was auf Erden und am Himmel vorgeht, und kann dir nichts verborgen bleiben.« Den dritten Bruder nahm ein Jäger in die Lehre und gab ihm in allem, was zur Jägerei gehört, so guten Unterricht, daß er ein ausgelernter Jäger ward. Der Meister schenkte ihm beim Abschied eine Büchse und sprach »die fehlt nicht, was du damit aufs Korn nimmst, das triffst du sicher.« Der jüngste Bruder begegnete gleichfalls einem Manne, der ihn anredete und nach seinem Vorhaben fragte. »Hast du nicht Lust, ein Schneider zu werden?« »Daß ich nicht wüßte,« sprach der Junge, »das Krummsitzen von morgens bis abends, das Hin- und Herfegen mit der Nadel und das Bügeleisen will mir nicht in den Sinn.« »Ei was,« antwortete der Mann, »du sprichst, wie dus verstehst: bei mir lernst du eine ganz andere Schneiderkunst, die ist anständig und ziemlich, zum Teil sehr ehrenvoll.« Da ließ er sich überreden, ging mit und lernte die Kunst des Mannes aus dem Fundament. Beim Abschied gab ihm dieser eine Nadel und sprach »damit kannst du zusammennähen, was dir vorkommt, es sei so weich wie ein Ei oder so hart als Stahl; und es wird ganz zu einem Stück, daß keine Naht mehr zu sehen ist.«

Als die bestimmten vier Jahre herum waren, kamen die vier Brüder zu gleicher Zeit an dem Kreuzwege zusammen, herzten und küßten sich und kehrten heim zu ihrem Vater. »Nun,« sprach dieser ganz vergnügt, »hat euch der Wind wieder zu mir geweht?« Sie erzählten, wie es ihnen ergangen war, und daß jeder das Seinige gelernt hätte. Nun saßen sie gerade vor dem Haus unter einem großen Baum, da sprach der Vater »jetzt will ich euch auf die Probe stellen und sehen, was ihr könnt.« Danach schaute er auf und sagte zu dem zweiten Sohne »oben im Gipfel dieses Baumes sitzt zwischen zwei Ästen ein Buchfinkennest, sag mir, wie viel Eier liegen darin?« Der Sterngucker nahm sein Glas, schaute hinauf und sagte »fünfe sinds.« Sprach der Vater zum ältesten »hol du die Eier herunter, ohne daß der Vogel, der darauf sitzt und brütet, gestört wird.« Der kunstreiche Dieb stieg hinauf und nahm dem Vöglein, das gar nichts davon merkte und ruhig sitzen blieb, die fünf Eier unter dem Leib weg und brachte sie dem Vater herab. Der Vater nahm sie, legte an jede Ecke des Tisches eins und das fünfte in die Mitte, und sprach zum Jäger »du schießest mir mit einem Schuß die fünf Eier in der Mitte entzwei.« Der Jäger legte seine Büchse an und schoß die Eier, wie es der Vater verlangt hatte, alle fünfe, und zwar in einem Schuß. Der hatte gewiß von dem Pulver, das um die Ecke schießt. »Nun kommt die Reihe an dich,« sprach der Vater zu dem vierten Sohn, »du nähst die Eier wieder zusammen und auch die jungen Vöglein, die darin sind, und zwar so, daß ihnen der Schuß nichts schadet.« Der Schneider holte seine Nadel und nähte, wies der Vater verlangt hatte. Als er fertig war, mußte der Dieb die Eier wieder auf den Baum ins Nest tragen und dem Vogel, ohne daß er etwas merkte, wieder unterlegen. Das Tierchen brütete sie vollends aus, und nach ein paar Tagen krochen die Jungen hervor und hatten da, wo sie vom Schneider zusammengenäht waren, ein rotes Streifchen um den Hals.

»Ja,« sprach der Alte zu seinen Söhnen, »ich muß euch über den grünen Klee loben, ihr habt eure Zeit wohl benutzt und was Rechtschaffenes gelernt: ich kann nicht sagen, wem von euch der Vorzug gebührt. Wenn ihr nur bald Gelegenheit habt, eure Kunst anzuwenden, da wird sichs ausweisen.« Nicht lange da nach kam großer Lärm ins Land, die Königstochter wäre von einem Drachen entführt worden. Der König war Tag und Nacht darüber in Sorgen und ließ bekanntmachen, wer sie zurückbrächte, sollte sie zur Gemahlin haben. Die vier Brüder sprachen untereinander »das wäre eine Gelegenheit, wo wir uns könnten sehen lassen,« wollten zusammen ausziehen und die Königstochter befreien. »Wo sie ist, will ich bald wissen,« sprach der Sterngucker, schaute durch sein Fernrohr und sprach »ich sehe sie schon, sie sitzt weit von hier auf einem Felsen im Meer, und neben ihr der Drache, der sie bewacht.« Da ging er zu dem König und bat um ein Schiff für sich und seine Brüder und fuhr mit ihnen über das Meer, bis sie zu dem Felsen hinkamen. Die Königstochter saß da, aber der Drache lag in ihrem Schoß und schlief. Der Jäger sprach »ich darf nicht schießen, ich würde die schöne Jungfrau zugleich töten.« »So will ich mein Heil versuchen,« sagte der Dieb, schlich sich heran und stahl sie unter dem Drachen weg, aber so leis und behend, daß das Untier nichts merkte, sondern fortschnarchte. Sie eilten voll Freude mit ihr aufs Schiff und steuerten in die offene See: aber der Drache, der bei seinem Erwachen die Königstochter nicht mehr gefunden hatte, hinter ihnen her und schnaubte wütend durch die Luft. Als er gerade über dem Schiff schwebte und sich herablassen wollte, legte der Jäger seine Büchse an und schoß ihm mitten ins Herz. Das Untier fiel tot herab, war aber so groß und gewaltig, daß es im Herabfallen das ganze Schiff zertrümmerte. Sie erhaschten glücklich noch ein paar Bretter und schwammen auf dem weiten Meer umher. Da war wieder große Not, aber der Schneider, nicht faul, nahm seine wunderbare Nadel, nähte die Bretter mit ein paar großen Stichen in der Eile zusammen, setzte sich darauf und sammelte alle Stücke des Schiffs. Dann nähte er auch diese so geschickt zusammen, daß in kurzer Zeit das Schiff wieder segelfertig war und sie glücklich heimfahren konnten.

Als der König seine Tochter wieder erblickte, war große Freude. Er sprach zu den vier Brüdern »einer von euch soll sie zur Gemahlin haben, aber welcher das ist, macht unter euch aus.« Da entstand ein heftiger Streit unter ihnen, denn jeder machte Ansprüche. Der Sterngucker sprach »hätt ich nicht die Königstochter gesehen, so wären alle eure Künste umsonst gewesen: darum ist sie mein.« Der Dieb sprach »was hätte das Sehen geholfen, wenn ich sie nicht unter dem Drachen weggeholt hätte: darum ist sie mein.« Der Jäger sprach »ihr wärt doch samt der Königstochter von dem Untier zerrissen worden, hätte es meine Kugel nicht getroffen: darum ist sie mein.« Der Schneider sprach »und hätte ich euch mit meiner Kunst nicht das Schiff wieder zusammengeflickt, ihr wärt alle jämmerlich ertrunken: darum ist sie mein.« Da tat der König den Ausspruch »jeder von euch hat ein gleiches Recht, und weil ein jeder die Jungfrau nicht haben kann, so soll sie keiner von euch haben, aber ich will jedem zur Belohnung ein halbes Königreich geben.« Den Brüdern gefiel diese Entscheidung und sie sprachen »es ist besser so, als daß wir uneins werden.« Da erhielt jeder ein halbes Königreich, und sie lebten mit ihrem Vater in aller Glückseligkeit, solange es Gott gefiel.

130. Einäuglein, Zweiäuglein und Dreiäuglein.

Es war eine Frau, die hatte drei Töchter, davon hieß die älteste Einäuglein, weil sie nur ein einziges Auge mitten auf der Stirn hatte, und die mittelste Zweiäuglein, weil sie zwei Augen hatte wie andere Menschen, und die jüngste Dreiäuglein, weil sie drei Augen hatte, und das dritte stand bei ihr gleichfalls mitten auf der Stirne. Darum aber, daß Zweiäuglein nicht anders aussah als andere Menschenkinder, konnten es die Schwestern und die Mutter nicht leiden. Sie sprachen zu ihm »du mit deinen zwei Augen bist nicht besser als das gemeine Volk, du gehörst nicht zu uns.« Sie stießen es herum und warfen ihm schlechte Kleider hin und gaben ihm nicht mehr zu essen, als was sie übrig ließen, und taten ihm Herzeleid an, wo sie nur konnten.

Es trug sich zu, daß Zweiäuglein hinaus ins Feld gehen und die Ziege hüten mußte, aber noch ganz hungrig war, weil ihm seine Schwestern so wenig zu essen gegeben hatten. Da setzte es sich auf einen Rain und fing an zu weinen, und so zu weinen, daß zwei Bächlein aus seinen Augen herabflossen. Und wie es in seinem Jammer einmal aufblickte, stand eine Frau neben ihm, die fragte »Zweiäuglein, was weinst du?« Zweiäuglein antwortete »soll ich nicht weinen? weil ich zwei Augen habe wie andere Menschen, so können mich meine Schwestern und meine Mutter nicht leiden, stoßen mich aus einer Ecke in die andere, werfen mir alte Kleider hin und geben mir nichts zu essen, als was sie übrig lassen. Heute haben sie mir so wenig gegeben, daß ich noch ganz hungrig bin.« Sprach die weise Frau »Zweiäuglein, trockne dir dein Angesicht, ich will dir etwas sagen, daß du nicht mehr hungern sollst. Sprich nur zu deiner Ziege

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, deck,«

so wird ein sauber gedecktes Tischlein vor dir stehen und das schönste Essen darauf, daß du essen kannst, soviel du Lust hast.

Und wenn du satt bist und das Tischlein nicht mehr brauchst, so sprich nur

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, weg,«

so wirds vor deinen Augen wieder verschwinden.« Darauf ging die weise Frau fort. Zweiäuglein aber dachte, »ich muß gleich einmal versuchen, ob es wahr ist, was sie gesagt hat, denn mich hungert gar zu sehr,« und sprach

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, deck,«

und kaum hatte sie die Worte ausgesprochen, so stand da ein Tischlein mit einem weißen Tüchlein gedeckt, darauf ein Teller mit Messer und Gabel und silbernem Löffel, die schönsten Speisen standen rund herum, rauchten und waren noch warm, als wären sie eben aus der Küche gekommen. Da sagte Zweiäuglein das kürzeste Gebet her, das es wußte, »Herr Gott, sei unser Gast zu aller Zeit, Amen,« langte zu und ließ sichs wohl schmecken. Und als es satt war, sprach es, wie die weise Frau gelehrt hatte

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, weg.«

Alsbald war das Tischchen und alles, was darauf stand, wieder verschwunden. »Das ist ein schöner Haushalt,« dachte Zweiäuglein und war ganz vergnügt und guter Dinge.

Abends, als es mit seiner Ziege heim kam, fand es ein irdenes Schüsselchen mit Essen, das ihm die Schwestern hingestellt hatten, aber es rührte nichts an. Am andern Tag zog es mit seiner Ziege wieder hinaus und ließ die paar Brocken, die ihm gereicht wurden, liegen. Das erstemal und das zweitemal beachteten es die Schwestern gar nicht, wie es aber jedesmal geschah, merkten sie auf und sprachen »es ist nicht richtig mit dem Zweiäuglein, das läßt jedesmal das Essen stehen und hat doch sonst alles aufgezehrt, was ihm gereicht wurde: das muß andere Wege gefunden haben.« Damit sie aber hinter die Wahrheit kämen, sollte Einäuglein mitgehen, wenn Zweiäuglein die Ziege auf die Weide trieb, und sollte achten, was es da vorhätte, und ob ihm jemand etwas Essen und Trinken brächte.

Als nun Zweiäuglein sich wieder aufmachte, trat Einäuglein zu ihm und sprach »ich will mit ins Feld und sehen, daß die Ziege auch recht gehütet und ins Futter getrieben wird.« Aber Zweiäuglein merkte, was Einäuglein im Sinne hatte, und trieb die Ziege hinaus ins hohe Gras und sprach »komm, Einäuglein, wir wollen uns hinsetzen, ich will dir was vorsingen.« Einäuglein setzte sich hin und war von dem ungewohnten Weg und von der Sonnenhitze müde, und Zweiäuglein sang immer

»Einäuglein, wachst du?
Einäuglein, schläfst du?«

Da tat Einäuglein das eine Auge zu und schlief ein. Und als Zweiäuglein sah, daß Einäuglein schlief und nichts verraten konnte, sprach es

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, deck,«

und setzte sich an sein Tischlein und aß und trank, bis es satt war, dann rief es wieder

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, weg,«

und alles war augenblicklich verschwunden. Zweiäuglein weckte nun Einäuglein und sprach »Einäuglein, du willst hüten und schläfst dabei ein, derweil hätte die Ziege in alle Welt laufen können; komm, wir wollen nach Haus gehen.« Da gingen sie nach Haus, und Zweiäuglein ließ wieder sein Schüsselchen unangerührt stehen, und Einäuglein konnte der Mutter nicht verraten, warum es nicht essen wollte, und sagte zu seiner Entschuldigung »ich war draußen eingeschlafen.«

Am andern Tag sprach die Mutter zu Dreiäuglein »diesmal sollst du mitgehen und acht haben, ob Zweiäuglein draußen ißt, und ob ihm jemand Essen und Trinken bringt, denn essen und trinken muß es heimlich.« Da trat Dreiäuglein zum Zweiäuglein und sprach »ich will mitgehen und sehen, ob auch die Ziege recht gehütet und ins Futter getrieben wird.« Aber Zweiäuglein merkte, was Dreiäuglein im Sinne hatte, und trieb die Ziege hinaus ins hohe Gras und sprach »wir wollen uns dahin setzen, Dreiäuglein, ich will dir was vorsingen.« Dreiäuglein setzte sich und war müde von dem Weg und der Sonnenhitze, und Zweiäuglein hub wieder das vorige Liedlein an und sang

»Dreiäuglein, wachst du?«

Aber statt es nun singen mußte

»Dreiäuglein, schläfst du?«

sang es aus Unbedachtsamkeit

»Zweiäuglein, schläfst du?«

und sang immer

»Dreiäuglein, wachst du?«
»Zweiäuglein, schläfst du?«

Da fielen dem Dreiäuglein seine zwei Augen zu und schliefen, aber das dritte, weil es von dem Sprüchlein nicht angeredet war, schlief nicht ein. Zwar tat es Dreiäuglein zu, aber nur aus List, gleich als schlief es auch damit: doch blinzelte es und konnte alles gar wohl sehen. Und als Zweiäuglein meinte, Dreiäuglein schliefe fest, sagte es sein Sprüchlein

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, deck,«

aß und trank nach Herzenslust und hieß dann das Tischlein wieder fortgehen,

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, weg,«

und Dreiäuglein hatte alles mit angesehen. Da kam Zweiäuglein zu ihm, weckte es und sprach »ei, Dreiäuglein, du bist eingeschlafen? du kannst gut hüten! komm, wir wollen heim gehen.« Und als sie nach Haus kamen, aß Zweiäuglein wieder nicht, und Dreiäuglein sprach zur Mutter »ich weiß nun, warum das hochmütige Ding nicht ißt: wenn sie draußen zur Ziege spricht

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, deck,«

so steht ein Tischlein vor ihr, das ist mit dem besten Essen besetzt, viel besser als wirs hier haben: und wenn sie satt ist, so spricht sie

»Zicklein, meck,
Tischlein, weg,«

und alles ist wieder verschwunden; ich habe alles genau mit angesehen. Zwei Augen hatte sie mir mit einem Sprüchlein eingeschläfert, aber das eine auf der Stirne, das war zum Glück wach geblieben.« Da rief die neidische Mutter »willst dus besser haben als wir? die Lust soll dir vergehen!« Sie holte ein Schlachtmesser und stieß es der Ziege ins Herz, daß sie tot hinfiel.

Als Zweiäuglein das sah, ging es voller Trauer hinaus, setzte sich auf den Feldrain und weinte seine bitteren Tränen. Da stand auf einmal die weise Frau wieder neben ihm und sprach »Zweiäuglein, was weinst du?« »Soll ich nicht weinen!« antwortete es, »die Ziege, die mir jeden Tag, wenn ich Euer Sprüchlein hersagte, den Tisch so schön deckte, ist von meiner Mutter totgestochen; nun muß ich wieder Hunger und Kummer leiden.« Die weise Frau sprach »Zweiäuglein, ich will dir einen guten Rat erteilen, bitt deine Schwestern, daß sie dir das Eingeweide von der geschlachteten Ziege geben, und vergrab es vor der Haustür in die Erde, so wirds dein Glück sein.« Da verschwand sie, und Zweiäuglein ging heim und sprach zu den Schwestern »liebe Schwestern, gebt mir doch etwas von meiner Ziege, ich verlange nichts Gutes, gebt mir nur das Eingeweide.« Da lachten sie und sprachen »kannst du haben, wenn du weiter nichts willst.« Und Zweiäuglein nahm das Eingeweide und vergrubs abends in aller Stille nach dem Rate der weisen Frau vor die Haustüre.

Am andern Morgen, als sie insgesamt erwachten und vor die Haustüre traten, so stand da ein wunderbarer prächtiger Baum, der hatte Blätter von Silber, und Früchte von Gold hingen dazwischen, daß wohl nichts Schöneres und Köstlicheres auf der weiten Welt war. Sie wußten aber nicht, wie der Baum in der Nacht dahin gekommen war, nur Zweiäuglein merkte, daß er aus den Eingeweiden der Ziege aufgewachsen war, denn er stand gerade da, wo es sie in die Erde begraben hatte. Da sprach die Mutter zu Einäuglein »steig hinauf, mein Kind, und brich uns die Früchte von dem Baume ab.« Einäuglein stieg hinauf, aber wie es einen von den goldenen Äpfeln greifen wollte, so fuhr ihm der Zweig aus den Händen: und das geschah jedesmal, so daß es keinen einzigen Apfel brechen konnte, es mochte sich anstellen, wie es wollte. Da sprach die Mutter »Dreiäuglein, steig du hinauf, du kannst mit deinen drei Augen besser um dich schauen als Einäuglein.« Einäuglein rutschte herunter und Dreiäuglein stieg hinauf. Aber Dreiäuglein war nicht geschickter und mochte schauen, wie es wollte, die goldenen Äpfel wichen immer zurück. Endlich ward die Mutter ungeduldig und stieg selbst hinauf, konnte aber so wenig wie Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein die Frucht fassen und griff immer in die leere Luft. Da sprach Zweiäuglein »ich will mich einmal hinaufmachen, vielleicht gelingt mirs eher.« Die Schwestern riefen zwar »du mit deinen zwei Augen, was willst du wohl!« Aber Zweiäuglein stieg hinauf, und die goldenen Äpfel zogen sich nicht vor ihm zurück, sondern ließen sich von selbst in seine Hand herab, also daß es einen nach dem andern abpflücken konnte und ein ganzes Schürzchen voll mit herunterbrachte. Die Mutter nahm sie ihm ab, und statt daß sie, Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein dafür das arme Zweiäuglein hätten besser behandeln sollen, so wurden sie nur neidisch, daß es allein die Früchte holen konnte, und gingen noch härter mit ihm um.

Es trug sich zu, als sie einmal beisammen an dem Baum standen, daß ein junger Ritter daherkam. »Geschwind, Zweiäuglein,« riefen die zwei Schwestern, »kriech unter, daß wir uns deiner nicht schämen müssen,« und stürzten über das arme Zweiäuglein in aller Eil ein leeres Faß, das gerade neben dem Baume stand, und schoben die goldenen Äpfel, die es abgebrochen hatte, auch darunter. Als nun der Ritter näher kam, war es ein schöner Herr, der hielt still, bewunderte den prächtigen Baum von Gold und Silber und sprach zu den beiden Schwestern »wem gehört dieser schöne Baum? wer mir einen Zweig davon gäbe, könnte dafür verlangen, was er wollte.« Da antworteten Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein, der Baum gehörte ihnen zu, und sie wollten ihm einen Zweig wohl abbrechen. Sie gaben sich auch beide große Mühe, aber sie waren es nicht imstande, denn die Zweige und Früchte wichen jedesmal vor ihnen zurück. Da sprach der Ritter »das ist ja wunderlich, daß der Baum euch zugehört, und ihr doch nicht Macht habt, etwas davon abzubrechen.« Sie blieben dabei, der Baum wäre ihr Eigentum. Indem sie aber so sprachen, rollte Zweiäuglein unter dem Fasse ein paar goldene Äpfel heraus, so daß sie zu den Füßen des Ritters liefen, denn Zweiäuglein war bös, daß Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein nicht die Wahrheit sagten. Wie der Ritter die Äpfel sah, erstaunte er und fragte, wo sie herkämen. Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein antworteten, sie hätten noch eine Schwester, die dürfte sich aber nicht sehen lassen, weil sie nur zwei Augen hätte wie andere gemeine Menschen. Der Ritter aber verlangte sie zu sehen und rief »Zweiäuglein, komm hervor.« Da kam Zweiäuglein ganz getrost unter dem Faß hervor, und der Ritter war verwundert über seine große

Schönheit und sprach »du, Zweiäuglein, kannst mir gewiß einen Zweig von dem Baum abbrechen.« »Ja,« antwortete Zweiäuglein, »das will ich wohl können, denn der Baum gehört mir.« Und stieg hinauf und brach mit leichter Mühe einen Zweig mit feinen silbernen Blättern und goldenen Früchten ab und reichte ihn dem Ritter hin. Da sprach der Ritter »Zweiäuglein, was soll ich dir dafür geben?« »Ach,« antwortete Zweiäuglein, »ich leide Hunger und Durst, Kummer und Not vom frühen Morgen bis zum späten Abend: wenn ihr mich mitnehmen und erlösen wollt, so wäre ich glücklich.« Da hob der Ritter das Zweiäuglein auf sein Pferd und brachte es heim auf sein väterliches Schloß: dort gab er ihm schöne Kleider, Essen und Trinken nach Herzenslust, und weil er es so lieb hatte, ließ er sich mit ihm einsegnen, und ward die Hochzeit in großer Freude gehalten.

Wie nun Zweiäuglein so von dem schönen Rittersmann fortgeführt ward, da beneideten die zwei Schwestern ihm erst recht sein Glück. »Der wunderbare Baum bleibt uns doch,« dachten sie, »können wir auch keine Früchte davon brechen, so wird doch jedermann davor stehen bleiben, zu uns kommen und ihn rühmen; wer weiß, wo unser Weizen noch blüht!« Aber am andern Morgen war ihr Baum verschwunden und ihre Hoffnung dahin. Und wie Zweiäuglein zu seinem Kämmerlein hinaussah, so stand er zu seiner großen Freude davor und war ihm also nachgefolgt.

Zweiäuglein lebte lange Zeit vergnügt. Einmal kamen zwei arme Frauen zu ihm auf das Schloß und baten um ein Almosen. Da sah ihnen Zweiäuglein ins Gesicht und erkannte ihre Schwestern Einäuglein und Dreiäuglein, die so in Armut geraten waren, daß sie umherziehen und vor den Türen ihr Brot suchen mußten. Zweiäuglein aber hieß sie willkommen und tat ihnen Gutes und pflegte sie, also daß die beiden von Herzen bereuten, was sie ihrer Schwester in der Jugend Böses angetan hatten.

131. Die schöne Katrinelje und Pif Paf Poltrie.

»Guten Tag, Vater Hollenthe.« »Großen Dank, Pif Paf Poltrie.« »Könnt ich wohl Eure Tochter kriegen?« »O ja, wenns die Mutter Malcho (Melk-Kuh), der Bruder Hohenstolz, die Schwester Käsetraut und die schöne Katrinelje will, so kanns geschehen.«

»Wo ist dann die Mutter Malcho?«
»Sie ist im Stall und melkt die Kuh.«

»Guten Tag, Mutter Malcho.« »Großen Dank, Pif Paf Poltrie.« »Könnt ich wohl Eure Tochter kriegen?« »O ja, wenns der Vater Hollenthe, der Bruder Hohenstolz, die Schwester Käsetraut und die schöne Katrinelje will, so kanns geschehen.«

»Wo ist dann der Bruder Hohenstolz?«
»Er ist in der Kammer und hackt das Holz.«

»Guten Tag, Bruder Hohenstolz.« »Großen Dank, Pif Paf Poltrie.« »Könnt ich wohl Eure Schwester kriegen?« »O ja, wenns der Vater Hollenthe, die Mutter Malcho, die Schwester Käsetraut und die schöne Katrinelje will, so kanns geschehen.«

»Wo ist dann die Schwester Käsetraut?«
»Sie ist im Garten und schneidet das Kraut.«

»Guten Tag, Schwester Käsetraut.« »Großen Dank, Pif Paf Poltrie.« »Könnt ich wohl Eure Schwester kriegen?« »O ja, wenns der Vater Hollenthe, die Mutter Malcho, der Bruder Hohenstolz und die schöne Katrinelje will, so kanns geschehen.«

»Wo ist dann die schöne Katrinelje?«
»Sie ist in der Kammer und zählt ihre Pfennige.«

»Guten Tag, schöne Katrinelje.« »Großen Dank, Pif Paf Poltrie.« »Willst du wohl mein Schatz sein?« »O ja, wenns der Vater Hollenthe, die Mutter Malcho, der Bruder Hohenstolz, die Schwester Käsetraut will, so kanns geschehen.«

»Schön Katrinelje, wieviel hast du an Brautschatz?« »Vierzehn Pfennige bares Geld, drittehalb Groschen Schuld, ein halb Pfund Hutzeln, eine Handvoll Prutzeln, eine Handvoll Wurzelen,«

un so der watt:
is dat nig en guden Brutschatt?

»Pif Paf Poltrie, was kannst du für ein Handwerk? bist du ein Schneider?« »Noch viel besser.« »Ein Schuster?« »Noch viel besser.« »Ein Ackersmann?« »Noch viel besser.« »Ein Schreiner?« »Noch viel besser.« »Ein Schmied?« »Noch viel besser.« »Ein Müller?« »Noch viel besser.« »Vielleicht ein Besenbinder?« »Ja, das bin ich: ist das nicht ein schönes Handwerk?«

132. Der Fuchs und das Pferd.

Es hatte ein Bauer ein treues Pferd, das war alt geworden und konnte keine Dienste mehr tun, da wollte ihm sein Herr nichts mehr zu fressen geben und sprach »brauchen kann ich dich freilich nicht mehr, indes mein ich es gut mit dir, zeigst du dich noch so stark, daß du mir einen Löwen hierher bringst, so will ich dich behalten, jetzt aber mach dich fort aus meinem Stall,« und jagte es damit ins weite Feld. Das Pferd war traurig und ging nach dem Wald zu, dort ein wenig Schutz vor dem Wetter zu suchen. Da begegnete ihm der Fuchs und sprach »was hängst du so den Kopf und gehst so einsam herum?« »Ach,« antwortete das Pferd, »Geiz und Treue wohnen nicht beisammen in einem Haus: mein Herr hat vergessen, was ich ihm für Dienste in so vielen Jahren geleistet habe, und weil ich nicht recht mehr ackern kann, will er mir kein Futter mehr geben, und hat mich fortgejagt.« »Ohne allen Trost?« fragte der Fuchs. »Der Trost war schlecht, er hat gesagt, wenn ich noch so stark wäre, daß ich ihm einen Löwen brächte, wollt er mich behalten, aber er weiß wohl, daß ich das nicht vermag.« Der Fuchs sprach »da will ich dir helfen, leg dich nur hin, strecke dich aus und rege dich nicht, als wärst du tot.« Das Pferd tat, was der Fuchs verlangte, der Fuchs aber ging zum Löwen, der seine Höhle nicht weit davon hatte, und sprach »da draußen liegt ein totes Pferd, komm doch mit hinaus, da kannst du eine fette Mahlzeit halten.« Der Löwe ging mit, und wie sie bei dem Pferd standen, sprach der Fuchs »hier hast dus doch nicht nach deiner Gemächlichkeit, weißt du was? ich wills mit dem Schweif an dich binden, so kannst dus in deine Höhle ziehen und in aller Ruhe verzehren.« Dem Löwen gefiel der Rat, er stellte sich hin, und damit ihm der Fuchs das Pferd festknüpfen könnte, hielt er ganz still. Der Fuchs aber band mit des Pferdes Schweif dem Löwen die Beine zusammen und drehte und schnürte alles so wohl und stark, daß es mit keiner Kraft zu zerreißen war. Als er nun sein Werk vollendet hatte, klopfte er dem Pferd auf die Schulter und sprach »zieh, Schimmel, zieh.« Da sprang das Pferd mit einmal auf und zog den Löwen mit sich fort. Der Löwe fing an zu brüllen, daß die Vögel in dem ganzen Wald vor Schrecken aufflogen, aber das Pferd ließ ihn brüllen, zog und schleppte ihn über das Feld vor seines Herrn Tür. Wie der Herr das sah, besann er sich eines Bessern und sprach zu dem Pferd »du sollst bei mir bleiben und es gut haben,« und gab ihm satt zu fressen, bis es starb.

133. Die zertanzten Schuhe.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte zwölf Töchter, eine immer schöner als die andere. Sie schliefen zusammen in einem Saal, wo ihre Betten nebeneinander standen, und abends, wenn sie darin lagen, schloß der König die Tür zu und verriegelte sie. Wenn er aber am Morgen die Türe aufschloß, so sah er, daß ihre Schuhe zertanzt waren, und niemand konnte herausbringen, wie das zugegangen war. Da ließ der König ausrufen, wers könnte ausfindig machen, wo sie in der Nacht tanzten, der sollte sich eine davon zur Frau wählen und nach seinem Tod König sein: wer sich aber meldete und es nach drei Tagen und Nächten nicht herausbrächte, der hätte sein Leben verwirkt. Nicht lange, so meldete sich ein Königssohn und erbot sich, das Wagnis zu unternehmen. Er ward wohl aufgenommen und abends in ein Zimmer geführt, das an den Schlafsaal stieß. Sein Bett war da aufgeschlagen, und er sollte acht haben, wo sie hingingen und tanzten; und damit sie nichts heimlich treiben konnten oder zu einem andern Ort hinausgingen, war auch die Saaltüre offen gelassen. Dem Königssohn fiels aber wie Blei auf die Augen und er schlief ein, und als er am Morgen aufwachte, waren alle zwölfe zum Tanz gewesen, denn ihre Schuhe standen da und hatten Löcher in den Sohlen. Den zweiten und dritten Abend gings nicht anders, und da ward ihm sein Haupt ohne Barmherzigkeit abgeschlagen. Es kamen hernach noch viele und meldeten sich zu dem Wagestück, sie mußten aber alle ihr Leben lassen. Nun trug sichs zu, daß ein armer Soldat, der eine Wunde hatte und nicht mehr dienen konnte, sich auf dem Weg nach der Stadt befand, wo der König wohnte. Da begegnete ihm eine alte Frau, die fragte ihn, wo er hin wollte. »Ich weiß selber nicht recht,« sprach er, und setzte im Scherz hinzu »ich hätte wohl Lust, ausfindig zu machen, wo die Königstöchter ihre Schuhe vertanzen, und darnach König zu werden.« »Das ist so schwer nicht,« sagte die Alte, »du mußt den Wein nicht trinken, der dir abends gebracht wird, und mußt tun, als wärst du fest eingeschlafen.« Darauf gab sie ihm ein Mäntelchen und sprach »wenn du das umhängst, so bist du unsichtbar und kannst den zwölfen dann nachschleichen.« Wie der Soldat den guten Rat bekommen hatte, wards Ernst bei ihm, so daß er ein Herz faßte, vor den König ging und sich als Freier meldete. Er ward so gut aufgenommen wie die andern auch, und wurden ihm königliche Kleider angetan. Abends zur Schlafenszeit ward er in das Vorzimmer geführt, und als er zu Bette gehen wollte, kam die älteste und brachte ihm einen Becher Wein: aber er hatte sich einen Schwamm unter das Kinn gebunden, ließ den Wein da hineinlaufen, und trank keinen Tropfen. Dann legte er sich nieder, und als er ein Weilchen gelegen hatte, fing er an zu schnarchen wie im tiefsten Schlaf. Das hörten die zwölf Königstöchter, lachten, und die älteste sprach »der hätte auch sein Leben sparen können.« Danach standen sie auf, öffneten Schränke, Kisten und Kasten, und holten prächtige Kleider heraus: putzten sich vor den Spiegeln, sprangen herum und freuten sich auf den Tanz. Nur die jüngste sagte »ich weiß nicht, ihr freut euch, aber mir ist so wunderlich zumut: gewiß widerfährt uns ein Unglück.« »Du bist eine Schneegans,« sagte die älteste, »die sich immer fürchtet. Hast du vergessen, wie viel Königssöhne schon umsonst dagewesen sind? dem Soldaten hätt ich nicht einmal brauchen einen Schlaftrunk zu geben, der Lümmel wäre doch nicht aufgewacht.« Wie sie alle fertig waren, sahen sie erst nach dem Soldaten, aber der hatte die Augen zugetan, rührte und regte sich nicht, und sie glaubten nun ganz sicher zu sein. Da ging die älteste an ihr Bett und klopfte daran: alsbald sank es in die Erde, und sie stiegen durch die Öffnung hinab, eine nach der andern, die älteste voran. Der Soldat, der alles mit angesehen hatte, zauderte nicht lange, hing sein Mäntelchen um und stieg hinter der jüngsten mit hinab. Mitten auf der Treppe trat er ihr ein wenig aufs Kleid, da erschrak sie und rief »was ist das? wer hält mich am Kleid?« »Sei nicht so einfältig,« sagte die älteste, »du bist an einem Haken hängen geblieben.« Da gingen sie vollends hinab, und wie sie unten waren, standen sie in einem wunderprächtigen Baumgang, da waren alle Blätter von Silber und schimmerten und glänzten. Der Soldat dachte »du willst dir ein Wahrzeichen mitnehmen,« und brach einen Zweig davon ab: da fuhr ein gewaltiger Krach aus dem Baume. Die jüngste rief wieder »es ist nicht richtig, habt ihr den Knall gehört?« Die älteste aber sprach »das sind Freudenschüsse, weil wir unsere Prinzen bald erlöst haben.« Sie kamen darauf in einen Baumgang, wo alle Blätter von Gold, und endlich in einen dritten, wo sie klarer Demant waren: von beiden brach er einen Zweig ab, wobei es jedesmal krachte, daß die jüngste vor Schrecken zusammenfuhr: aber die älteste blieb dabei, es wären Freudenschüsse. Sie gingen weiter und kamen zu einem großen Wasser, darauf standen zwölf Schifflein, und in jedem Schifflein saß ein schöner Prinz, die hatten auf die zwölfe gewartet, und jeder nahm eine zu sich, der Soldat aber setzte sich mit der jüngsten ein. Da sprach der Prinz »ich weiß nicht, das Schiff ist heute viel schwerer, und ich muß aus allen Kräften rudern, wenn ich es fortbringen soll.« »Wovon sollte das kommen,« sprach die jüngste, »als vom warmen Wetter, es ist mir auch so heiß zumut.« Jenseits des Wassers aber stand ein schönes hellerleuchtetes Schloß, woraus eine lustige Musik erschallte von Pauken und Trompeten. Sie ruderten hinüber, traten ein, und jeder Prinz tanzte mit seiner Liebsten; der Soldat aber tanzte unsichtbar mit, und wenn eine einen Becher mit Wein hielt, so trank er ihn aus, daß er leer war, wenn sie ihn an den Mund brachte; und der jüngsten ward auch angst darüber, aber die älteste brachte sie immer zum Schweigen. Sie tanzten da bis drei Uhr am andern Morgen, wo alle Schuhe durchgetanzt waren und sie aufhören mußten. Die Prinzen fuhren sie über das Wasser wieder zurück, und der Soldat setzte sich diesmal vornen hin zur ältesten. Am Ufer nahmen sie von ihren Prinzen Abschied und versprachen, in der folgenden Nacht wiederzukommen. Als sie an der Treppe waren, lief der Soldat voraus und legte sich in sein Bett, und als die zwölf langsam und müde heraufgetrippelt kamen, schnarchte er schon wieder so laut, daß sies alle hören konnten, und sie sprachen »vor dem sind wir sicher.« Da taten sie ihre schönen Kleider aus, brachten sie weg, stellten die zertanzten Schuhe unter das Bett und legten sich nieder. Am andern Morgen wollte der Soldat nichts sagen, sondern das wunderliche Wesen noch mit ansehen, und ging die zweite und die dritte Nacht wieder mit. Da war alles wie das erstemal, und sie tanzten jedesmal, bis die Schuhe entzwei waren. Das drittemal aber nahm er zum Wahrzeichen einen Becher mit. Als die Stunde gekommen war, wo er antworten sollte, steckte er die drei Zweige und den Becher zu sich und ging vor den König, die zwölfe aber standen hinter der Türe und horchten, was er sagen würde. Als der König die Frage tat »wo haben meine zwölf Töchter ihre Schuhe in der Nacht vertanzt?« so antwortete er »mit zwölf Prinzen in einem unterirdischen Schloß,« berichtete, wie es zugegangen war, und holte die Wahrzeichen hervor. Da ließ der König seine Töchter kommen und fragte sie, ob der Soldat die Wahrheit gesagt hätte, und da sie sahen, daß sie verraten waren und leugnen nichts half, so mußten sie alles eingestehen. Darauf fragte ihn der König, welche er zur Frau haben wollte. Er antwortete »ich bin nicht mehr jung, so gebt mir die älteste.« Da ward noch am selbigen Tage die Hochzeit gehalten und ihm das Reich nach des Königs Tode versprochen. Aber die Prinzen wurden auf so viel Tage wieder verwünscht, als sie Nächte mit den zwölfen getanzt hatten.

134. Die sechs Diener.

Vorzeiten lebte eine alte Königin, die war eine Zauberin, und ihre Tochter war das schönste Mädchen unter der Sonne. Die Alte dachte aber auf nichts, als wie sie die Menschen ins Verderben locken könnte, und wenn ein Freier kam, so sprach sie, wer ihre Tochter haben wollte, müßte zuvor einen Bund (eine Aufgabe) lösen, oder er müßte sterben. Viele waren von der Schönheit der Jungfrau verblendet und wagten es wohl, aber sie konnten nicht vollbringen, was die Alte ihnen auflegte, und dann war keine Gnade, sie mußten niederknien, und das Haupt ward ihnen abgeschlagen. Ein Königssohn, der hatte auch von der großen Schönheit der Jungfrau gehört und sprach zu seinem Vater »laßt mich hinziehen, ich will um sie werben.« »Nimmermehr,« antwortete der König, »gehst du fort, so gehst du in deinen Tod.« Da legte der Sohn sich nieder und ward sterbenskrank, und lag sieben Jahre lang, und kein Arzt konnte ihm helfen. Als der Vater sah, daß keine Hoffnung mehr war, sprach er voll Herzenstraurigkeit zu ihm »zieh hin und versuche dein Glück, ich weiß dir sonst nicht zu helfen.« Wie der Sohn das hörte, stand er auf von seinem Lager, ward gesund und machte sich fröhlich auf den Weg.

Es trug sich zu, als er über eine Heide zu reiten kam, daß er von weitem auf der Erde etwas liegen sah wie einen großen Heuhaufen, und wie er sich näherte, konnte er unterscheiden, daß es der Bauch eines Menschen war, der sich dahingestreckt hatte; der Bauch aber sah aus wie ein kleiner Berg. Der Dicke, wie er den Reisenden erblickte, richtete sich in die Höhe und sprach »wenn Ihr jemand braucht, so nehmt mich in Eure Dienste.« Der Königssohn antwortete »was soll ich mit einem so ungefügen Mann anfangen?« »O,« sprach der Dicke, »das will nichts sagen, wenn ich mich recht auseinander tue, bin ich noch dreitausendmal so dick.« »Wenn das ist,« sagte der Königssohn, »so kann ich dich brauchen, komm mit mir.« Da ging der Dicke hinter dem Königssohn her, und über eine Weile fanden sie einen andern, der lag da auf der Erde und hatte das Ohr auf den Rasen gelegt. Fragte der Königssohn »was machst du da?« »Ich horche,« antwortete der Mann. »Wonach horchst du so aufmerksam?« »Ich horche nach dem, was eben in der Welt sich zuträgt, denn meinen Ohren entgeht nichts, das Gras sogar hör ich wachsen.« Fragte der Königssohn »sage mir, was hörst du am Hofe der alten Königin, welche die schöne Tochter hat?« Da antwortete er »ich höre das Schwert sausen, das einem Freier den Kopf abschlägt.« Der Königssohn sprach »ich kann dich brauchen, komm mit mir.« Da zogen sie weiter und sahen einmal ein paar Füße da liegen und auch etwas von den Beinen, aber das Ende konnten sie nicht sehen. Als sie eine gute Strecke fortgegangen waren, kamen sie zu dem Leib und endlich auch zu dem Kopf. »Ei,« sprach der Königssohn, »was bist du für ein langer Strick!« »O,« antwortete der Lange, »das ist noch gar nichts, wenn ich meine Gliedmaßen erst recht ausstrecke, bin ich noch dreitausendmal so lang, und bin größer als der höchste Berg auf Erden. Ich will Euch gerne dienen, wenn Ihr mich annehmen wollt.« »Komm mit,« sprach der Königssohn, »ich kann dich brauchen.« Sie zogen weiter und fanden einen am Weg sitzen, der hatte die Augen zugebunden. Sprach der Königssohn zu ihm »hast du blöde Augen, daß du nicht in das Licht sehen kannst?« »Nein,« antwortete der Mann, »ich darf die Binde nicht abnehmen, denn was ich mit meinen Augen ansehe, das springt auseinander, so gewaltig ist mein Blick. Kann Euch das nützen, so will ich Euch gern dienen.« »Komm mit,« antwortete der Königssohn, »ich kann dich brauchen.« Sie zogen weiter und fanden einen Mann, der lag mitten im heißen Sonnenschein und zitterte und fror am ganzen Leibe, so daß ihm kein Glied stillstand. »Wie kannst du frieren?« sprach der Königssohn, »und die Sonne scheint so warm.« »Ach,« antwortete der Mann, »meine Natur ist ganz anderer Art, je heißer es ist, desto mehr frier ich, und der Frost dringt mir durch alle Knochen: und je kälter es ist, desto heißer wird mir: mitten im Eis kann ichs vor Hitze und mitten im Feuer vor Kälte nicht aushalten.« »Du bist ein wunderlicher Kerl,« sprach der Königssohn, »aber wenn du mir dienen willst, so komm mit.« Nun zogen sie weiter und sahen einen Mann stehen, der machte einen langen Hals, schaute sich um und schaute über alle Berge hinaus. Sprach der Königssohn »wonach siehst du so eifrig?« Der Mann antwortete »ich habe so helle Augen, daß ich über alle Wälder und Felder, Täler und Berge hinaus und durch die ganze Welt sehen kann.« Der Königssohn sprach »willst du, so komm mit mir, denn so einer fehlte mir noch.«

Nun zog der Königssohn mit seinen sechs Dienern in die Stadt ein, wo die alte Königin lebte. Er sagte nicht, wer er wäre, aber er sprach »wollt Ihr mir Eure schöne Tochter geben, so will ich vollbringen, was Ihr mir auferlegt.« Die Zauberin freute sich, daß ein so schöner Jüngling wieder in ihre Netze fiel, und sprach »dreimal will ich dir einen Bund aufgeben, lösest du ihn jedesmal, so sollst du der Herr und Gemahl meiner Tochter werden.« »Was soll das erste sein?« fragte er. »Daß du mir einen Ring herbeibringst, den ich ins Rote Meer habe fallen lassen.« Da ging der Königssohn heim zu seinen Dienern und sprach »der erste Bund ist nicht leicht, ein Ring soll aus dem Roten Meer geholt werden, nun schafft Rat.« Da sprach der mit den hellen Augen »ich will sehen, wo er liegt,« schaute in das Meer hinab und sagte »dort hängt er an einem spitzen Stein.« Der Lange trug sie hin und sprach »ich wollte ihn wohl herausholen, wenn ich ihn nur sehen könnte.« »Wenns weiter nichts ist,« rief der Dicke, legte sich nieder und hielt seinen Mund ans Wasser: da fielen die Wellen hinein wie in einen Abgrund, und er trank das ganze Meer aus, daß es trocken ward wie eine Wiese. Der Lange bückte sich ein wenig und holte den Ring mit der Hand heraus. Da ward der Königssohn froh, als er den Ring hatte, und brachte ihn der Alten. Sie erstaunte und sprach »ja, es ist der rechte Ring: den ersten Bund hast du glücklich gelöst, aber nun kommt der zweite. Siehst du, dort auf der Wiese vor meinem Schlosse, da weiden dreihundert fette Ochsen, die mußt du mit Haut und Haar, Knochen und Hörnern verzehren: und unten im Keller liegen dreihundert Fässer Wein, die mußt du dazu austrinken; und bleibt von den Ochsen ein Haar und von dem Wein ein Tröpfchen übrig, so ist mir dein

Leben verfallen.« Sprach der Königssohn »darf ich mir keine Gäste dazu laden? ohne Gesellschaft schmeckt keine Mahlzeit.« Die Alte lachte boshaft und antwortete »einen darfst du dir dazu laden, damit du Gesellschaft hast, aber weiter keinen.«

Da ging der Königssohn zu seinen Dienern und sprach zu dem Dicken »du sollst heute mein Gast sein und dich einmal satt essen.« Da tat sich der Dicke voneinander und aß die dreihundert Ochsen, daß kein Haar übrig blieb, und fragte, ob weiter nichts als das Frühstück da wäre: den Wein aber trank er gleich aus den Fässern, ohne daß er ein Glas nötig hatte, und trank den letzten Tropfen vom Nagel herunter. Als die Mahlzeit zu Ende war, ging der Königssohn zur Alten und sagte ihr, der zweite Bund wäre gelöst. Sie verwunderte sich und sprach »so weit hats noch keiner gebracht, aber es ist noch ein Bund übrig,« und dachte »du sollst mir nicht entgehen und wirst deinen Kopf nicht oben behalten.« »Heut abend,« sprach sie, »bring ich meine Tochter zu dir in deine Kammer, und du sollst sie mit deinem Arm umschlingen: und wenn ihr da beisammen sitzt, so hüte dich, daß du nicht einschläfst: ich komme Schlag zwölf Uhr, und ist sie dann nicht mehr in deinen Armen, so hast du verloren.« Der Königssohn dachte »der Bund ist leicht, ich will wohl meine Augen offen behalten,« doch rief er seine Diener, erzählte ihnen, wie die Alte gesagt hatte, und sprach »wer weiß, was für eine List dahinter steckt, Vorsicht ist gut, haltet Wache und sorgt, daß die Jungfrau nicht wieder aus meiner Kammer kommt.« Als die Nacht einbrach, kam die Alte mit ihrer Tochter und führte sie in die Arme des Königssohns, und dann schlang sich der Lange um sie beide in einen Kreis, und der Dicke stellte sich vor die Türe, also daß keine lebendige Seele herein konnte. Da saßen sie beide, und die Jungfrau sprach kein Wort, aber der Mond schien durchs Fenster auf ihr Angesicht, daß er ihre wunderbare Schönheit sehen konnte. Er tat nichts als sie anschauen, war voll Freude und Liebe, und es kam keine Müdigkeit in seine Augen. Das dauerte bis elf Uhr, da warf die Alte einen Zauber über alle, daß sie einschliefen, und in dem Augenblick war auch die Jungfrau entrückt.

Nun schliefen sie hart bis ein Viertel vor zwölf, da war der Zauber kraftlos, und sie erwachten alle wieder. »O Jammer und Unglück,« rief der Königssohn, »nun bin ich verloren!« Die treuen Diener fingen auch an zu klagen, aber der Horcher sprach »seid still, ich will horchen,« da horchte er einen Augenblick und dann sprach er »sie sitzt in einem Felsen dreihundert Stunden von hier, und bejammert ihr Schicksal. Du allein kannst helfen, Langer, wenn du dich aufrichtest, so bist du mit ein paar Schritten dort.« »Ja,« antwortete der Lange, »aber der mit den scharfen Augen muß mitgehen, damit wir den Felsen wegschaffen.« Da huckte der Lange den mit verbundenen Augen auf, und im Augenblick, wie man eine Hand umwendet, waren sie vor dem verwünschten Felsen. Alsbald nahm der Lange dem andern die Binde von den Augen, der sich nur umschaute, so zersprang der Felsen in tausend Stücke. Da nahm der Lange die Jungfrau auf den Arm, trug sie in einem Nu zurück, holte ebenso schnell auch noch seinen Kameraden, und eh es zwölfe schlug, saßen sie alle wieder wie vorher und waren munter und guter Dinge. Als es zwölf schlug, kam die alte Zauberin herbeigeschlichen, machte ein höhnisches Gesicht, als wollte sie sagen »nun ist er mein,« und glaubte, ihre Tochter säße dreihundert Stunden weit im Felsen. Als sie aber ihre Tochter in den Armen des Königssohns erblickte, erschrak sie und sprach »da ist einer, der kann mehr als ich.« Aber sie durfte nichts einwenden und mußte ihm die Jungfrau zusagen. Da sprach sie ihr ins Ohr »Schande für dich, daß du gemeinem Volk gehorchen sollst und dir einen Gemahl nicht nach deinem Gefallen wählen darfst.«

Da ward das stolze Herz der Jungfrau mit Zorn erfüllt und sann auf Rache. Sie ließ am andern Morgen dreihundert Malter Holz zusammenfahren und sprach zu dem Königssohn, die drei Bünde wären gelöst, sie würde aber nicht eher seine Gemahlin werden, bis einer bereit wäre, sich mitten in das Holz zu setzen und das Feuer auszuhalten. Sie dachte, keiner seiner Diener würde sich für ihn verbrennen, und aus Liebe zu ihr würde er selber sich hineinsetzen, und dann wäre sie frei. Die Diener aber sprachen »wir haben alle etwas getan, nur der Frostige noch nicht, der muß auch daran,« setzten ihn mitten auf den Holzstoß und steckten ihn an. Da begann das Feuer zu brennen und brannte drei Tage, bis alles Holz verzehrt war, und als die Flammen sich legten, stand der Frostige mitten in der Asche, zitterte wie ein Espenlaub und sprach »einen solchen Frost habe ich mein Lebtage nicht ausgehalten, und wenn er länger gedauert hätte, so wäre ich erstarrt.«

Nun war keine Aussicht mehr zu finden, die schöne Jungfrau mußte den unbekannten Jüngling zum Gemahl nehmen. Als sie aber nach der Kirche fuhren, sprach die Alte »ich kann die Schande nicht ertragen,« und schickte ihr Kriegsvolk nach, das sollte alles niedermachen, was ihm vorkäme, und ihr die Tochter zurückbringen. Der Horcher aber hatte die Ohren gespitzt und die heimlichen Reden der Alten vernommen. »Was fangen wir an?« sprach er zu dem Dicken, aber der wußte Rat, spie einmal oder zweimal hinter dem Wagen einen Teil von dem Meereswasser aus, das er getrunken hatte, da entstand ein großer See, worin die Kriegsvölker stecken blieben und ertranken. Als die Zauberin das vernahm, schickte sie ihre geharnischten Reiter, aber der Horcher hörte das Rasseln ihrer Rüstung und band dem einen die Augen auf, der guckte die Feinde ein bißchen scharf an, da sprangen sie auseinander wie Glas. Nun fuhren sie ungestört weiter, und als die beiden in der Kirche ein gesegnet waren, nahmen die sechs Diener ihren Abschied und sprachen zu ihrem Herrn »Eure Wünsche sind erfüllt, Ihr habt uns nicht mehr nötig, wir wollen weiter ziehen und unser Glück versuchen.«

Eine halbe Stunde vor dem Schloß war ein Dorf, vor dem hütete ein Schweinehirt seine Herde: wie sie dahin kamen, sprach er zu seiner Frau »weißt du auch recht, wer ich bin? ich bin kein Königssohn, sondern ein Schweinehirt, und der mit der Herde dort, das ist mein Vater: wir zwei müssen auch daran und ihm helfen hüten.« Dann stieg er mit ihr in das Wirtshaus ab, und sagte heimlich zu den Wirtsleuten, in der Nacht sollten sie ihr die königlichen Kleider wegnehmen. Wie sie nun am Morgen aufwachte, hatte sie nichts anzutun, und die Wirtin gab ihr einen alten Rock und ein

Paar alte wollene Strümpfe, dabei tat sie noch, als wärs ein großes Geschenk, und sprach »wenn nicht Euer Mann wäre, hätt ichs Euch gar nicht gegeben.« Da glaubte sie, er wäre wirklich ein Schweinehirt, und hütete mit ihm die Herde und dachte »ich habe es verdient mit meinem Übermut und Stolz.« Das dauerte acht Tage, da konnte sie es nicht mehr aushalten, denn die Füße waren ihr wund geworden. Da kamen ein paar Leute und fragten, ob sie wüßte, wer ihr Mann wäre. »Ja,« antwortete sie, »er ist ein Schweinehirt, und ist eben ausgegangen, mit Bändern und Schnüren einen kleinen Handel zu treiben.« Sie sprachen aber »kommt einmal mit, wir wollen Euch zu ihm hinführen,« und brachten sie ins Schloß hinauf; und wie sie in den Saal kam, stand da ihr Mann in königlichen Kleidern. Sie erkannte ihn aber nicht, bis er ihr um den Hals fiel, sie küßte und sprach »ich habe so viel für dich gelitten, da hast du auch für mich leiden sollen.« Nun ward erst die Hochzeit gefeiert, und ders erzählt hat, wollte, er wäre auch dabei gewesen.

135. Die weiße und die schwarze Braut.

Eine Frau ging mit ihrer Tochter und Stieftochter über Feld, Futter zu schneiden. Da kam der liebe Gott als ein armer Mann zu ihnen gegangen und fragte »wo führt der Weg ins Dorf?« »Wenn Ihr ihn wissen wollt,« sprach die Mutter, »so sucht ihn selber,« und die Tochter setzte hinzu »habt Ihr Sorge, daß Ihr ihn nicht findet, so nehmt Euch einen Wegweiser mit.« Die Stieftochter aber sprach »armer Mann, ich will dich führen, komm mit mir.« Da zürnte der liebe Gott über die Mutter und Tochter, wendete ihnen den Rücken zu und verwünschte sie, daß sie sollten schwarz werden wie die Nacht und häßlich wie die Sünde. Der armen Stieftochter aber war Gott gnädig und ging mit ihr, und als sie nahe am Dorf waren, sprach er einen Segen über sie und sagte »wähle dir drei Sachen aus, die will ich dir gewähren.« Da sprach das Mädchen »ich möchte gern so schön und rein werden wie die Sonne;« alsbald war sie weiß und schön wie der Tag. »Dann möchte ich einen Geldbeutel haben, der nie leer würde;« den gab ihr der liebe Gott auch, sprach aber »vergiß das Beste nicht.« Sagte sie »ich wünsche mir zum dritten das ewige Himmelreich nach meinem Tode.« Das ward ihr auch gewährt, und also schied der liebe Gott von ihr.

Als die Stiefmutter mit ihrer Tochter nach Hause kam und sah, daß sie beide kohlschwarz und häßlich waren, die Stieftochter aber weiß und schön, so stieg die Bosheit in ihrem Herzen noch höher, und sie hatte nichts anders im Sinn, als wie sie ihr ein Leid antun könnte. Die Stieftochter aber hatte einen Bruder namens Reginer, den liebte sie sehr und erzählte ihm alles, was geschehen war. Nun sprach Reginer einmal zu ihr »liebe Schwester, ich will dich abmalen, damit ich dich beständig vor Augen sehe, denn meine Liebe zu dir ist so groß, daß ich dich immer anblicken möchte.« Da antwortete sie »aber ich bitte dich, laß niemand das Bild sehen.« Er malte nun seine Schwester ab und hing das Bild in seiner Stube auf; er wohnte aber in des Königs Schloß, weil er bei ihm Kutscher war. Alle Tage ging er davor stehen und dankte Gott für das Glück seiner lieben Schwester. Nun war aber gerade dem König, bei dem er diente, seine Gemahlin verstorben, die so schön gewesen war, daß man keine finden konnte, die ihr gliche, und der König war darüber in tiefer Trauer. Die Hofdiener bemerkten aber, daß der Kutscher täglich vor dem schönen Bilde stand, mißgönntens ihm und meldeten es dem König. Da ließ dieser das Bild vor sich bringen, und als er sah, daß es in allem seiner verstorbenen Frau glich, nur noch schöner war, so verliebte er sich sterblich hinein. Er ließ den Kutscher vor sich kommen und fragte, wen das Bild vorstellte. Der Kutscher sagte, es wäre seine Schwester, so entschloß sich der König, keine andere als diese zur Gemahlin zu nehmen, gab ihm Wagen und Pferde und prächtige Goldkleider und schickte ihn fort, seine erwählte Braut abzuholen. Wie Reginer mit der Botschaft ankam, freute sich seine Schwester, allein die Schwarze war eifersüchtig über das Glück, ärgerte sich über alle Maßen und sprach zu ihrer Mutter »was helfen nun all Eure Künste, da Ihr mir ein solches Glück doch nicht verschaffen könnt.« »Sei still,« sagte die Alte, »ich will dirs schon zuwenden.« Und durch ihre Hexenkünste trübte sie dem Kutscher die Augen, daß er halb blind war, und der Weißen verstopfte sie die Ohren, daß sie halb taub war. Darauf stiegen sie in den Wagen, erst die Braut in den herrlichen königlichen Kleidern, dann die Stiefmutter mit ihrer Tochter, und Reginer saß auf dem Bock, um zu fahren. Wie sie eine Weile unterwegs waren, rief der Kutscher

»deck dich zu, mein Schwesterlein,
daß Regen dich nicht näßt,
daß Wind dich nicht bestäubt,
daß du fein schön zum König kommst.«

Die Braut fragte »was sagt mein lieber Bruder?« »Ach,« sprach die Alte, »er hat gesagt, du solltest dein gülden Kleid ausziehen und es deiner Schwester geben.« Da zog sies aus und tats der Schwarzen an, die gab ihr dafür einen schlechten grauen Kittel. So fuhren sie weiter: über ein Weilchen rief der Bruder abermals

»deck dich zu, mein Schwesterlein,
daß Regen dich nicht näßt,
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Die Braut fragte »was sagt mein lieber Bruder?« »Ach,« sprach die Alte, »er hat gesagt, du solltest deine güldene Haube abtun und deiner Schwester geben.« Da tat sie die Haube ab und tat sie der Schwarzen auf und saß im bloßen Haar. So fuhren sie weiter: wiederum über eine Weile rief der Bruder

»deck dich zu, mein Schwesterlein,
daß Regen dich nicht näßt,
daß Wind dich nicht bestäubt,
und du fein schön zum König kommst.«

Die Braut fragte »was sagt mein lieber Bruder?« »Ach,« sprach die Alte, »er hat gesagt, du möchtest einmal aus dem Wagen sehen.« Sie fuhren aber gerade auf einer Brücke über ein tiefes Wasser. Wie nun die Braut aufstand und aus dem Wagen sich herausbückte, da stießen sie die beiden hinaus, daß sie mitten ins Wasser stürzte. Als sie versunken war, in demselben Augenblick stieg eine schneeweiße Ente aus dem Wasserspiegel hervor und schwamm den Fluß hinab. Der Bruder hatte gar nichts davon gemerkt und fuhr den Wagen weiter, bis sie an den Hof kamen. Da brachte er dem König die Schwarze als seine Schwester und meinte, sie wärs wirklich, weil es ihm trübe vor den Augen war und doch die Goldkleider schimmern sah. Der König, wie er die grundlose Häßlichkeit an seiner vermeinten Braut erblickte, ward sehr bös und befahl, den Kutscher in eine Grube zu werfen, die voll Ottern und Schlangengezücht war. Die alte Hexe aber wußte den König doch so zu bestricken und durch ihre Künste ihm die Augen zu verblenden, daß er sie und ihre Tochter behielt, ja daß sie ihm ganz leidlich vorkam und er sich wirklich mit ihr verheiratete.

Einmal abends, während die schwarze Braut dem König auf dem Schoße saß, kam eine weiße Ente zum Gossenstein in die Küche geschwommen und sagte zum Küchenjungen

»Jüngelchen, mach Feuer an,
daß ich meine Federn wärmen kann.«

Das tat der Küchenjunge und machte ihr ein Feuer auf dem Herd: da kam die Ente und setzte sich daneben, schüttelte sich und strich sich die Federn mit dem Schnabel zurecht. Während sie so saß und sich wohltat, fragte sie

»was macht mein Bruder Reginer?«

Der Küchenjunge antwortete

»liegt in der Grube gefangen
bei Ottern und bei Schlangen.«

Fragte sie weiter

»was macht die schwarze Hexe im Haus?«

Der Küchenjunge antwortete

»die sitzt warm
ins Königs Arm.«

Sagte die Ente

»daß Gott erbarm!«

und schwamm den Gossenstein hinaus.

Den folgenden Abend kam sie wieder und tat dieselben Fragen und den dritten Abend noch einmal. Da konnte es der Küchenjunge nicht länger übers Herz bringen, ging zu dem König und entdeckte ihm alles. Der König aber wollte es selbst sehen, ging den andern Abend hin, und wie die Ente den Kopf durch den Gossenstein hereinstreckte, nahm er sein Schwert und hieb ihr den Hals durch, da ward sie auf einmal zum schönsten Mädchen, und glich genau dem Bild, das der Bruder von ihr gemacht hatte. Der König war voll Freuden; und weil sie ganz naß dastand, ließ er köstliche Kleider bringen und ließ sie damit bekleiden. Dann erzählte sie ihm, wie sie durch List und Falschheit wäre betrogen und zuletzt in den Fluß hinabgeworfen worden; und ihre erste Bitte war, daß ihr Bruder aus der Schlangenhöhle herausgeholt würde. Und als der König diese Bitte erfüllt hatte, ging er in die Kammer, wo die alte Hexe saß, und fragte »was verdient die, welche das und das tut?« und erzählte, was geschehen war. Da war sie so verblendet, daß sie nichts merkte und sprach »die verdient, daß man sie nackt auszieht und in ein Faß mit Nägeln legt, und daß man vor das Faß ein Pferd spannt und das Pferd in alle Welt schickt.« Das geschah alles an ihr und ihrer schwarzen Tochter. Der König aber heiratete die weiße und schöne Braut und belohnte den treuen Bruder, indem er ihn zu einem reichen und angesehenen Mann machte.

136. Der Eisenhans.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte einen großen Wald bei seinem Schloß, darin lief Wild aller Art herum. Zu einer Zeit schickte er einen Jäger hinaus, der sollte ein Reh schießen, aber er kam nicht wieder. »Vielleicht ist ihm ein Unglück zugestoßen,« sagte der König, und schickte den folgenden Tag zwei andere Jäger hinaus, die sollten ihn aufsuchen, aber die blieben auch weg. Da ließ er am dritten Tag alle seine Jäger kommen und sprach »streift durch den ganzen Wald und laßt nicht ab, bis ihr sie alle drei gefunden habt.« Aber auch von diesen kam keiner wieder heim, und von der Meute Hunde, die sie mitgenommen hatten, ließ sich keiner wieder sehen. Von der Zeit an wollte sich niemand mehr in den Wald wagen, und er lag da in tiefer Stille und Einsamkeit, und man sah nur zuweilen einen Adler oder Habicht darüber hinfliegen. Das dauerte viele Jahre, da meldete sich ein fremder Jäger bei dem König, suchte eine Versorgung und erbot sich, in den gefährlichen Wald zu gehen. Der König aber wollte seine Einwilligung nicht geben und sprach »es ist nicht geheuer darin, ich fürchte, es geht dir nicht besser als den andern, und du kommst nicht wieder heraus.« Der Jäger antwortete »Herr, ich wills auf meine Gefahr wagen: von Furcht weiß ich nichts.«

Der Jäger begab sich also mit seinem Hund in den Wald. Es dauerte nicht lange, so geriet der Hund einem Wild auf die Fährte und wollte hinter ihm her: kaum aber war er ein paar Schritte gelaufen, so stand er vor einem tiefen Pfuhl, konnte nicht weiter, und ein nackter Arm streckte sich aus dem Wasser, packte ihn und zog ihn hinab. Als der Jäger das sah, ging er zurück und holte drei Männer, die mußten mit Eimern kommen und das Wasser ausschöpfen. Als sie auf den Grund sehen konnten, so lag da ein wilder Mann, der braun am Leib war wie rostiges Eisen, und dem die Haare über das Gesicht bis zu den Knien herabhingen. Sie banden ihn mit Stricken und führten ihn fort in das Schloß. Da war große Verwunderung über den wilden Mann, der König aber ließ ihn in einen eisernen Käfig auf seinen Hof setzen und verbot bei Lebensstrafe, die Türe des Käfigs zu öffnen, und die Königin mußte den Schlüssel selbst in Verwahrung nehmen. Von nun an konnte ein jeder wieder mit Sicherheit in den Wald gehen.

Der König hatte einen Sohn von acht Jahren, der spielte einmal auf dem Hof, und bei dem Spiel fiel ihm sein goldener Ball in den Käfig. Der Knabe lief hin und sprach »gib mir meinen Ball heraus.« »Nicht eher,« antwortete der Mann, »als bis du mir die Türe aufgemacht hast.« »Nein,« sagte der Knabe, »das tue ich nicht, das hat der König verboten,« und lief fort. Am andern Tag kam er wieder und forderte seinen Ball: der wilde Mann sagte »öffne meine Türe,« aber der Knabe wollte nicht. Am dritten Tag war der König auf die Jagd geritten, da kam der Knabe nochmals und sagte »wenn ich auch wollte, ich kann die Türe nicht öffnen, ich habe den Schlüssel nicht.« Da sprach der wilde Mann »er liegt unter dem Kopfkissen deiner Mutter, da kannst du ihn holen.« Der Knabe, der seinen Ball wiederhaben wollte, schlug alles Bedenken in den Wind und brachte den Schlüssel herbei. Die Türe ging schwer auf, und der Knabe klemmte sich den Finger. Als sie offen war, trat der wilde Mann heraus, gab ihm den goldenen Ball und eilte hinweg. Dem Knaben war angst geworden, er schrie und rief ihm nach »ach, wilder Mann, geh nicht fort, sonst bekomme ich Schläge.« Der wilde Mann kehrte um, hob ihn auf, setzte ihn auf seinen Nacken und ging mit schnellen Schritten in den Wald hinein. Als der König heim kam, bemerkte er den leeren Käfig und fragte die Königin, wie das zugegangen wäre. Sie wußte nichts davon, suchte den Schlüssel, aber er war weg. Sie rief den Knaben, aber niemand antwortete. Der König schickte Leute aus, die ihn auf dem Felde suchen sollten, aber sie fanden ihn nicht. Da konnte er leicht erraten, was geschehen war, und es herrschte große Trauer an dem königlichen Hof.

Als der wilde Mann wieder in dem finstern Wald angelangt war, so setzte er den Knaben von den Schultern herab und sprach zu ihm »Vater und Mutter siehst du nicht wieder, aber ich will dich bei mir behalten, denn du hast mich befreit, und ich habe Mitleid mit dir. Wenn du alles tust, was ich dir sage, so sollst dus gut haben. Schätze und Gold habe ich genug und mehr als jemand in der Welt.« Er machte dem Knaben ein Lager von Moos, auf dem er einschlief, und am andern Morgen führte ihn der Mann zu einem Brunnen und sprach »siehst du, der Goldbrunnen ist hell und klar wie Kristall: du sollst dabeisitzen und acht haben, daß nichts hineinfällt, sonst ist er verunehrt. Jeden Abend komme ich und sehe, ob du mein Gebot befolgt hast.« Der Knabe setzte sich an den Rand des Brunnens, sah, wie manchmal ein goldner Fisch, manchmal eine goldne Schlange sich darin zeigte, und hatte acht, daß nichts hineinfiel. Als er so saß, schmerzte ihn einmal der Finger so heftig, daß er ihn unwillkürlich in das Wasser steckte. Er zog ihn schnell wieder heraus, sah aber, daß er ganz vergoldet war, und wie große Mühe er sich gab, das Gold wieder abzuwischen, es war alles vergeblich. Abends kam der Eisenhans zurück, sah den Knaben an und sprach »was ist mit dem Brunnen geschehen?« »Nichts, nichts,« antwortete er und hielt den Finger auf den Rücken, daß er ihn nicht sehen sollte. Aber der Mann sagte »du hast den Finger in das Wasser getaucht: diesmal mags hingehen, aber hüte dich, daß du nicht wieder etwas hineinfallen läßt.« Am frühsten Morgen saß er schon bei dem Brunnen und bewachte ihn. Der Finger tat ihm wieder weh, und er fuhr damit über seinen Kopf, da fiel unglücklicherweise ein Haar herab in den Brunnen. Er nahm es schnell heraus, aber es war schon ganz vergoldet. Der Eisenhans kam und wußte schon, was geschehen war. »Du hast ein Haar in den Brunnen fallen lassen,« sagte er, »ich will dirs noch einmal nachsehen, aber wenns zum drittenmal geschieht, so ist der Brunnen entehrt, und du kannst nicht länger bei mir bleiben.« Am dritten Tag saß der Knabe am Brunnen, und bewegte den Finger nicht, wenn er ihm noch so weh tat. Aber die Zeit ward ihm lang, und er betrachtete sein Angesicht, das auf dem Wasserspiegel stand. Und als er sich dabei immer mehr beugte, und sich recht in die Augen sehen wollte, so fielen ihm seine langen Haare von den Schultern herab in das Wasser. Er richtete sich schnell in die Höhe, aber das ganze Haupthaar war schon vergoldet und glänzte wie eine Sonne. Ihr könnt denken, wie der arme Knabe erschrak. Er nahm sein Taschentuch und band es um den Kopf, damit es der Mann nicht sehen sollte. Als er kam, wußte er schon alles und sprach »binde das Tuch auf.« Da quollen die goldenen Haare hervor, und der Knabe mochte sich entschuldigen, wie er wollte, es half ihm nichts. »Du hast die Probe nicht bestanden und kannst nicht länger hier bleiben. Geh hinaus in die Welt, da wirst du erfahren, wie die Armut tut. Aber weil du kein böses Herz hast und ichs gut mit dir meine, so will ich dir eins erlauben: wenn du in Not gerätst, so geh zu dem Wald und rufe »Eisenhans,« dann will ich kommen und dir helfen. Meine Macht ist groß, größer als du denkst, und Gold und Silber habe ich im Überfluß.«

Da verließ der Königssohn den Wald und ging über gebahnte und ungebahnte Wege immerzu, bis er zuletzt in eine große Stadt kam. Er suchte da Arbeit, aber er konnte keine finden und hatte auch nichts erlernt, womit er sich hätte forthelfen können. Endlich ging er in das Schloß und fragte, ob sie ihn behalten wollten. Die Hofleute wußten nicht, wozu sie ihn brauchen sollten, aber sie hatten Wohlgefallen an ihm und hießen ihn bleiben. Zuletzt nahm ihn der Koch in Dienst und sagte, er könnte Holz und Wasser tragen und die Asche zusammenkehren. Einmal, als gerade kein anderer zur Hand war, hieß ihn der Koch die Speisen zur königlichen Tafel tragen, da er aber seine goldenen Haare nicht wollte sehen lassen, so behielt er sein Hütchen auf. Dem König war so etwas noch nicht vorgekommen, und er sprach »wenn du zur königlichen Tafel kommst, mußt du deinen Hut abziehen.« »Ach Herr,« antwortete er, »ich kann nicht, ich habe einen bösen Grind auf dem Kopf.« Da ließ der König den Koch herbeirufen, schalt ihn und fragte, wie er einen solchen Jungen hätte in seinen Dienst nehmen können; er sollte ihn gleich fortjagen. Der Koch aber hatte Mitleiden mit ihm und vertauschte ihn mit dem Gärtnerjungen.

Nun mußte der Junge im Garten pflanzen und begießen, hacken und graben, und Wind und böses Wetter über sich ergehen lassen. Einmal im Sommer, als er allein im Garten arbeitete, war der Tag so heiß, daß er sein Hütchen abnahm und die Luft ihn kühlen sollte. Wie die Sonne auf das Haar schien, glitzte und blitzte es, daß die Strahlen in das Schlafzimmer der Königstochter fielen und sie aufsprang, um zu sehen, was das wäre. Da erblickte sie den Jungen und rief ihn an »Junge, bring mir einen Blumenstrauß.« Er setzte in aller Eile sein Hütchen auf, brach wilde Feldblumen ab und band sie zusammen. Als er damit die Treppe hinaufstieg, begegnete ihm der Gärtner und sprach »wie kannst du der Königstochter einen Strauß von schlechten Blumen bringen? geschwind hole andere, und suche die schönsten und seltensten aus.« »Ach nein,« antwortete der Junge, »die wilden riechen kräftiger und werden ihr besser gefallen.« Als er in ihr Zimmer kam, sprach die Königstochter »nimm dein Hütchen ab, es ziemt sich nicht, daß du ihn vor mir aufbehältst.« Er antwortete wieder »ich darf nicht, ich habe einen grindigen Kopf.« Sie griff aber nach dem Hütchen und zog es ab, da rollten seine goldenen Haare auf die Schultern herab, daß es prächtig anzusehen war. Er wollte fortspringen, aber sie hielt ihn am Arm und gab ihm eine Handvoll Dukaten. Er ging damit fort, achtete aber des Goldes nicht, sondern er brachte es dem Gärtner und sprach »ich schenke es deinen Kindern, die können damit spielen.« Den andern Tag rief ihm die Königstochter abermals zu, er sollte ihr einen Strauß Feldblumen bringen, und als er damit eintrat, grapste sie gleich nach seinem Hütchen und wollte es ihm wegnehmen, aber er hielt es mit beiden Händen fest. Sie gab ihm wieder eine Handvoll Dukaten, aber er wollte sie nicht behalten und gab sie dem Gärtner zum Spielwerk für seine Kinder. Den dritten Tag gings nicht anders, sie konnte ihm sein Hütchen nicht wegnehmen, und er wollte ihr Gold nicht.

Nicht lange danach ward das Land mit Krieg überzogen. Der König sammelte sein Volk und wußte nicht, ob er dem Feind, der übermächtig war und ein großes Heer hatte, Widerstand leisten könnte. Da sagte der Gärtnerjunge »ich bin herangewachsen und will mit in den Krieg ziehen, gebt mir nur ein Pferd.« Die andern lachten und sprachen »wenn wir fort sind, so suche dir eins: wir wollen dir eins im Stall zurück lassen.« Als sie ausgezogen waren, ging er in den Stall und zog das Pferd heraus; es war an einem Fuß lahm und hickelte hunkepuus, hunkepuus. Dennoch setzte er sich auf und ritt fort nach dem dunkeln Wald. Als er an den Rand desselben gekommen war, rief er dreimal »Eisenhans« so laut, daß es durch die Bäume schallte. Gleich darauf erschien der wilde Mann und sprach »was verlangst du?« »Ich verlange ein starkes Roß, denn ich will in den Krieg ziehen.« »Das sollst du haben und noch mehr, als du verlangst.« Dann ging der wilde Mann in den Wald zurück, und es dauerte nicht lange, so kam ein Stallknecht aus dem Wald und führte ein Roß herbei, das schnaubte aus den Nüstern und war kaum zu bändigen. Und hinterher folgte eine große Schar Kriegsvolk, ganz in Eisen gerüstet, und ihre Schwerter blitzten in der Sonne. Der Jüngling übergab dem Stallknecht sein dreibeiniges Pferd, bestieg das andere und ritt vor der Schar her. Als er sich dem Schlachtfeld näherte, war schon ein großer Teil von des Königs Leuten gefallen, und es fehlte nicht viel, so mußten die übrigen weichen. Da jagte der Jüngling mit seiner eisernen Schar heran, fuhr wie ein Wetter über die Feinde und schlug alles nieder, was sich ihm widersetzte. Sie wollten fliehen, aber der Jüngling saß ihnen auf dem Nacken und ließ nicht ab, bis kein Mann mehr übrig war. Statt aber zu dem König zurückzukehren, führte er seine Schar auf Umwegen wieder zu dem Wald und rief den Eisenhans heraus. »Was verlangst du?« fragte der wilde Mann. »Nimm dein Roß und deine Schar zurück und gib mir mein dreibeiniges Pferd wieder.« Es geschah alles, was er verlangte, und er ritt auf seinem dreibeinigen Pferd heim. Als der König wieder in sein Schloß kam, ging ihm seine Tochter entgegen und wünschte ihm Glück zu seinem Sieg. »Ich bin es nicht, der den Sieg davongetragen hat,« sprach er, »sondern ein fremder Ritter, der mir mit seiner Schar zu Hilfe kam.« Die Tochter wollte wissen, wer der fremde Ritter wäre, aber der König wußte es nicht und sagte »er hat die Feinde verfolgt, und ich habe ihn nicht wieder gesehen.« Sie erkundigte sich bei dem Gärtner nach seinem Jungen: der lachte aber und sprach »eben ist er auf seinem dreibeinigen

Pferd heim gekommen, und die andern haben gespottet und gerufen »da kommt unser Hunkepuus wieder an.« Sie fragten auch »hinter welcher Hecke hast du derweil gelegen und geschlafen?« Er sprach aber »ich habe das Beste getan, und ohne mich wäre es schlecht gegangen.« Da ward er noch mehr ausgelacht.«

Der König sprach zu seiner Tochter »ich will ein großes Fest ansagen lassen, das drei Tage währen soll, und du sollst einen goldenen Apfel werfen: vielleicht kommt der Unbekannte herbei.« Als das Fest verkündet war, ging der Jüngling hinaus zu dem Wald und rief den Eisenhans. »Was verlangst du?« fragte er. »Daß ich den goldenen Apfel der Königstochter fange.« »Es ist so gut, als hättest du ihn schon,« sagte Eisenhans, »du sollst auch eine rote Rüstung dazu haben und auf einem stolzen Fuchs reiten.« Als der Tag kam, sprengte der Jüngling heran, stellte sich unter die Ritter und ward von niemand erkannt. Die Königstochter trat hervor und warf den Rittern einen goldenen Apfel zu, aber keiner fing ihn als er allein, aber sobald er ihn hatte, jagte er davon. Am zweiten Tag hatte ihn Eisenhans als weißen Ritter ausgerüstet und ihm einen Schimmel gegeben. Abermals fing er allein den Apfel, verweilte aber keinen Augenblick, sondern jagte damit fort. Der König ward bös und sprach »das ist nicht erlaubt, er muß vor mir erscheinen und seinen Namen nennen.« Er gab den Befehl, wenn der Ritter, der den Apfel gefangen habe, sich wieder davonmachte, so sollte man ihm nachsetzen, und wenn er nicht gutwillig zurückkehrte, auf ihn hauen und stechen. Am dritten Tag erhielt er vom Eisenhans eine schwarze Rüstung und einen Rappen und fing auch wieder den Apfel. Als er aber damit fortjagte, verfolgten ihn die Leute des Königs, und einer kam ihm so nahe, daß er mit der Spitze des Schwertes ihm das Bein verwundete. Er entkam ihnen jedoch, aber sein Pferd sprang so gewaltig, daß der Helm ihm vom Kopf fiel, und sie konnten sehen, daß er goldene Haare hatte. Sie ritten zurück und meldeten dem König alles.

Am andern Tag fragte die Königstochter den Gärtner nach seinem Jungen. »Er arbeitet im Garten: der wunderliche Kauz ist auch bei dem Fest gewesen und erst gestern abend wiedergekommen: er hat auch meinen Kindern drei goldene Äpfel gezeigt, die er gewonnen hat.« Der König ließ ihn vor sich fordern, und er erschien und hatte wieder sein Hütchen auf dem Kopf. Aber die Königstochter ging auf ihn zu und nahm es ihm ab, und da fielen seine goldenen Haare über die Schultern, und es war so schön, daß alle erstaunten. »Bist du der Ritter gewesen, der jeden Tag zu dem Fest gekommen ist, immer in einer andern Farbe, und der die drei goldenen Äpfel gefangen hat?« fragte der König. »Ja,« antwortete er, »und da sind die Äpfel,« holte sie aus der Tasche und reichte sie dem König. »Wenn Ihr noch mehr Beweise verlangt, so könnt Ihr die Wunde sehen, die mir Eure Leute geschlagen haben, als sie mich verfolgten. Aber ich bin auch der Ritter, der Euch zum Sieg über die Feinde geholfen hat.« »Wenn du solche Taten verrichten kannst, so bist du kein Gärtnerjunge: sage mir, wer ist dein Vater?« »Mein Vater ist ein mächtiger König und Goldes habe ich die Fülle, und soviel ich nur verlange.« »Ich sehe wohl,« sprach der König, »ich bin dir Dank schuldig, kann ich dir etwas zu Gefallen tun?« »Ja,« antwortete er, »das könnt Ihr wohl, gebt mir Eure Tochter zur Frau.« Da lachte die Jungfrau und sprach »der macht keine Umstände, aber ich habe schon an seinen goldenen Haaren gesehen, daß er kein Gärtnerjunge ist;« ging dann hin und küßte ihn. Zu der Vermählung kam sein Vater und seine Mutter und waren in großer Freude, denn sie hatten schon alle Hoffnung aufgegeben, ihren lieben Sohn wiederzusehen. Und als sie an der Hochzeitstafel saßen, da schwieg auf einmal die Musik, die Türen gingen auf und ein stolzer König trat herein mit großem Gefolge. Er ging auf den Jüngling zu, umarmte ihn und sprach »ich bin der Eisenhans, und war in einem wilden Mann verwünscht, aber du hast mich erlöst. Alle Schätze, die ich besitze, die sollen dein Eigentum sein.«

137. De drei schwatten Prinzessinnen.

Ostindien was von den Fiend belagert, he wull de Stadt nig verloeten, he wull ersten seshundert Dahler hebben. Do leiten se dat ut trummen, well de schaffen könne, de soll Börgemester weren. Do was der en armen Fisker, de fiskede up de See mit sinen Sohn, do kam de Fiend un nam den Sohn gefangen und gav em daför seshundert Dahler. Do genk de Vader hen und gav dat de Heerens in de Stadt, und de Fiend trock av und de Fisker wurde Börgemester. Do word utropen, wer nig »Heer Börgermester« segde, de soll an de Galge richtet weren.

De Sohn, de kam de Fiend wier ut de Hände un kam in en grauten Wold up en haujen Berg. De Berg, de dei sick up, do kam he in en graut verwünsket Schloß, woin Stohle, Diske un Bänke alle schwatt behangen wören. Do queimen drei Prinzessinnen, de gans schwatt antrocken wören, de men en lück (wenig) witt in't Gesicht hädden, de segden to em, he soll men nig bange sien, se wullen em nix dohn, he könn eer erlösen. Do seg he je, dat wull he gern dohn, wann he men wüste, wo he dat macken söll. Do segget se, he söll en gans Johr nig met en kühren (sprechen) un söll se auck nig anseihen; wat he gern hebben wull, dat söll he men seggen, wann se Antwort giewen dörften (geben dürften), wullen se et dohn. As he 'ne Tied lang der west was, sede he, he wull asse gern noh sin Vader gohn, da segget se, dat söll he men dohn, düssen Buel (Beutel) met Geld söll he met niermen, düsse Klöder soll he antrecken, un in acht Dage möst he der wier sin.

Do werd he upnurmen (aufgehoben), un is glick in Ostindien. Do kann he sin Vader in de Fiskhütte nig mer finden un frög de Luide, wo doh de arme Fisker blierwen wöre, do segget se, dat möst he nig seggen, dann queim he an de Galge. Do kümmet he bi sin Vader, do seg he »Fisker, wo sin ji do to kummen?« Do seg de »dat möt ji nig seggen, wann dat de Heerens van de Stadt gewahr weeret, kümme ji an, de Galge.« He willt ober gar nig loten, he werd noh de Galge bracht. Es he do is, seg he »o mine Heerens, gierwet mie doh Verlöv, dat ick noh de olle Fiskhütte gohn mag.« Do tüt he sinen ollen Kiel an, do kümmet he wier noh de Heerens un seg »seih ji et nu wull, sin ick nig en armen Fisker sinen Sohn? in düt Tueg heve ick minen Vader und Moder dat Braud gewunnen.« Do erkennet se en un badden üm Vergiebnüs un niermt en met noh sin Hues, do verteld he alle, wü et em gohn hev, dat he wöre in en Wold kummen up en haujen Berg, do hädde sick de Berg updohn, do wöre he in en verwünsket Schloß kummen, wo alles schwatt west wöre, un drei Prinzessinnen wören der an kummen, de wören schwatt west, men en lück witt in't Gesicht. De hädden em segd, he söll nig bange sien, he könn eer erlösen. Do seg sine Moder, dat mög wull nig guet sien, he soll 'ne gewiehte Wasskeefze met niermen un drüppen (tropfen) eer gleinig (glühend) Wass in't Gesicht.

He geit wier hen, und do gruelte (graute) em so, un he drüppde er Wass in't Gesicht, asse se sleipen, un se wören all halv witt. Do sprüngen alle de drei Prinzessinnen up un segden »de verfluchte Hund, usse Bloet soll örfer die Rache schreien, nu is kin Mensk up de Welt geboren un werd geboren, de us erlösen kann, wie hevet noh drei Bröders, de sind in siewen Ketten anschloeten, de söllt die terreiten.« Do givt et en Gekriesk in't ganse Schloß, un he sprank noh ut dat Fenster un terbrack dat Been, un dat Schloß sunk wier in de Grunde, de Berg was wier to, un nümmes wust, wo et west was.

138. Knoist un sine dre Sühne.

Twisken Werrel un Soist, do wuhnde ‘n Mann, un de hede Knoist, de hadde dre Sühne, de eene was blind, de annre was lahm un de dridde was splenternacket. Do giengen se mol öwer Feld, do sehen se eenen Hasen. De blinne, de schöt en, de lahme, de fienk en, de nackede, de stak en in de Tasken. Do käimen se für en groot allmächtig Waater, do wuren dre Schippe uppe, dat eene, dat rann, dat annre, dat sank, dat dridde, do was keen Buoden inne. Wo keen Buoden inne was, do giengen se olle dre inne. Do käimen se an eenen allmächtig grooten Walle (Wald), do was en groot allmächtig Boom inne, in den Boom was eene allmächtig groote Kapelle, in de Kapelle was een hageböcken Köster un en bußboomen Pastoer, de deelden dat Wiggewaater mit Knuppeln uit.

Sielig is de Mann,
de den Wiggewaater entlaupen kann.

139. Dat Mäken von Brakel.

Et gien mal ‘n Mäken von Brakel na de sünt Annen Kapellen uner de Hinnenborg, un weil et gierne ‘n Mann heven wulle un ock meinde, et wäre süs neimes in de Kapellen, sau sank et

»o hilge sünte Anne,
help mie doch bald tom Manne.
Du kennst ‘n ja wull:
he wuhnt var’m Suttmerdore,
hed gele Hore:
du kennst ‘n ja wull.«

De Köster stand awerst hünner de Altare un höre dat, da rep he mit ‘ner gans schrögerigen Stimme »du kriggst ‘n nig, du kriggst ‘n nig.« Dat Mäken awerst meinde, dat Marienkinneken, dat bie de Mudder Anne steiht, hedde üm dat to ropen, da wor et beuse un reip »pepperlepep, dumme Blae, halt de Schnuten un lat de Möhme kühren (die Mutter reden).«

140. Das Hausgesinde.

»Wo wust du henne?« »Nah Walpe.« »Ick nah Walpe, du nah Walpe; sam, sam, goh wie dann.«

»Häst du auck ‘n Mann? wie hedd din Mann?« »Cham.« »Min Mann Cham, din Mann Cham: ick nah Walpe, du nah Walpe; sam, sam, goh wie dann.«

»Häst du auck ‘n Kind: wie hedd din Kind?« »Grind.« »Min Kind Grind, din Kind Grind: min Mann Cham, din Mann Cham: ick nah Walpe, du nah Walpe; sam, sam, goh wie dann.«

»Häst du auck ‘ne Weige? wie hedd dine Weige?« »Hippodeige.« »Mine Weige Hippodeige, dine Weige Hippodeige: min Kind Grind, din Kind Grind: min Mann Cham, din Mann Cham: ick nah Walpe, du nah Walpe; sam, sam, goh wie dann.«

»Häst du auck ‘n Knecht? wie hedd din Knecht?« »Machmirsrecht.« »Min Knecht Machmirsrecht, din Knecht Machmirsrecht: mine Weige Hippodeige, dine Weige Hippodeige: min Kind Grind, din Kind Grind: min Mann Cham, din Mann Cham: ick nah Walpe, du nah Walpe; sam, sam, goh wie dann.«

141. Das Lämmchen und Fischchen.

Es war einmal ein Brüderchen und Schwesterchen, die hatten sich herzlich lieb. Ihre rechte Mutter war aber tot, und sie hatten eine Stiefmutter, die war ihnen nicht gut und tat ihnen heimlich alles Leid an. Es trug sich zu, daß die zwei mit andern Kindern auf einer Wiese vor dem Haus spielten, und an der Wiese war ein Teich, der ging bis an die eine Seite vom Haus. Die Kinder liefen da herum, kriegten sich und spielten Abzählens:

»Eneke, Beneke, lat mi liewen,
will di ock min Vügelken giewen.
Vügelken sall mi Strau söken,
Strau will ick den Köseken giewen,
Köseken sall mie Melk giewen,
Melk will ich den Bäcker giewen,
Bäcker sall mie ‘n Kocken backen,
Kocken will ick den Kätken giewen,
Kätken sall mie Müse fangen,
Müse will ick in ‘n Rauck hangen
un will se anschnien.«

Dabei standen sie in einem Kreis, und auf welchen nun das Wort »anschnien« fiel, der mußte fortlaufen, und die anderen liefen ihm nach und fingen ihn. Wie sie so fröhlich dahinsprangen, sahs die Stiefmutter vom Fenster mit an und ärgerte sich. Weil sie aber Hexenkünste verstand, so verwünschte sie beide, das Brüderchen in einen Fisch und das Schwesterchen in ein Lamm. Da schwamm das Fischchen im Teich hin und her, und war traurig, das Lämmchen ging auf der Wiese hin und her, und war traurig und fraß nicht und rührte kein Hälmchen an. So ging eine lange Zeit hin, da kamen fremde Gäste auf das Schloß. Die falsche Stiefmutter dachte »jetzt ist die Gelegenheit gut,« rief den Koch und sprach zu ihm »geh und hol das Lamm von der Wiese und schlachts, wir haben sonst nichts für die Gäste.« Da ging der Koch hin und holte das Lämmchen und führte es in die Küche und band ihm die Füßchen; das litt es alles geduldig. Wie er nun sein Messer herausgezogen hatte und auf der Schwelle wetzte, um es abzustechen, sah es, wie ein Fischlein in dem Wasser vor dem Gossenstein hin und her schwamm und zu ihm hinaufblickte. Das war aber das Brüderchen, denn als das Fischchen gesehen hatte, wie der Koch das Lämmchen fortführte, war es im Teich mitgeschwommen bis zum Haus. Da rief das Lämmchen hinab

»ach Brüderchen im tiefen See,
wie tut mir doch mein Herz so weh!
der Koch, der wetzt das Messer,
will mir mein Herz durchstechen.«

Das Fischchen antwortete

»ach Schwesterchen in der Höh,
wie tut mir doch mein Herz so weh
in dieser tiefen See!«

Wie der Koch hörte, daß das Lämmchen sprechen konnte und so traurige Worte zu dem Fischchen hinabrief, erschrak er und dachte, es müßte kein natürliches Lämmchen sein, sondern wäre von der bösen Frau im Haus verwünscht. Da sprach er »sei ruhig, ich will dich nicht schlachten,« nahm ein anderes Tier und bereitete das für die Gäste, und brachte das Lämmchen zu einer guten Bäuerin, der erzählte er alles, was er gesehen und gehört hatte. Die Bäuerin war aber gerade die Amme von dem Schwesterchen gewesen, vermutete gleich, wers sein würde, und ging mit ihm zu einer weisen Frau. Da sprach die weise Frau einen Segen über das Lämmchen und Fischchen, wovon sie ihre menschliche Gestalt wiederbekamen, und danach führte sie beide in einen großen Wald in ein klein Häuschen, wo sie einsam, aber zufrieden und glücklich lebten.

142. Simeliberg.

Es waren zwei Brüder, einer war reich, der andere arm. Der Reiche aber gab dem Armen nichts, und er mußte sich vom Kornhandel kümmerlich ernähren; da ging es ihm oft so schlecht, daß er für seine Frau und Kinder kein Brot hatte. Einmal fuhr er mit seinem Karren durch den Wald, da erblickte er zur Seite einen großen kahlen Berg, und weil er den noch nie gesehen hatte, hielt er still und betrachtete ihn mit Verwunderung. Wie er so stand, sah er zwölf wilde große Männer daherkommen: weil er nun glaubte, das wären Räuber, schob er seinen Karren ins Gebüsch und stieg auf einen Baum und wartete, was da geschehen würde. Die zwölf Männer gingen aber vor den Berg und riefen »Berg Semsi, Berg Semsi, tu dich auf.« Alsbald tat sich der kahle Berg in der Mitte voneinander und die zwölfe gingen hinein, und wie sie drin waren, schloß er sich zu. Über eine kleine Weile aber tat er sich wieder auf, und die Männer kamen heraus und trugen schwere Säcke auf dem Rücken, und wie sie alle wieder am Tageslicht waren, sprachen sie »Berg Semsi, Berg Semsi, tu dich zu.« Da fuhr der Berg zusammen und war kein Eingang mehr an ihm zu sehen, und die zwölfe gingen fort. Als sie ihm nun ganz aus den Augen waren, stieg der Arme vom Baum herunter und war neugierig, was wohl im Berge Heimliches verborgen wäre. Also ging er davor und sprach »Berg Semsi, Berg Semsi, tu dich auf,« und der Berg tat sich auch vor ihm auf. Da trat er hinein, und der ganze Berg war eine Höhle voll Silber und Gold, und hinten lagen große Haufen Perlen und blitzende Edelsteine, wie Korn aufgeschüttet. Der Arme wußte gar nicht, was er anfangen sollte, und ob er sich etwas von den Schätzen nehmen dürfte; endlich füllte er sich die Taschen mit Gold, die Perlen und Edelsteine aber ließ er liegen. Als er wieder herauskam, sprach er gleichfalls »Berg Semsi, Berg Semsi, tu dich zu,« da schloß sich der Berg und er fuhr mit seinem Karren nach Haus. Nun brauchte er nicht mehr zu sorgen und konnte mit seinem Golde für Frau und Kind Brot und auch Wein dazu kaufen, lebte fröhlich und redlich, gab den Armen und tat jedermann Gutes. Als aber das Geld zu Ende war, ging er zu seinem Bruder, lieh einen Scheffel und holte sich von neuem; doch rührte er von den großen Schätzen nichts an. Wie er sich zum drittenmal etwas holen wollte, borgte er bei seinem Bruder abermals den Scheffel. Der Reiche aber war schon lange neidisch über sein Vermögen und den schönen Haushalt, den er sich eingerichtet hatte, und konnte nicht begreifen, woher der Reichtum käme, und was sein Bruder mit dem Scheffel anfinge. Da dachte er eine List aus und bestrich den Boden mit Pech, und wie er das Maß zurückbekam, so war ein Goldstück daran hängen geblieben. Alsbald ging er zu seinem Bruder und fragte ihn »was hast du mit dem Scheffel gemessen?« »Korn und Gerste,« sagte der andere. Da zeigte er ihm das Goldstück und drohte ihm, wenn er nicht die Wahrheit sagte, so wollt er ihn beim Gericht verklagen. Er erzählte ihm nun alles, wie es zugegangen war. Der Reiche aber ließ gleich einen Wagen anspannen, fuhr hinaus, wollte die Gelegenheit besser benutzen und ganz andere Schätze mitbringen. Wie er vor den Berg kam, rief er »Berg Semsi, Berg Semsi, tu dich auf.« Der Berg tat sich auf, und er ging hinein. Da lagen die Reichtümer alle vor ihm und er wußte lange nicht, wozu er am ersten greifen sollte, endlich lud er Edelsteine auf, soviel er tragen konnte. Er wollte seine Last hinausbringen, weil aber Herz und Sinn ganz voll von den Schätzen waren, hatte er darüber den Namen des Berges vergessen und rief »Berg Simeli, Berg Simeli, tu dich auf.« Aber das war der rechte Name nicht, und der Berg regte sich nicht und blieb verschlossen. Da ward ihm angst, aber je länger er nachsann, desto mehr verwirrten sich seine Gedanken, und halfen ihm alle Schätze nichts mehr. Am Abend tat sich der Berg auf und die zwölf Räuber kamen herein, und als sie ihn sahen, lachten sie und riefen »Vogel, haben wir dich endlich, meinst du, wir hättens nicht gemerkt, daß du zweimal hereingekommen bist, aber wir konnten dich nicht fangen, zum drittenmal sollst du nicht wieder heraus.« Da rief er »ich wars nicht, mein Bruder wars,« aber er mochte bitten um sein Leben und sagen, was er wollte, sie schlugen ihm das Haupt ab.

143. Up Reisen gohn.

Et was emol ne arme Frau, de hadde enen Suhn, de wull so gerne reisen, do seg de Mohr »wu kannst du reisen? wi hebt je gar kien Geld, dat du mitniemen kannst.« Do seg de Suhn »ich will mi gut behelpen, ick will alltied seggen »nig viel, nig viel, nig viel«.«

Do genk he ene gude Tied un sede alltied »nig viel, nig viel, nig viel.« Kam do bi en Trop Fisker un seg »Gott helpe ju! nig viel, nig viel, nig viel.« »Wat segst du, Kerl, nig viel?« Un asse dat Gören (Garn) uttrocken, kregen se auck nig viel Fiske. So met enen Stock up de Jungen, un »hest du mig nig dresken (dreschen) seihn?« »Wat sall ick denn seggen?« seg de Junge. »Du sallst seggen »fank vull, fank vull«.«

Do geit he wier ene ganze Tied un seg »fank vull, fank vull,« bis he kümmt an enen Galgen, do hebt se en armen Sünder, den willt se richten. Do seg he »guden Morgen, fank vull, fank vull.« »Wat segst du, Kerl, fank vull? söllt der noch mehr leige (leidige, böse) Lüde in de Welt sien? is düt noch nig genog?« He krig wier wat up den Puckel. »Wat sall ick denn seggen?« »Du sallst seggen »Gott tröst de arme Seele«.«

De Junge geit wier ene ganze Tied un seg »Gott tröst de arme Seele!« Da kümmert he an en Grawen, do steit en Filler (Schinder), de tüt en Perd af. De Junge seg »guden Morgen, Gott tröst de arme Seele!« »Wat segst du, leige Kerl?« un schleif en met sinem Filhacken üm de Ohren, dat he ut den Augen nig seihen kann. »Wu sall ick denn seggen?« »Du sallst seggen »do ligge du Aas in en Grawen«.«

Do geit he und seg alltied »do ligge du Aas in en Grawen! do ligge du Aas in en Grawen!« Nu kümmt he bi enen Wagen vull Lüde, do seg he »guden Morgen, do ligge du Aas in en Grawen!« Do föllt de Wagen üm in en Grawen, de Knecht kreg de Pietske un knapt den Jungen, dat he wier to sine Mohr krupen moste. Un he is sien Lewen nig wier up Reisen gohn.

144. Das Eselein.

Es lebte einmal ein König und eine Königin, die waren reich und hatten alles, was sie sich wünschten, nur keine Kinder. Darüber klagte sie Tag und Nacht und sprach »ich bin wie ein Acker, auf dem nichts wächst.« Endlich erfüllte Gott ihre Wünsche: als das Kind aber zur Welt kam, sahs nicht aus wie ein Menschenkind, sondern war ein junges Eselein. Wie die Mutter das erblickte, fing ihr Jammer und Geschrei erst recht an, sie hätte lieber gar kein Kind gehabt als einen Esel, und sagte, man sollt ihn ins Wasser werfen, damit ihn die Fische fräßen. Der König aber sprach »nein, hat Gott ihn gegeben, soll er auch mein Sohn und Erbe sein, nach meinem Tod auf dem königlichen Thron sitzen und die königliche Krone tragen.« Also ward das Eselein aufgezogen, nahm zu, und die Ohren wuchsen ihm auch fein hoch und grad hinauf. Es war aber sonst fröhlicher Art, sprang herum, spielte und hatte besonders seine Lust an der Musik, so daß es zu einem berühmten Spielmann ging und sprach »lehre mich deine Kunst, daß ich so gut die Laute schlagen kann als du.« »Ach, liebes Herrlein,« antwortete der Spielmann, »das sollt Euch schwer fallen, Eure Finger sind nicht allerdings dazu gemacht und gar zu groß; ich sorge, die Saiten haltens nicht aus.« Es half keine Ausrede, das Eselein wollte und mußte die Laute schlagen, war beharrlich und fleißig und lernte es am Ende so gut als sein Meister selber. Einmal ging das junge Herrlein nachdenksam spazieren und kam an einen Brunnen, da schaute es hinein und sah im spiegelhellen Wasser seine Eseleinsgestalt. Darüber ward es so betrübt, daß es in die weite Welt ging und nur einen treuen Gesellen mitnahm. Sie zogen auf und ab, zuletzt kamen sie in ein Reich, wo ein alter König herrschte, der nur eine einzige, aber wunderschöne Tochter hatte. Das Eselein sagte »hier wollen wir weilen,« klopfte ans Tor und rief »es ist ein Gast haußen, macht auf, damit er eingehen kann.« Als aber nicht aufgetan ward, setzte er sich hin, nahm seine Laute und schlug sie mit seinen zwei Vorderfüßen aufs lieblichste. Da sperrte der Türhüter gewaltig die Augen auf, lief zum König und sprach »da draußen sitzt ein junges Eselein vor dem Tor, das schlägt die Laute so gut als ein gelernter Meister.« »So laß mir den Musikant hereinkommen,« sprach der König. Wie aber ein Eselein hereintrat, fing alles an über den Lautenschläger zu lachen. Nun sollte das Eselein unten zu den Knechten gesetzt und gespeist werden, es ward aber unwillig und sprach »ich bin kein gemeines Stalleselein, ich bin ein vornehmes.« Da sagten sie »wenn du das bist, so setze dich zu dem Kriegsvolk.« »Nein,« sprach es, »ich will beim König sitzen.« Der König lachte und sprach in gutem Mut »ja, es soll so sein, wie du verlangst, Eselein, komm her zu mir.« Danach fragte er »Eselein, wie gefällt dir meine Tochter?« Das Eselein drehte den Kopf nach ihr, schaute sie an, nickte und sprach »aus der Maßen wohl, sie ist so schön, wie ich noch keine gesehen habe.« »Nun, so sollst du auch neben ihr sitzen,« sagte der König. »Das ist mir eben recht,« sprach das Eselein und setzte sich an ihre Seite, aß und trank und wußte sich fein und säuberlich zu betragen. Als das edle Tierlein eine gute Zeit an des Königs Hof geblieben war, dachte es »was hilft das alles, du mußt wieder heim,« ließ den Kopf traurig hängen, trat vor den König und verlangte seinen Abschied. Der König hatte es aber lieb gewonnen und sprach »Eselein, was ist dir? du schaust ja sauer wie ein Essigkrug: bleib bei mir, ich will dir geben, was du verlangst. Willst du Gold?« »Nein,« sagte das Eselein und schüttelte mit dem Kopf. »Willst du Kostbarkeiten und Schmuck?« »Nein.« »Willst du mein halbes Reich?« »Ach nein.« Da sprach der König »wenn ich nur wüßte, was dich vergnügt machen könnte: willst du meine schöne Tochter zur Frau?« »Ach ja,« sagte das Eselein, »die möchte ich wohl haben,« war auf einmal ganz lustig und guter Dinge, denn das wars gerade, was er sich gewünscht hatte. Also ward eine große und prächtige Hochzeit gehalten. Abends, wie Braut und Bräutigam in ihr Schlafkämmerlein geführt wurden, wollte der König wissen, ob sich das Eselein auch fein artig und manierlich betrüge, und hieß einen Diener sich dort verstecken. Wie sie nun beide drinnen waren, schob der Bräutigam den Riegel vor die Türe, blickte sich um, und wie er glaubte, daß sie ganz allein wären, da warf er auf einmal seine Eselshaut ab und stand da als ein schöner königlicher Jüngling. »Nun siehst du,« sprach er, »wer ich bin, und siehst auch, daß ich deiner nicht unwert war.« Da ward die Braut froh, küßte ihn und hatte ihn von Herzen lieb. Als aber der Morgen herankam, sprang er auf, zog seine Tierhaut wieder über, und hätte kein Mensch gedacht, was für einer dahintersteckte. Bald kam auch der alte König gegangen, »ei,« rief er, »ist das Eselein schon munter! Du bist wohl recht traurig,« sagte er zu seiner Tochter, »daß du keinen ordentlichen Menschen zum Mann bekommen hast?« »Ach nein, lieber Vater, ich habe ihn so lieb, als wenn er der allerschönste wäre, und will ihn mein Lebtag behalten.« Der König wunderte sich, aber der Diener, der sich versteckt hatte, kam und offenbarte ihm alles. Der König sprach »das ist nimmermehr wahr.« »So wacht selber die folgende Nacht, Ihr werdets mit eigenen Augen sehen, und wißt Ihr was, Herr König, nehmt ihm die Haut weg und werft sie ins Feuer, so muß er sich wohl in seiner rechten Gestalt zeigen.« »Dein Rat ist gut,« sprach der König, und abends, als sie schliefen, schlich er sich hinein, und wie er zum Bett kam, sah er im Mondschein einen stolzen Jüngling da ruhen, und die Haut lag abgestreift auf der Erde. Da nahm er sie weg und ließ draußen ein gewaltiges Feuer anmachen und die Haut hineinwerfen, und blieb selber dabei, bis sie ganz zu Asche verbrannt war. Weil er aber sehen wollte, wie sich der Beraubte anstellen würde, blieb er die Nacht über wach und lauschte. Als der Jüngling ausgeschlafen hatte, beim ersten Morgenschein, stand er auf und wollte die Eselshaut anziehen, aber sie war nicht zu finden. Da erschrak er und sprach voll Trauer und Angst »nun muß ich sehen, daß ich entfliehe.« Wie er hinaustrat, stand aber der König da und sprach »mein Sohn, wohin so eilig, was hast du im Sinn? Bleib hier, du bist ein so schöner Mann, du sollst nicht wieder von mir. Ich gebe dir jetzt mein Reich halb, und nach meinem Tod bekommst du es ganz.« »So wünsch ich, daß der gute Anfang auch ein gutes Ende nehme,« sprach der Jüngling, »ich bleibe bei Euch.« Da gab ihm der

Alte das halbe Reich, und als er nach einem Jahr starb, hatte er das ganze, und nach dem Tode seines Vaters noch eins dazu, und lebte in aller Herrlichkeit.

145. Der undankbare Sohn.

Es saß einmal ein Mann mit seiner Frau vor der Haustür, und sie hatten ein gebraten Huhn vor sich stehen und wollten das zusammen verzehren. Da sah der Mann, wie sein alter Vater daherkam, geschwind nahm er das Huhn und versteckte es, weil er ihm nichts davon gönnte. Der Alte kam, tat einen Trunk und ging fort. Nun wollte der Sohn das gebratene Huhn wieder auf den Tisch tragen, aber als er danach griff, war es eine große Kröte geworden, die sprang ihm ins Angesicht und saß da, und ging nicht wieder weg; und wenn sie jemand wegtun wollte, sah sie ihn giftig an, als wollte sie ihm ins Angesicht springen, so daß keiner sie anzurühren getraute. Und die Kröte mußte der undankbare Sohn alle Tage füttern, sonst fraß sie ihm aus seinem Angesicht; und also ging er ohne Ruhe in der Welt hin und her.

146. Die Rübe.

Es waren einmal zwei Brüder, die dienten beide als Soldaten, und war der eine reich, der andere arm. Da wollte der Arme sich aus seiner Not helfen, zog den Soldatenrock aus und ward ein Bauer. Also grub und hackte er sein Stückchen Acker und säte Rübsamen. Der Same ging auf, und es wuchs da eine Rübe, die ward groß und stark und zusehends dicker und wollte gar nicht aufhören zu wachsen, so daß sie eine Fürstin aller Rüben heißen konnte, denn nimmer war so eine gesehen, und wird auch nimmer wieder gesehen werden. Zuletzt war sie so groß, daß sie allein einen ganzen Wagen anfüllte, und zwei Ochsen daran ziehen mußten, und der Bauer wußte nicht, was er damit anfangen sollte, und obs sein Glück oder sein Unglück wäre. Endlich dachte er »verkaufst du sie, was wirst du Großes dafür bekommen, und willst du sie selber essen, so tun die kleinen Rüben denselben Dienst: am besten ist, du bringst sie dem König und machst ihm eine Verehrung damit.« Also lud er sie auf den Wagen, spannte zwei Ochsen vor, brachte sie an den Hof und schenkte sie dem König. »Was ist das für ein seltsam Ding?« sagte der König, »mir ist viel Wunderliches vor die Augen gekommen, aber so ein Ungetüm noch nicht; aus was für Samen mag die gewachsen sein? oder dir geräts allein und du bist ein Glückskind.« »Ach nein,« sagte der Bauer, »ein Glückskind bin ich nicht, ich bin ein armer Soldat, der, weil er sich nicht mehr ernähren konnte, den Soldatenrock an den Nagel hing und das Land baute. Ich habe noch einen Bruder, der ist reich, und Euch, Herr König, auch wohl bekannt, ich aber, weil ich nichts habe, bin von aller Welt vergessen.« Da empfand der König Mitleid mit ihm und sprach »deiner Armut sollst du überhoben und so von mir beschenkt werden, daß du wohl deinem reichen Bruder gleich kommst.« Da schenkte er ihm eine Menge Gold, Äcker, Wiesen und Herden und machte ihn steinreich, so daß des andern Bruders Reichtum gar nicht konnte damit verglichen werden. Als dieser hörte, was sein Bruder mit einer einzigen Rübe erworben hatte, beneidete er ihn und sann hin und her, wie er sich auch ein solches Glück zuwenden könnte. Er wollts aber noch viel gescheiter anfangen, nahm Gold und Pferde und brachte sie dem König und meinte nicht anders, der würde ihm ein viel größeres Gegengeschenk machen, denn hätte sein Bruder so viel für eine Rübe bekommen, was würde es ihm für so schöne Dinge nicht alles tragen. Der König nahm das Geschenk und sagte, er wüßte ihm nichts wiederzugeben, das seltener und besser wäre als die große Rübe. Also mußte der Reiche seines Bruders Rübe auf einen Wagen legen und nach Haus fahren lassen. Daheim wußte er nicht, an wem er seinen Zorn und Ärger auslassen sollte, bis ihm böse Gedanken kamen und er beschloß, seinen Bruder zu töten. Er gewann Mörder, die mußten sich in einen Hinterhalt stellen, und darauf ging er zu seinem Bruder und sprach »lieber Bruder, ich weiß einen heimlichen Schatz, den wollen wir miteinander heben und teilen.« Der andere ließ sichs auch gefallen und ging ohne Arg mit. Als sie aber hinauskamen, stürzten die Mörder über ihn her, banden ihn und wollten ihn an einen Baum hängen. Indem sie eben darüber waren, erscholl aus der Ferne lauter Gesang und Hufschlag, daß ihnen der Schrecken in den Leib fuhr und sie über Hals und Kopf ihren Gefangenen in den Sack steckten, am Ast hinaufwanden und die Flucht ergriffen. Er aber arbeitete oben, bis er ein Loch im Sack hatte, wodurch er den Kopf stecken konnte. Wer aber des Wegs kam, war nichts als ein fahrender Schüler, ein junger Geselle, der fröhlich sein Lied singend durch den Wald auf der Straße daherritt. Wie der oben nun merkte, daß einer unter ihm vorbeiging, rief er »sei mir gegrüßt zu guter Stunde.« Der Schüler guckte sich überall um, wußte nicht, wo die Stimme herschallte, endlich sprach er »wer ruft mir?« Da antwortete er aus dem Wipfel »erhebe deine Augen, ich sitze hier oben im Sack der Weisheit: in kurzer Zeit habe ich große Dinge gelernt, dagegen sind alle Schulen ein Wind: um ein weniges, so werde ich ausgelernt haben, herabsteigen und weiser sein als alle Menschen. Ich verstehe die Gestirne und Himmelszeichen, das Wehen aller Winde, den Sand im Meer, Heilung der Krankheit, die Kräfte der Kräuter, Vögel und Steine. Wärst du einmal darin, du würdest fühlen, was für Herrlichkeit aus dem Sack der Weisheit fließt.« Der Schüler, wie er das alles hörte, erstaunte und sprach »gesegnet sei die Stunde, wo ich dich gefunden habe, könnt ich nicht auch ein wenig in den Sack kommen?« Oben der antwortete, als tät ers nicht gerne, »eine kleine Weile will ich dich wohl hineinlassen für Lohn und gute Worte, aber du mußt doch noch eine Stunde warten, es ist ein Stück übrig, das ich erst lernen muß.« Als der Schüler ein wenig gewartet hatte, war ihm die Zeit zu lang und er bat, daß er doch möchte hineingelassen werden, sein Durst nach Weisheit wäre gar zu groß. Da stellte sich der oben, als gäbe er endlich nach, und sprach »damit ich aus dem Haus der Weisheit heraus kann, mußt du den Sack am Strick herunterlassen, so sollst du eingehen.« Also ließ der Schüler ihn herunter, band den Sack auf und befreite ihn, dann rief er selber »nun zieh mich recht geschwind hinauf,« und wollt geradstehend in den Sack einschreiten. »Halt!« sagte der andere, »so gehts nicht an,« packte ihn beim Kopf, steckte ihn umgekehrt in den Sack, schnürte zu und zog den Jünger der Weisheit am Strick baumwärts, dann schwengelte er ihn in der Luft und sprach »wie stehts, mein lieber Geselle? siehe, schon fühlst du, daß dir die Weisheit kommt, und machst gute Erfahrung, sitze also fein ruhig, bis du klüger wirst.« Damit stieg er auf des Schülers Pferd, ritt fort, schickte aber nach einer Stunde jemand, der ihn wieder herablassen mußte.

147. Das junggeglühte Männlein.

Zur Zeit, da unser Herr noch auf Erden ging, kehrte er eines Abends mit dem heiligen Petrus bei einem Schmied ein und bekam willig Herberge. Nun geschahs, daß ein armer Bettelmann, von Alter und Gebrechen hart gedrückt, in dieses Haus kam und vom Schmied Almosen forderte. Des erbarmte sich Petrus und sprach »Herr und Meister, so dirs gefällt, heil ihm doch seine Plage, daß er sich selbst sein Brot möge gewinnen.« Sanftmütig sprach der Herr »Schmied, leih mir deine Esse und lege mir Kohlen an, so will ich den alten kranken Mann zu dieser Zeit verjüngen.« Der Schmied war ganz bereit, und St. Petrus zog die Bälge, und als das Kohlenfeuer auffunkte, groß und hoch, nahm unser Herr das alte Männlein, schobs in die Esse, mitten ins rote Feuer, daß es drin glühte wie ein Rosenstock, und Gott lobte mit lauter Stimme. Nachdem trat der Herr zum Löschtrog, zog das glühende Männlein hinein, daß das Wasser über ihn zusammenschlug, und nachdem ers fein sittig abgekühlt, gab er ihm seinen Segen: siehe, zuhand sprang das Männlein heraus, zart, gerade, gesund und wie von zwanzig Jahren. Der Schmied, der eben und genau zugesehen hatte, lud sie alle zum Nachtmahl. Er hatte aber eine alte halbblinde bucklichte Schwieger, die machte sich zum Jüngling hin und forschte ernstlich, ob ihn das Feuer hart gebrennet habe. Nie sei ihm besser gewesen, antwortete jener, er habe da in der Glut gesessen wie in einem kühlen Tau.

Was der Jüngling gesagt hatte, das klang die ganze Nacht in den Ohren der alten Frau, und als der Herr frühmorgens die Straße weitergezogen war und dem Schmied wohl gedankt hatte, meinte dieser, er könnte seine alte Schwieger auch jung machen, da er fein ordentlich alles mit angesehen habe und es in seine Kunst schlage. Rief sie deshalb an, ob sie auch wie ein Mägdlein von achtzehn Jahren in Sprüngen daher wollte gehen. Sie sprach »von ganzem Herzen,« weil es dem Jüngling auch so sanft angekommen war. Machte also der Schmied große Glut und stieß die Alte hinein, die sich hin und wieder bog und grausames Mordgeschrei anstimmte. »Sitz still, was schreist und hüpfst du, ich will erst weidlich zublasen.« Zog damit die Bälge von neuem, bis ihr alle Haderlumpen brannten. Das alte Weib schrie ohne Ruhe, und der Schmied dachte »Kunst geht nicht recht zu,« nahm sie heraus und warf sie in den Löschtrog. Da schrie sie ganz überlaut, daß es droben im Haus die Schmiedin und ihre Schnur hörten: die liefen beide die Stiegen herab, und sahen die Alte heulend und maulend ganz zusammengeschnurrt im Trog liegen, das Angesicht gerunzelt, gefaltet und ungeschaffen. Darob sich die zwei, die beide mit Kindern gingen, so entsetzten, daß sie noch dieselbe Nacht zwei Junge gebaren, die waren nicht wie Menschen geschaffen, sondern wie Affen, liefen zum Wald hinein; und von ihnen stammt das Geschlecht der Affen her.

148. Des Herrn und des Teufels Getier.

Gott der Herr hatte alle Tiere erschaffen und sich die Wölfe zu seinen Hunden auserwählet: bloß der Geiß hatte er vergessen. Da richtete sich der Teufel an, wollte auch schaffen und machte die Geiße mit feinen langen Schwänzen. Wenn sie nun zur Weide gingen, blieben sie gewöhnlich mit ihren Schwänzen in den Dornhecken hängen, da mußte der Teufel hineingehen und sie mit vieler Mühe losknüpfen. Das verdroß ihn zuletzt, war her und biß jeder Geiß den Schwanz ab, wie noch heut des Tags an den Stümpfen zu sehen ist.

Nun ließ er sie zwar allein weiden, aber es geschah, daß Gott der Herr zusah, wie sie bald einen fruchtbaren Baum benagten, bald die edlen Reben beschädigten, bald andere zarte Pflanzen verderbten. Das jammerte ihn, so daß er aus Güte und Gnaden seine Wölfe dran hetzte, welche die Geiße, die da gingen, bald zerrissen. Wie der Teufel das vernahm, trat er vor den Herrn und sprach »dein Geschöpf hat mir das meine zerrissen.« Der Herr antwortete »was hattest du es zu Schaden erschaffen!« Der Teufel sagte »ich mußte das: gleichwie selbst mein Sinn auf Schaden geht, konnte, was ich erschaffen, keine andere Natur haben, und mußt mirs teuer zahlen.« »Ich zahl dirs, sobald das Eichenlaub abfällt, dann komm, dein Geld ist schon gezählt.« Als das Eichenlaub abgefallen war, kam der Teufel und forderte seine Schuld. Der Herr aber sprach »in der Kirche zu Konstantinopel steht eine hohe Eiche, die hat noch alles ihr Laub.« Mit Toben und Fluchen entwich der Teufel und wollte die Eiche suchen, irrte sechs Monate in der Wüstenei, ehe er sie befand, und als er wiederkam, waren derweil wieder alle andere Eichen voll grüner Blätter. Da mußte er sein Schuld fahren lassen, stach im Zorn allen übrigen Geißen die Augen aus und setzte ihnen seine eigenen ein.

Darum haben alle Geißen Teufelsaugen und abgebissene Schwänze, und er nimmt gern ihre Gestalt an.

149. Der Hahnenbalken.

Es war einmal ein Zauberer, der stand mitten in einer großen Menge Volks und vollbrachte seine Wunderdinge. Da ließ er auch einen Hahn einherschreiten, der hob einen schweren Balken und trug ihn, als wäre er federleicht. Nun war aber ein Mädchen, das hatte eben ein vierblättriges Kleeblatt gefunden und war dadurch klug geworden, so daß kein Blendwerk vor ihm bestehen konnte, und sah, daß der Balken nichts war als ein Strohhalm. Da rief es »ihr Leute, seht ihr nicht, das ist ein bloßer Strohhalm und kein Balken, was der Hahn da trägt.« Alsbald verschwand der Zauber, und die Leute sahen, was es war, und jagten den Hexenmeister mit Schimpf und Schande fort. Er aber, voll innerlichen Zornes, sprach »ich will mich schon rächen.« Nach einiger Zeit hielt das Mädchen Hochzeit, war geputzt und ging in einem großen Zug über das Feld nach dem Ort, wo die Kirche stand. Auf einmal kamen sie an einen stark angeschwollenen Bach, und war keine Brücke und kein Steg, darüber zu gehen. Da war die Braut flink, hob ihre Kleider auf und wollte durchwaten. Wie sie nun eben im Wasser so steht, ruft ein Mann, und das war der Zauberer, neben ihr ganz spöttisch »ei! wo hast du deine Augen, daß du das für ein Wasser hältst?« Da gingen ihr die Augen auf, und sie sah, daß sie mit ihren aufgehobenen Kleidern mitten in einem blaublühenden Flachsfeld stand. Da sahen es die Leute auch allesamt und jagten sie mit Schimpf und Gelächter fort.

150. Die alte Bettelfrau.

Es war einmal eine alte Frau, du hast wohl ehe eine alte Frau sehn betteln gehn? diese Frau bettelte auch, und wann sie etwas bekam, dann sagte sie »Gott lohn Euch.« Die Bettelfrau kam an die Tür, da stand ein freundlicher Schelm von Jungen am Feuer und wärmte sich. Der Junge sagte freundlich zu der armen alten Frau, wie sie so an der Tür stand und zitterte »kommt, Altmutter, und erwärmt Euch.« Sie kam herzu, ging aber zu nahe ans Feuer stehn, daß ihre alten Lumpen anfingen zu brennen, und sie wards nicht gewahr. Der Junge stand und sah das, er hätts doch löschen sollen? Nicht wahr, er hätte löschen sollen? Und wenn er kein Wasser gehabt hätte, dann hätte er alles Wasser in seinem Leibe zu den Augen herausweinen sollen, das hätte so zwei hübsche Bächlein gegeben zu löschen.

151. Die drei Faulen.

Ein König hatte drei Söhne, die waren ihm alle gleich lieb, und er wußte nicht, welchen er zum König nach seinem Tode bestimmen sollte. Als die Zeit kam, daß er sterben wollte, rief er sie vor sein Bett und sprach »liebe Kinder, ich habe etwas bei mir bedacht, das will ich euch eröffnen: welcher von euch der faulste ist, der soll nach mir König werden.« Da sprach der älteste »Vater, so gehört das Reich mir, denn ich bin so faul, wenn ich liege und will schlafen, und es fällt mir ein Tropfen in die Augen, so mag ich sie nicht zutun, damit ich einschlafe.« Der zweite sprach »Vater, das Reich gehört mir, denn ich bin so faul, wenn ich beim Feuer sitze, mich zu wärmen, so ließ ich mir eher die Fersen verbrennen, eh ich die Beine zurückzöge.« Der dritte sprach »Vater, das Reich ist mein, denn ich bin so faul, sollt ich aufgehängt werden, und hätte den Strick schon um den Hals, und einer gäbe mir ein scharfes Messer in die Hand, damit ich den Strick zerschneiden dürfte, so ließ ich mich eher aufhenken, ehe ich meine Hand erhübe zum Strick.« Wie der Vater das hörte, sprach er »du hast es am weitesten gebracht und sollst der König sein.«

151*. Die zwölf faulen Knechte

Zwölf Knechte, die den ganzen Tag nichts getan hatten, wollten sich am Abend nicht noch anstrengen, sondern legten sich ins Gras und rühmten sich ihrer Faulheit. Der erste sprach »was geht mich eure Faulheit an, ich habe mit meiner eigenen zu tun. Die Sorge für den Leib ist meine Hauptarbeit: ich esse nicht wenig und trinke desto mehr. Wenn ich vier Mahlzeiten gehalten habe, so faste ich eine kurze Zeit, bis ich wieder Hunger empfinde, das bekommt mir am besten. Früh aufstehn ist nicht meine Sache, wenn es gegen Mittag geht, so suche ich mir schon einen Ruheplatz aus. Ruft der Herr, so tue ich, als hätte ich es nicht gehört, und ruft er zum zweitenmal, so warte ich noch eine Zeitlang, bis ich mich erhebe, und gehe auch dann recht langsam. So läßt sich das Leben ertragen.« Der zweite sprach »ich habe ein Pferd zu besorgen, aber ich lasse ihm das Gebiß im Maul, und wenn ich nicht will, so gebe ich ihm kein Futter und sage, es habe schon gefressen. Dafür lege ich mich in den Haferkasten und schlafe vier Stunden. Hernach strecke ich wohl einen Fuß heraus und fahre damit dem Pferd ein paarmal über den Leib, so ist es gestriegelt und geputzt; wer wird da viel Umstände machen? Aber der Dienst ist mir doch noch zu beschwerlich.« Der dritte sprach »wozu sich mit Arbeit plagen? dabei kommt nichts heraus. Ich legte mich in die Sonne und schlief. Es fing an zu tröpfeln, aber weshalb aufstehen? ich ließ es in Gottes Namen fortregnen. Zuletzt kam ein Platzregen, und zwar so heftig, daß er mir die Haare vom Kopf ausriß und wegschwemmte, und ich ein Loch in den Schädel bekam. Ich legte ein Pflaster darauf, und damit wars gut. Schaden der Art habe ich schon mehr gehabt.« Der vierte sprach »soll ich eine Arbeit angreifen, so dämmere ich erst eine Stunde herum, damit ich meine Kräfte spare. Hernach fange ich ganz gemächlich an und frage, ob nicht andere da wären, die mir helfen könnten. Die lasse ich dann die Hauptarbeit tun, und sehe eigentlich nur zu: aber das ist mir auch noch zuviel.« Der fünfte sprach »was will das sagen! denkt euch, ich soll den Mist aus dem Pferdestall fortschaffen und auf den Wagen laden. Ich lasse es langsam angehen, und habe ich etwas auf die Gabel genommen, so hebe ich es nur halb in die Höhe und ruhe erst eine Viertelstunde, bis ich es vollends hinaufwerfe. Es ist übrig genug, wenn ich des Tags ein Fuder hinausfahre. Ich habe keine Lust, mich totzuarbeiten.« Der sechste sprach »schämt euch, ich erschrecke vor keiner Arbeit, aber ich lege mich drei Wochen hin und ziehe nicht einmal meine Kleider aus. Wozu Schnallen an die Schuhe, die können mir immerhin von den Füßen abfallen, es schadet nichts. Will ich eine Treppe ersteigen, so ziehe ich einen Fuß nach dem andern langsam auf die erste Stufe herauf, dann zähle ich die übrigen, damit ich weiß, wo ich ruhen muß.« Der siebente sprach »bei mir geht das nicht: mein Herr sieht auf meine Arbeit, nur ist er den ganzen Tag nicht zu Haus. Doch versäume ich nichts, ich laufe, soviel das möglich ist, wenn man schleicht. Soll ich fortkommen, so müßten mich vier stämmige Männer mit allen Kräften fortschieben. Ich kam dahin, wo auf einer Pritsche sechs nebeneinander lagen und schliefen: ich legte mich zu ihnen und schlief auch. Ich war nicht wieder zu wecken, und wollten sie mich heim haben, so mußten sie mich wegtragen.« Der achte sprach »ich sehe wohl, daß ich allein ein munterer Kerl bin, liegt ein Stein vor mir, so gebe ich mir nicht die Mühe, meine Beine aufzuheben und darüber hinwegzuschreiten, ich lege mich auf die Erde nieder, und bin ich naß, voll Kot und Schmutz, so bleibe ich liegen, bis mich die Sonne wieder ausgetrocknet hat: höchstens drehe ich mich so, daß sie auf mich scheinen kann.« Der neunte sprach »das ist was Rechts! heute lag das Brot vor mir, aber ich war zu faul, danach zu greifen, und wäre fast Hungers gestorben. Auch ein Krug stand dabei, aber so groß und schwer, daß ich ihn nicht in die Höhe heben mochte und lieber Durst litt. Mich nur umzudrehen, war mir zu viel, ich blieb den ganzen Tag liegen wie ein Stock.« Der zehnte sprach »mir hat die Faulheit Schaden gebracht, ein gebrochenes Bein und geschwollene Waden. Unser drei lagen auf einem Fahrweg, und ich hatte die Beine ausgestreckt. Da kam jemand mit einem Wagen, und die Räder gingen mir darüber. Ich hätte die Beine freilich zurückziehen können, aber ich hörte den Wagen nicht kommen: die Mücken summten mir um die Ohren, krochen mir zu der Nase herein und zu dem Mund wieder heraus; wer will sich die Mühe geben, das Geschmeiß wegzujagen.« Der elfte sprach »gestern habe ich meinen Dienst aufgesagt. Ich hatte keine Lust, meinem Herrn die schweren Bücher noch länger herbeizuholen und wieder wegzutragen: das nahm den ganzen Tag kein Ende. Aber die Wahrheit zu sagen, er gab mir den Abschied und wollte mich auch nicht länger behalten, denn seine Kleider, die ich im Staub liegen ließ, waren von den Motten zerfressen; und das war recht.« Der zwölfte sprach »heute mußte ich mit dem Wagen über Feld fahren, ich machte mir ein Lager von Stroh darauf und schlief richtig ein. Die Zügel rutschten mir aus der Hand, und als ich erwachte, hatte sich das Pferd beinahe losgerissen, das Geschirr war weg, das Rückenseil, Kummet, Zaum und Gebiß. Es war einer vorbeigekommen, der hatte alles fortgetragen. Dazu war der Wagen in eine Pfütze geraten und stand fest. Ich ließ ihn stehen und streckte mich wieder aufs Stroh. Der Herr kam endlich selbst und schob den Wagen heraus, und wäre er nicht gekommen, so läge ich nicht hier, sondern dort und schliefe in guter Ruh.«

152. Das Hirtenbüblein.

Es war einmal ein Hirtenbübchen, das war wegen seiner weisen Antworten, die es auf alle Fragen gab, weit und breit berühmt. Der König des Landes hörte auch davon, glaubte es nicht und ließ das Bübchen kommen. Da sprach er zu ihm »kannst du mir auf drei Fragen, die ich dir vorlegen will, Antwort geben, so will ich dich ansehen wie mein eigen Kind, und du sollst bei mir in meinem königlichen Schloß wohnen.« Sprach das Büblein »wie lauten die drei Fragen?« Der König sagte »die erste lautet: wie viel Tropfen Wasser sind in dem Weltmeer?« Das Hirtenbüblein antwortete »Herr König, laßt alle Flüsse auf der Erde verstopfen, damit kein Tröpflein mehr daraus ins Meer lauft, das ich nicht erst gezählt habe, so will ich Euch sagen, wie viel Tropfen im Meere sind.« Sprach der König »die andere Frage lautet: wie viel Sterne stehen am Himmel?« Das Hirtenbübchen sagte »gebt mir einen großen Bogen weiß Papier,« und dann machte es mit der Feder so viel feine Punkte darauf, daß sie kaum zu sehen und fast gar nicht zu zählen waren und einem die Augen vergingen, wenn man darauf blickte. Darauf sprach es »so viel Sterne stehen am Himmel, als hier Punkte auf dem Papier, zählt sie nur.« Aber niemand war dazu imstand. Sprach der König »die dritte Frage lautet: wie viel Sekunden hat die Ewigkeit?« Da sagte das Hirtenbüblein »in Hinterpommern liegt der Demantberg, der hat eine Stunde in die Höhe, eine Stunde in die Breite und eine Stunde in die Tiefe; dahin kommt alle hundert Jahr ein Vöglein und wetzt sein Schnäbelein daran, und wenn der ganze Berg abgewetzt ist, dann ist die erste Sekunde von der Ewigkeit vorbei.«

Sprach der König »du hast die drei Fragen aufgelöst wie ein Weiser und sollst fortan bei mir in meinem königlichen Schlosse wohnen, und ich will dich ansehen wie mein eigenes Kind.«

153. Die Sterntaler.

Es war einmal ein kleines Mädchen, dem war Vater und Mutter gestorben, und es war so arm, daß es kein Kämmerchen mehr hatte, darin zu wohnen, und kein Bettchen mehr, darin zu schlafen, und endlich gar nichts mehr als die Kleider auf dem Leib und ein Stückchen Brot in der Hand, das ihm ein mitleidiges Herz geschenkt hatte. Es war aber gut und fromm. Und weil es so von aller Welt verlassen war, ging es im Vertrauen auf den lieben Gott hinaus ins Feld. Da begegnete ihm ein armer Mann, der sprach »ach, gib mir etwas zu essen, ich bin so hungerig.« Es reichte ihm das ganze Stückchen Brot und sagte »Gott segne dirs,« und ging weiter. Da kam ein Kind, das jammerte und sprach »es friert mich so an meinem Kopfe, schenk mir etwas, womit ich ihn bedecken kann.« Da tat es seine Mütze ab und gab sie ihm. Und als es noch eine Weile gegangen war, kam wieder ein Kind und hatte kein Leibchen und fror: da gab es ihm seins; und noch weiter, da bat eins um ein Röcklein, das gab es auch von sich hin. Endlich gelangte es in einen Wald, und es war schon dunkel geworden, da kam noch eins und bat um ein Hemdlein, und das fromme Mädchen dachte »es ist dunkle Nacht, da sieht dich niemand, du kannst wohl dein Hemd weggeben,« und zog das Hemd ab und gab es auch noch hin. Und wie es so stand und gar nichts mehr hatte, fielen auf einmal die Sterne vom Himmel, und waren lauter harte blanke Taler: und ob es gleich sein Hemdlein weggegeben, so hatte es ein neues an, und das war vom allerfeinsten Linnen. Da sammelte es sich die Taler hinein und war reich für sein Lebtag.

154. Der gestohlene Heller.

Es saß einmal ein Vater mit seiner Frau und seinen Kindern mittags am Tisch, und ein guter Freund, der zum Besuch gekommen war, aß mit ihnen. Und wie sie so saßen, und es zwölf Uhr schlug, da sah der Fremde die Tür aufgehen und ein schneeweiß gekleidetes, ganz blasses Kindlein hereinkommen. Es blickte sich nicht um und sprach auch nichts, sondern ging geradezu in die Kammer nebenan. Bald darauf kam es zurück und ging ebenso still wieder zur Türe hinaus. Am zweiten und dritten Tag kam es auf ebendiese Weise. Da fragte endlich der Fremde den Vater, wem das schöne Kind gehörte, das alle Mittag in die Kammer ginge. »Ich habe es nicht gesehen,« antwortete er, »und wüßte auch nicht, wem es gehören könnte.« Am andern Tage, wie es wiederkam, zeigte es der Fremde dem Vater, der sah es aber nicht, und die Mutter und die Kinder alle sahen auch nichts. Nun stand der Fremde auf, ging zur Kammertüre, öffnete sie ein wenig und schaute hinein. Da sah er das Kind auf der Erde sitzen und emsig mit den Fingern in den Dielenritzen graben und wühlen; wie es aber den Fremden bemerkte, verschwand es. Nun erzählte er, was er gesehen hatte, und beschrieb das Kind genau, da erkannte es die Mutter und sagte »ach, das ist mein liebes Kind, das vor vier Wochen gestorben ist.« Sie brachen die Dielen auf und fanden zwei Heller, die hatte einmal das Kind von der Mutter erhalten, um sie einem armen Manne zu geben, es hatte aber gedacht »dafür kannst du dir einen Zwieback kaufen,« die Heller behalten und in die Dielenritzen versteckt; und da hatte es im Grabe keine Ruhe gehabt, und war alle Mittage gekommen, um nach den Hellern zu suchen. Die Eltern gaben darauf das Geld einem Armen, und nachher ist das Kind nicht wieder gesehen worden.

155. Die Brautschau..

Es war ein junger Hirt, der wollte gern heiraten und kannte drei Schwestern, davon war eine so schön wie die andere, daß ihm die Wahl schwer wurde und er sich nicht entschließen konnte, einer davon den Vorzug zu geben. Da fragte er seine Mutter um Rat, die sprach »lad alle drei ein und setz ihnen Käs vor, und hab acht, wie sie ihn anschneiden.« Das tat der Jüngling, die erste aber verschlang den Käs mit der Rinde: die zweite schnitt in der Hast die Rinde vom Käs ab, weil sie aber so hastig war, ließ sie noch viel Gutes daran und warf das mit weg: die dritte schälte ordentlich die Rinde ab, nicht zu viel und nicht zu wenig. Der Hirt erzählte das alles seiner Mutter, da sprach sie »nimm die dritte zu deiner Frau.« Das tat er und lebte zufrieden und glücklich mit ihr.

156. Die Schlickerlinge.

Es war einmal ein Mädchen, das war schön, aber faul und nachlässig. Wenn es spinnen sollte, so war es so verdrießlich, daß, wenn ein kleiner Knoten im Flachs war, es gleich einen ganzen Haufen mit herausriß und neben sich zur Erde schlickerte. Nun hatte es ein Dienstmädchen, das war arbeitsam, suchte den weggeworfenen Flachs zusammen, reinigte ihn, spann ihn fein und ließ sich ein hübsches Kleid daraus weben. Ein junger Mann hatte um das faule Mädchen geworben, und die Hochzeit sollte gehalten werden. Auf dem Polterabend tanzte das fleißige in seinem schönen Kleide lustig herum, da sprach die Braut

»ach, wat kann dat Mäken springen
in minen Slickerlingen!«

Das hörte der Bräutigam und fragte die Braut, was sie damit sagen wollte. Da erzählte sie ihm, daß das Mädchen ein Kleid von dem Flachs trüge, den sie weggeworfen hätte. Wie der Bräutigam das hörte und ihre Faulheit bemerkte und den Fleiß des armen Mädchens, so ließ er sie stehen, ging zu jener und wählte sie zu seiner Frau.

157. Der Sperling und seine vier Kinder.

Ein Sperling hatte vier Junge in einem Schwalbennest. Wie sie nun flügge sind, stoßen böse Buben das Nest ein, sie kommen aber alle glücklich in Windbraus davon. Nun ist dem Alten leid, weil seine Söhne in die Welt kommen, daß er sie nicht vor allerlei Gefahr erst verwarnet und ihnen gute Lehren fürgesagt habe.

Aufn Herbst kommen in einem Weizenacker viel Sperlinge zusammen, allda trifft der Alte seine vier Jungen an, die führt er voll Freuden mit sich heim. »Ach, meine lieben Söhne, was habt ihr mir den Sommer über Sorge gemacht, dieweil ihr ohne meine Lehre in Winde kamet; höret meine Worte und folget eurem Vater und sehet euch wohl vor: kleine Vöglein haben große Gefährlichkeit auszustehen!« Darauf fragte er den ältern, wo er sich den Sommer über aufgehalten und wie er sich ernähret hätte. »Ich habe mich in den Gärten gehalten, Räuplein und Würmlein gesucht, bis die Kirschen reif wurden.« »Ach, mein Sohn,« sagte der Vater, »die Schnabelweid ist nicht bös, aber es ist große Gefahr dabei, darum habe fortan deiner wohl acht, und sonderlich, wenn Leut in Gärten umhergehen, die lange grüne Stangen tragen, die inwendig hohl sind und oben ein Löchlein haben.« »Ja, mein Vater, wenn dann ein grün Blättlein aufs Löchlein mit Wachs geklebt wäre?« spricht der Sohn. »Wo hast du das gesehen?« »In eines Kaufmanns Garten,« sagt der Junge. »O mein Sohn,« spricht der Vater, »Kaufleut, geschwinde Leut! bist du um die Weltkinder gewesen, so hast du Weltgeschmeidigkeit genug gelernt, siehe und brauchs nur recht wohl und trau dir nicht zuviel.«

Darauf befragt er den andern »wo hast du dein Wesen gehabt?« »Zu Hofe,« spricht der Sohn. »Sperling und alberne Vöglein dienen nicht an diesem Ort, da viel Gold, Sammet, Seiden, Wehr, Harnisch, Sperber, Kauzen und Blaufüß sind, halt dich zum Roßstall, da man den Hafer schwingt, oder wo man drischet, so kann dirs Glück mit gutem Fried auch dein täglich Körnlein bescheren.« »Ja, Vater,« sagte dieser Sohn, »wenn aber die Stalljungen Hebritzen machen und ihre Maschen und Schlingen ins Stroh binden, da bleibt auch mancher behenken.« »Wo hast du das gesehen?« sagte der Alte. »Zu Hof, beim Roßbuben.« »O, mein Sohn, Hofbuben, böse Buben! bist du zu Hof und um die Herren gewesen und hast keine Federn da gelassen, so hast du ziemlich gelernet und wirst dich in der Welt wohl wissen auszureißen, doch siehe dich um und auf: die Wölfe fressen auch oft die gescheiten Hündlein.«

Der Vater nimmt den dritten auch vor sich »wo hast du dein Heil versucht?« »Auf den Fahrwegen und Landstraßen hab ich Kübel und Seil eingeworfen und da bisweilen ein Körnlein oder Gräuplein angetroffen.« »Dies ist ja,« sagt der Vater, »eine feine Nahrung, aber merk gleichwohl auf die Schanz und siehe fleißig auf, sonderlich wenn sich einer bücket und einen Stein aufheben will, da ist dir nicht lang zu bleiben.« »Wahr ists,« sagt der Sohn, »wenn aber einer zuvor einen Wand- oder Handstein im Busen oder Tasche trüge?« »Wo hast du dies gesehen?« »Bei den Bergleuten, lieber

Vater, wenn sie ausfahren, führen sie gemeinlich Handsteine bei sich.« »Bergleut, Werkeleut, anschlägige Leut! bist du um Bergburschen gewesen, so hast du etwas gesehen und erfahren.

Fahr hin und nimm deiner Sachen gleichwohl gut acht,
Bergbuben haben manchen Sperling mit Kobold umbracht.«

Endlich kommt der Vater an jüngsten Sohn »du mein liebes Gackennestle, du warst allzeit der alberst und schwächest, bleib du bei mir, die Welt hat viel grober und böser Vögel, die krumme Schnäbel und lange Krallen haben und nur auf arme Vöglein lauern und sie verschlucken: halt dich zu deinesgleichen und lies die Spinnlein und Räuplein von den Bäumen oder Häuslein, so bleibst du lang zufrieden.« »Du, mein lieber Vater, wer sich nährt ohn andrer Leut Schaden, der kommt lang hin, und kein Sperber, Habicht, Aar oder Weih wird ihm nicht schaden, wenn er zumal sich und seine ehrliche Nahrung dem lieben Gott all Abend und Morgen treulich befiehlt, welcher aller Wald- und Dorfvöglein Schöpfer und Erhalter ist, der auch der jungen Räblein Geschrei und Gebet höret, denn ohne seinen Willen fällt auch kein Sperling oder Schneekünglein auf die Erde.« »Wo hast du dies gelernt?« Antwortet der Sohn »wie mich der große Windbraus von dir wegriß, kam ich in eine Kirche, da las ich den Sommer die Fliegen und Spinnen von den Fenstern ab und hörte diese Sprüch predigen, da hat mich der Vater aller Sperlinge den Sommer über ernährt und behütet vor allem Unglück und grimmigen Vögeln.« »Traun! mein lieber Sohn, fleuchst du in die Kirchen und hilfest Spinnen und die sumsenden Fliegen aufräumen und zirpst zu Gott wie die jungen Räblein und befiehlst dich dem ewigen Schöpfer, so wirst du wohl bleiben, und wenn die ganze Welt voll wilder tückischer Vögel wäre.

Denn wer dem Herrn befiehlt seine Sach,
schweigt, leidet, wartet, betet, braucht Glimpf, tut gemach,
bewahrt Glaub und gut Gewissen rein,
dem will Gott Schutz und Helfer sein.«

158. Das Märchen vom Schlauraffenland.

In der Schlauraffenzeit, da ging ich und sah, an einem kleinen Seidenfaden hing Rom und der Lateran, und ein fußloser Mann, der überlief ein schnelles Pferd, und ein bitterscharfes Schwert, das durchhieb eine Brücke. Da sah ich einen jungen Esel mit einer silbernen Nase, der jagte hinter zwei schnellen Hasen her, und eine Linde, die war breit, auf der wuchsen heiße Fladen. Da sah ich eine alte dürre Geiß, trug wohl hundert Fuder Schmalzes an ihrem Leibe und sechzig Fuder Salzes. Ist das nicht gelogen genug? Da sah ich zackern einen Pflug ohne Roß und Rinder, und ein jähriges Kind warf vier Mühlensteine von Regensburg bis nach Trier und von Trier hinein in Straßburg, und ein Habicht schwamm über den Rhein: das tat er mit vollem Recht. Da hört ich Fische miteinander Lärm anfangen, daß es in den Himmel hinaufscholl, und ein süßer Honig floß wie Wasser von einem tiefen Tal auf einen hohen Berg; das waren seltsame Geschichten. Da waren zwei Krähen, mähten eine Wiese, und ich sah zwei Mücken an einer Brücke bauen, und zwei Tauben zerrupften einen Wolf, zwei Kinder, die würfen zwei Zicklein, aber zwei Frösche droschen miteinander Getreid aus. Da sah ich zwei Mäuse einen Bischof weihen, zwei Katzen, die einem Bären die Zunge auskratzten. Da kam eine Schnecke gerannt und erschlug zwei wilde Löwen. Da stand ein Bartscherer, schor einer Frauen ihren Bart ab, und zwei säugende Kinder hießen ihre Mutter stillschweigen. Da sah ich zwei Windhunde, brachten eine Mühle aus dem Wasser getragen, und eine alte Schindmähre stand dabei, die sprach, es wäre recht. Und im Hof standen vier Rosse, die droschen Korn aus allen Kräften, und zwei Ziegen, die den Ofen heizten, und eine rote Kuh schoß das Brot in den Ofen. Da krähte ein Huhn »kikeriki, das Märchen ist auserzählt, kikeriki.«

159. Das Dietmarsische Lügenmärchen.

Ich will euch etwas erzählen. Ich sah zwei gebratene Hühner fliegen, flogen schnell und hatten die Bäuche gen Himmel gekehrt, die Rücken nach der Hölle, und ein Amboß und ein Mühlstein schwammen über den Rhein, fein langsam und leise, und ein Frosch saß und fraß eine Pflugschar zu Pfingsten auf dem Eis. Da waren drei Kerle, wollten einen Hasen fangen, gingen auf Krücken und Stelzen, der eine war taub, der zweite blind, der dritte stumm und der vierte konnte keinen Fuß rühren. Wollt ihr wissen, wie das geschah? Der Blinde, der sah zuerst den Hasen über Feld traben, der Stumme rief dem Lahmen zu, und der Lahme faßte ihn beim Kragen. Etliche, die wollten zu Land segeln und spannten die Segel im Wind und schifften über große Äcker hin: da segelten sie über einen hohen Berg, da mußten sie elendig ersaufen. Ein Krebs jagte einen Hasen in die Flucht, und hoch auf dem Dach lag eine Kuh, die war hinaufgestiegen. In dem Lande sind die Fliegen so groß als hier die Ziegen. Mache das Fenster auf, damit die Lügen hinausfliegen.

160. Rätselmärchen.

Drei Frauen waren verwandelt in Blumen, die auf dem Felde standen, doch deren eine durfte des Nachts in ihrem Hause sein. Da sprach sie auf eine Zeit zu ihrem Mann, als sich der Tag nahete und sie wiederum zu ihren Gespielen auf das Feld gehen und eine Blume werden mußte, »so du heute vormittag kommst und mich abbrichst, werde ich erlöst und fürder bei dir bleiben;« als dann auch geschah. Nun ist die Frage, wie sie ihr Mann erkannt habe, so die Blumen ganz gleich und ohne Unterschied waren. Antwort: »dieweil sie die Nacht in ihrem Haus und nicht auf dem Feld war, fiel der Tau nicht auf sie als auf die andern zwei, dabei sie der Mann erkannte.«

161. Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot.

Eine arme Witwe, die lebte einsam in einem Hüttchen, und vor dem Hüttchen war ein Garten, darin standen zwei Rosenbäumchen, davon trug das eine weiße, das andere rote Rosen: und sie hatte zwei Kinder, die glichen den beiden Rosenbäumchen, und das eine hieß Schneeweißchen, das andere Rosenrot. Sie waren aber so fromm und gut, so arbeitsam und unverdrossen, als je zwei Kinder auf der Welt gewesen sind: Schneeweißchen war nur stiller und sanfter als Rosenrot. Rosenrot sprang lieber in den Wiesen und Feldern umher, suchte Blumen und fing Sommervögel: Schneeweißchen aber saß daheim bei der Mutter, half ihr im Hauswesen oder las ihr vor, wenn nichts zu tun war. Die beiden Kinder hatten einander so lieb, daß sie sich immer an den Händen faßten, sooft sie zusammen ausgingen: und wenn Schneeweißchen sagte »wir wollen uns nicht verlassen,« so antwortete Rosenrot »so lange wir leben, nicht,« und die Mutter setzte hinzu »was das eine hat, solls mit dem andern teilen.« Oft liefen sie im Walde allein umher und sammelten rote Beeren, aber kein Tier tat ihnen etwas zuleid, sondern sie kamen vertraulich herbei: das Häschen fraß ein Kohlblatt aus ihren Händen, das Reh graste an ihrer Seite, der Hirsch sprang ganz lustig vorbei und die Vögel blieben auf den Ästen sitzen und sangen, was sie nur wußten. Kein Unfall traf sie: wenn sie sich im Walde verspätet hatten und die Nacht sie überfiel, so legten sie sich nebeneinander auf das Moos und schliefen, bis der Morgen kam, und die Mutter wußte das und hatte ihrentwegen keine Sorge. Einmal, als sie im Walde übernachtet hatten und das Morgenrot sie aufweckte, da sahen sie ein schönes Kind in einem weißen glänzenden Kleidchen neben ihrem Lager sitzen. Es stand auf und blickte sie ganz freundlich an, sprach aber nichts und ging in den Wald hinein. Und als sie sich umsahen, so hatten sie ganz nahe bei einem Abgrunde geschlafen, und wären gewiß hineingefallen, wenn sie in der Dunkelheit noch ein paar Schritte weitergegangen wären. Die Mutter aber sagte ihnen, das müßte der Engel gewesen sein, der gute Kinder bewache.

Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot hielten das Hüttchen der Mutter so reinlich, daß es eine Freude war hineinzuschauen. Im Sommer besorgte Rosenrot das Haus und stellte der Mutter jeden Morgen, ehe sie aufwachte, einen Blumenstrauß vors Bett, darin war von jedem Bäumchen eine Rose. Im Winter zündete Schneeweißchen das Feuer an und hing den Kessel an den Feuerhaken, und der Kessel war von Messing, glänzte aber wie Gold, so rein war er gescheuert. Abends, wenn die Flocken fielen, sagte die Mutter »geh, Schneeweißchen, und schieb den Riegel vor,« und dann setzten sie sich an den Herd, und die Mutter nahm die Brille und las aus einem großen Buche vor, und die beiden Mädchen hörten zu, saßen und spannen; neben ihnen lag ein Lämmchen auf dem Boden, und hinter ihnen auf einer Stange saß ein weißes Täubchen und hatte seinen Kopf unter den Flügel gesteckt.

Eines Abends, als sie so vertraulich beisammen saßen, klopfte jemand an die Türe, als wollte er eingelassen sein. Die Mutter sprach »geschwind, Rosenrot, mach auf, es wird ein Wanderer sein, der Obdach sucht.« Rosenrot ging und schob den Riegel weg und dachte, es wäre ein armer Mann, aber der war es nicht, es war ein Bär, der seinen dicken schwarzen Kopf zur Türe hereinstreckte. Rosenrot schrie laut und sprang zurück: das Lämmchen blökte, das Täubchen flatterte auf, und Schneeweißchen versteckte sich hinter der Mutter Bett. Der Bär aber fing an zu sprechen und sagte »fürchtet euch nicht, ich tue euch nichts zuleid, ich bin halb erfroren und will mich nur ein wenig bei euch wärmen.« »Du armer Bär,« sprach die Mutter, »leg dich ans Feuer, und gib nur acht, daß dir dein Pelz nicht brennt.« Dann rief sie »Schneeweißchen, Rosenrot, kommt hervor, der Bär tut euch nichts, er meints ehrlich.« Da kamen sie beide heran, und nach und nach näherten sich auch das Lämmchen und Täubchen und hatten keine Furcht vor ihm. Der Bär sprach »ihr Kinder, klopft mir den Schnee ein wenig aus dem Pelzwerk,« und sie holten den Besen und kehrten dem Bär das Fell rein: er aber streckte sich ans Feuer und brummte ganz vergnügt und behaglich. Nicht lange, so wurden sie ganz vertraut und trieben Mutwillen mit dem unbeholfenen Gast. Sie zausten ihm das Fell mit den Händen, setzten ihre Füßchen auf seinen Rücken und walgerten ihn hin und her, oder sie nahmen eine Haselrute und schlugen auf ihn los, und wenn er brummte, so lachten sie. Der Bär ließ sichs aber gerne gefallen, nur wenn sies gar zu arg machten, rief er »laßt mich am Leben, ihr Kinder:

Schneeweißchen, Rosenrot,
schlägst dir den Freier tot.«

Als Schlafenszeit war und die andern zu Bett gingen, sagte die Mutter zu dem Bär »du kannst in Gottes Namen da am Herde liegen bleiben, so bist du vor der Kälte und dem bösen Wetter geschützt.« Sobald der Tag graute, ließen ihn die beiden Kinder hinaus, und er trabte über den Schnee in den Wald hinein. Von nun an kam der Bär jeden Abend zu der bestimmten Stunde, legte sich an den Herd und erlaubte den Kindern, Kurzweil mit ihm zu treiben, so viel sie wollten; und sie waren so gewöhnt an ihn, daß die Türe nicht eher zugeriegelt ward, als bis der schwarze Gesell angelangt war.

Als das Frühjahr herangekommen und draußen alles grün war, sagte der Bär eines Morgens zu Schneeweißchen »nun muß ich fort und darf den ganzen Sommer nicht wiederkommen.« »Wo gehst du denn hin, lieber Bär?« fragte Schneeweißchen. »Ich muß in den Wald und meine Schätze vor den bösen Zwergen hüten: im Winter, wenn die Erde hart gefroren ist, müssen sie wohl unten bleiben und können sich nicht durcharbeiten, aber jetzt, wenn die Sonne die Erde aufgetaut und erwärmt hat, da brechen sie durch, steigen herauf, suchen und stehlen; was einmal in ihren Händen ist und in ihren Höhlen liegt, das kommt so leicht nicht wieder an des Tages Licht.« Schneeweißchen war ganz traurig über den Abschied, und als es ihm die Türe aufriegelte, und der Bär sich hinausdrängte, blieb er an dem Türhaken hängen, und ein Stück seiner Haut riß auf, und da war es Schneeweißchen, als hätte es Gold durchschimmern gesehen: aber es war seiner Sache nicht gewiß. Der Bär lief eilig fort und war bald hinter den Bäumen verschwunden.

Nach einiger Zeit schickte die Mutter die Kinder in den Wald, Reisig zu sammeln. Da fanden sie draußen einen großen Baum, der lag gefällt auf dem Boden, und an dem Stamme sprang zwischen dem Gras etwas auf und ab, sie konnten aber nicht unterscheiden, was es war. Als sie näher kamen, sahen sie einen Zwerg mit einem alten verwelkten Gesicht und einem ellenlangen schneeweißen Bart. Das Ende des Bartes war in eine Spalte des Baums eingeklemmt, und der Kleine sprang hin und her wie ein Hündchen an einem Seil und wußte nicht, wie er sich helfen sollte. Er glotzte die Mädchen mit seinen roten feurigen Augen an und schrie »was steht ihr da! könnt ihr nicht herbeigehen und mir Beistand leisten?« »Was hast du angefangen, kleines Männchen?« fragte Rosenrot. »Dumme neugierige Gans,« antwortete der Zwerg, »den Baum habe ich mir spalten wollen, um kleines Holz in der Küche zu haben; bei den dicken Klötzen verbrennt gleich das bißchen Speise, das unsereiner braucht, der nicht so viel hinunterschlingt als ihr grobes, gieriges Volk. Ich hatte den Keil schon glücklich hineingetrieben, und es wäre alles nach Wunsch gegangen, aber das verwünschte Holz war zu glatt und sprang unversehens heraus, und der Baum fuhr so geschwind zusammen, daß ich meinen schönen weißen Bart nicht mehr herausziehen konnte; nun steckt er drin, und ich kann nicht fort. Da lachen die albernen glatten Milchgesichter! pfui, was seid ihr garstig!« Die Kinder gaben sich alle Mühe, aber sie konnten den Bart nicht herausziehen, er steckte zu fest. »Ich will laufen und Leute herbeiholen,« sagte Rosenrot. »Wahnsinnige Schafsköpfe,« schnarrte der Zwerg, »wer wird gleich Leute herbeirufen, ihr seid mir schon um zwei zu viel; fällt euch nicht Besseres ein?« »Sei nur nicht ungeduldig,« sagte Schneeweißchen, »ich will schon Rat schaffen,« holte sein Scherchen aus der Tasche und schnitt das Ende des Bartes ab. Sobald der Zwerg sich frei fühlte, griff er nach einem Sack, der zwischen den Wurzeln des Baumes steckte und mit Gold gefüllt war, hob ihn heraus und brummte vor sich hin »ungehobeltes Volk, schneidet mir ein Stück von meinem stolzen Barte ab! lohns euch der Kuckuck!« damit schwang er seinen Sack auf den Rücken und ging fort, ohne die Kinder nur noch einmal anzusehen.

Einige Zeit danach wollten Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot ein Gericht Fische angeln. Als sie nahe bei dem Bach waren, sahen sie, daß etwas wie eine große Heuschrecke nach dem Wasser zu hüpfte, als wollte es hineinspringen. Sie liefen heran und erkannten den Zwerg. »Wo willst du hin?« sagte Rosenrot, »du willst doch nicht ins Wasser?« »Solch ein Narr bin ich nicht,« schrie der Zwerg, »seht ihr nicht, der verwünschte Fisch will mich hineinziehen!« Der Kleine hatte da gesessen und geangelt, und unglücklicherweise hatte der Wind seinen Bart mit der Angelschnur verflochten: als gleich darauf ein großer Fisch anbiß, fehlten dem schwachen Geschöpf die Kräfte, ihn herauszuziehen: der Fisch behielt die Oberhand und riß den Zwerg zu sich hin. Zwar hielt er sich an allen Halmen und Binsen, aber das half nicht viel, er mußte den Bewegungen des Fisches folgen, und war in beständiger Gefahr, ins Wasser gezogen zu werden. Die Mädchen kamen zu rechter Zeit, hielten ihn fest und versuchten den Bart von der Schnur loszumachen, aber vergebens, Bart und Schnur waren fest ineinander verwirrt. Es blieb nichts übrig, als das Scherchen hervorzuholen und den Bart abzuschneiden, wobei ein kleiner Teil desselben verloren ging. Als der Zwerg das sah, schrie er sie an »ist das Manier, ihr Lorche, einem das Gesicht zu schänden? nicht genug, daß ihr mir den Bart unten abgestutzt habt, jetzt schneidet ihr mir den besten Teil davon ab: ich darf mich vor den Meinigen gar nicht sehen lassen. Daß ihr laufen müßtet und die Schuhsohlen verloren hättet!« Dann holte er einen Sack Perlen, der im Schilfe lag, und ohne ein Wort weiter zu sagen, schleppte er ihn fort und verschwand hinter einem Stein.

Es trug sich zu, daß bald hernach die Mutter die beiden Mädchen nach der Stadt schickte, Zwirn, Nadeln, Schnüre und Bänder einzukaufen. Der Weg führte sie über eine Heide, auf der hier und da mächtige Felsenstücke zerstreut lagen. Da sahen sie einen großen Vogel in der Luft schweben, der langsam über ihnen kreiste, sich immer tiefer herabsenkte und endlich nicht weit bei einem Felsen niederstieß. Gleich darauf hörten sie einen durchdringenden, jämmerlichen Schrei. Sie liefen herzu und sahen mit Schrecken, daß der Adler ihren alten Bekannten, den Zwerg, gepackt hatte und ihn forttragen wollte. Die mitleidigen Kinder hielten gleich das Männchen fest und zerrten sich so lange mit dem Adler herum, bis er seine Beute fahren ließ. Als der Zwerg sich von dem ersten Schrecken erholt hatte, schrie er mit seiner kreischenden Stimme »konntet ihr nicht säuberlicher mit mir umgehen? gerissen habt ihr an meinem dünnen Röckchen, daß es überall zerfetzt und durchlöchert ist, unbeholfenes und täppisches Gesindel, das ihr seid!« Dann nahm er einen Sack mit Edelsteinen und schlüpfte wieder unter den Felsen in seine Höhle. Die Mädchen waren an seinen Undank schon gewöhnt, setzten ihren Weg fort und verrichteten ihr Geschäft in der Stadt. Als sie beim Heimweg wieder auf die Heide kamen, überraschten sie den Zwerg, der auf einem reinlichen Plätzchen seinen Sack mit Edelsteinen ausgeschüttet und nicht gedacht hatte, daß so spät noch jemand daherkommen würde. Die Abendsonne schien über die glänzenden Steine, sie schimmerten und leuchteten so prächtig in allen Farben, daß die Kinder stehen blieben und sie betrachteten. »Was steht ihr da und habt Maulaffen feil!« schrie der Zwerg, und sein aschgraues Gesicht ward zinnoberrot vor Zorn. Er wollte mit seinen Scheltworten fortfahren, als sich ein lautes Brummen hören ließ und ein schwarzer Bär aus dem Walde herbeitrabte. Erschrocken sprang der Zwerg auf, aber er konnte nicht mehr zu seinem Schlupfwinkel gelangen, der Bär war schon in seiner Nähe. Da rief er in Herzensangst »lieber Herr Bär, verschont mich, ich will Euch alle meine Schätze geben, sehet, die schönen Edelsteine, die da liegen. Schenkt mir das Leben, was habt Ihr an mir kleinem schmächtigen Kerl? Ihr spürt mich nicht zwischen den Zähnen: da, die beiden gottlosen Mädchen packt, das sind für Euch zarte Bissen, fett wie junge Wachteln, die freßt in Gottes Namen.« Der Bär kümmerte sich um seine Worte nicht, gab dem boshaften Geschöpf einen einzigen Schlag mit der Tatze, und es regte sich nicht mehr.

Die Mädchen waren fortgesprungen, aber der Bär rief ihnen nach »Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot, fürchtet euch nicht, wartet, ich will mit euch gehen.« Da erkannten sie seine Stimme und blieben stehen, und als der Bär bei ihnen war, fiel plötzlich die Bärenhaut ab, und er stand da als ein schöner Mann, und war ganz in Gold gekleidet. »Ich bin eines Königs Sohn,« sprach er, »und war von dem gottlosen Zwerg, der mir meine Schätze gestohlen hatte, verwünscht, als ein wilder Bär in dem Walde zu laufen, bis ich durch seinen Tod erlöst würde. Jetzt hat er seine wohlverdiente Strafe empfangen.«

Schneeweißchen ward mit ihm vermählt und Rosenrot mit seinem Bruder, und sie teilten die großen Schätze miteinander, die der Zwerg in seine Höhle zusammengetragen hatte. Die alte Mutter lebte noch lange Jahre ruhig und glücklich bei ihren Kindern. Die zwei Rosenbäumchen aber nahm sie mit, und sie standen vor ihrem Fenster und trugen jedes Jahr die schönsten Rosen, weiß und rot.

162. Der kluge Knecht.

Wie glücklich ist der Herr, und wie wohl steht es mit seinem Hause, wenn er einen klugen Knecht hat, der auf seine Worte zwar hört, aber nicht danach tut und lieber seiner eigenen Weisheit folgt. Ein solcher kluger Hans ward einmal von seinem Herrn ausgeschickt, eine verlorene Kuh zu suchen. Er blieb lange aus, und der Herr dachte »der treue Hans, er läßt sich in seinem Dienste doch keine Mühe verdrießen.« Als er aber gar nicht wiederkommen wollte, befürchtete der Herr, es möchte ihm etwas zugestoßen sein, machte sich selbst auf und wollte sich nach ihm umsehen. Er mußte lange suchen, endlich erblickte er den Knecht, der im weitem Feld auf- und ablief. »Nun, lieber Hans,« sagte der Herr, als er ihn eingeholt hatte, »hast du die Kuh gefunden, nach der ich dich ausgeschickt habe?« »Nein, Herr,« antwortete er, »die Kuh habe ich nicht gefunden, aber auch nicht gesucht.« »Was hast du denn gesucht, Hans?« »Etwas Besseres, und das habe ich auch glücklich gefunden.« »Was ist das, Hans?« »Drei Amseln,« antwortete der Knecht. »Und wo sind sie?« fragte der Herr. »Eine sehe ich, die andere höre ich, und die dritte jage ich,« antwortete der kluge Knecht.

Nehmt euch daran ein Beispiel, bekümmert euch nicht um euern Herrn und seine Befehle, tut lieber, was euch einfällt, und wozu ihr Lust habt, dann werdet ihr ebenso weise handeln wie der kluge Hans.

163. Der gläserne Sarg.

Sage niemand, daß ein armer Schneider es nicht weit bringen und nicht zu hohen Ehren gelangen könne, es ist weiter gar nichts nötig, als daß er an die rechte Schmiede kommt und, was die Hauptsache ist, daß es ihm glückt. Ein solches artiges und behendes Schneiderbürschchen ging einmal seiner Wanderschaft nach und kam in einen großen Wald, und weil es den Weg nicht wußte, verirrte es sich. Die Nacht brach ein, und es blieb ihm nichts übrig, als in dieser schauerlichen Einsamkeit ein Lager zu suchen. Auf dem weichen Moose hätte er freilich ein gutes Bett gefunden, allein die Furcht vor den wilden Tieren ließ ihm da keine Ruhe, und er mußte sich endlich entschließen, auf einem Baume zu übernachten. Er suchte eine hohe Eiche, stieg bis in den Gipfel hinauf und dankte Gott, daß er sein Bügeleisen bei sich trug, weil ihn sonst der Wind, der über die Gipfel der Bäume wehete, weggeführt hätte.

Nachdem er einige Stunden in der Finsternis, nicht ohne Zittern und Zagen, zugebracht hatte, erblickte er in geringer Entfernung den Schein eines Lichtes; und weil er dachte, daß da eine menschliche Wohnung sein möchte, wo er sich besser befinden würde als auf den Ästen eines Baums, so stieg er vorsichtig herab und ging dem Lichte nach. Es leitete ihn zu einem kleinen Häuschen, das aus Rohr und Binsen geflochten war. Er klopfte mutig an, die Türe öffnete sich, und bei dem Scheine des herausfallenden Lichtes sah er ein altes eisgraues Männchen, das ein von buntfarbigen Lappen zusammengesetztes Kleid anhatte. »Wer seid Ihr, und was wollt Ihr?« fragte es mit einer schnarrenden Stimme. »Ich bin ein armer Schneider,« antwortete er, »den die Nacht hier in der Wildnis überfallen hat, und bitte Euch inständig, mich bis morgen in Eurer Hütte aufzunehmen.« »Geh deiner Wege,« erwiderte der Alte mit mürrischem Tone, »mit Landstreichern will ich nichts zu schaffen haben; suche dir anderwärts ein Unterkommen.« Nach diesen Worten wollte er wieder in sein Haus schlüpfen, aber der Schneider hielt ihn am Rockzipfel fest und bat so beweglich, daß der Alte, der so böse nicht war, als er sich anstellte, endlich erweicht ward und ihn mit in seine Hütte nahm, wo er ihm zu essen gab und dann in einem Winkel ein ganz gutes Nachtlager anwies.

Der müde Schneider brauchte keines Einwiegens, sondern schlief sanft bis an den Morgen, würde auch noch nicht an das Aufstehen gedacht haben, wenn er nicht von einem lauten Lärm wäre aufgeschreckt worden. Ein heftiges Schreien und Brüllen drang durch die dünnen Wände des Hauses. Der Schneider, den ein unerwarteter Mut überkam, sprang auf, zog in der Hast seine Kleider an und eilte hinaus. Da erblickte er nahe bei dem Häuschen einen großen schwarzen Stier und einen schönen Hirsch, die in dem heftigsten Kampfe begriffen waren. Sie gingen mit so großer Wut aufeinander los, daß von ihrem Getrampel der Boden erzitterte, und die Luft von ihrem Geschrei erdröhnte. Es war lange ungewiß, welcher von beiden den Sieg davontragen würde: endlich stieß der Hirsch seinem Gegner das

Geweih in den Leib, worauf der Stier mit entsetzlichem Brüllen zur Erde sank, und durch einige Schläge des Hirsches völlig getötet ward.

Der Schneider, welcher dem Kampfe mit Erstaunen zugesehen hatte, stand noch unbeweglich da, als der Hirsch in vollen Sprüngen auf ihn zueilte und ihn, ehe er entfliehen konnte, mit seinem großen Geweihe geradezu aufgabelte. Er konnte sich nicht lange besinnen, denn es ging schnellen Laufes fort über Stock und Stein, Berg und Tal, Wiese und Wald. Er hielt sich mit beiden Händen an den Enden des Geweihes fest und überließ sich seinem Schicksal. Es kam ihm aber nicht anders vor, als flöge er davon. Endlich hielt der Hirsch vor einer Felsenwand still und ließ den Schneider sanft herabfallen. Der Schneider, mehr tot als lebendig, bedurfte längerer Zeit, um wieder zur Besinnung zu kommen. Als er sich einigermaßen erholt hatte, stieß der Hirsch, der neben ihm stehen ge blieben war, sein Geweih mit solcher Gewalt gegen eine in dem Felsen befindliche Türe, daß sie aufsprang. Feuerflammen schlugen heraus, auf welche ein großer Dampf folgte, der den Hirsch seinen Augen entzog. Der Schneider wußte nicht, was er tun und wohin er sich wenden sollte, um aus dieser Einöde wieder unter Menschen zu gelangen. Indem er also unschlüssig stand, tönte eine Stimme aus dem Felsen, die ihm zurief »tritt ohne Furcht herein, dir soll kein Leid widerfahren.« Er zauderte zwar, doch, von einer heimlichen Gewalt angetrieben, gehorchte er der Stimme und gelangte durch die eiserne Tür in einen großen geräumigen Saal, dessen Decke, Wände und Boden aus glänzend geschliffenen Quadratsteinen bestanden, auf deren jedem ihm unbekannte Zeichen eingehauen waren. Er betrachtete alles voll Bewunderung und war eben im Begriff, wieder hinauszugehen, als er abermals die Stimme vernahm, welche ihm sagte »tritt auf den Stein, der in der Mitte des Saales liegt, und dein wartet großes Glück.«

Sein Mut war schon so weit gewachsen, daß er dem Befehle Folge leistete. Der Stein begann unter seinen Füßen nachzugeben und sank langsam in die Tiefe hinab. Als er wieder feststand und der Schneider sich umsah, befand er sich in einem Saale, der an Umfang dem vorigen gleich war. Hier aber gab es mehr zu betrachten und zu bewundern. In die Wände waren Vertiefungen eingehauen, in welchen Gefäße von durchsichtigem Glase standen, die mit farbigem Spiritus oder mit einem bläulichen Rauche angefüllt waren. Auf dem Boden des Saales standen, einander gegenüber, zwei große gläserne Kasten, die sogleich seine Neugierde reizten. Indem er zu dem einen trat, erblickte er darin ein schönes Gebäude, einem Schlosse ähnlich, von Wirtschaftsgebäuden, Ställen und Scheuern und einer Menge anderer artigen Sachen umgeben. Alles war klein, aber überaus sorgfältig und zierlich gearbeitet, und schien von einer kunstreichen Hand mit der höchsten Genauigkeit ausgeschnitzt zu sein.

Er würde seine Augen von der Betrachtung dieser Seltenheiten noch nicht abgewendet haben, wenn sich nicht die Stimme abermals hätte hören lassen. Sie forderte ihn auf, sich umzukehren und den gegenüberstehenden Glaskasten zu beschauen. Wie stieg seine Verwunderung, als er darin ein Mädchen von größter Schönheit erblickte. Es lag wie im Schlafe, und war in lange blonde Haare wie in einen kostbaren Mantel eingehüllt. Die Augen waren fest geschlossen, doch die lebhafte Gesichtsfarbe und ein Band, das der Atem hin und her bewegte, ließen keinen Zweifel an ihrem Leben. Der Schneider betrachtete die Schöne mit klopfendem Herzen, als sie plötzlich die Augen aufschlug und bei seinem Anblick in freudigem Schrecken zusammenfuhr. »Gerechter Himmel,« rief sie, »meine Befreiung naht! geschwind, geschwind, hilf mir aus meinem Gefängnis: wenn du den Riegel an diesem gläsernen Sarg wegschiebst, so bin ich erlöst.« Der Schneider gehorchte ohne Zaudern, alsbald hob sie den Glasdeckel in die Höhe, stieg heraus und eilte in die Ecke des Saals, wo sie sich in einen weiten Mantel verhüllte. Dann setzte sie sich auf einen Stein nieder, hieß den jungen Mann herangehen, und nachdem sie einen freundlichen Kuß auf seinen Mund gedrückt hatte, sprach sie »mein lang ersehnter Befreier, der gütige Himmel hat mich zu dir geführt und meinen Leiden ein Ziel gesetzt. An demselben Tage, wo sie endigen, soll dein Glück beginnen. Du bist der vom Himmel bestimmte Gemahl, und sollst, von mir geliebt und mit allen irdischen Gütern überhäuft, in ungestörter Freud dein Leben zubringen. Sitz nieder und höre die Erzählung meines Schicksals.

Ich bin die Tochter eines reichen Grafen. Meine Eltern starben, als ich noch in zarter Jugend war, und empfahlen mich in ihrem letzten Willen meinem älteren Bruder, bei dem ich auferzogen wurde. Wir liebten uns so zärtlich und waren so übereinstimmend in unserer Denkungsart und unsern Neigungen, daß wir beide den Entschluß faßten, uns niemals zu verheiraten, sondern bis an das Ende unseres Lebens beisammen zu bleiben. In unserm Hause war an Gesellschaft nie Mangel: Nachbarn und Freunde besuchten uns häufig, und wir übten gegen alle die Gastfreundschaft in vollem Maße. So geschah es auch eines Abends, daß ein Fremder in unser Schloß geritten kam und unter dem Vorgeben, den nächsten Ort nicht mehr erreichen zu können, um ein Nachtlager bat. Wir gewährten seine Bitte mit zuvorkommender Höflichkeit, und er unterhielt uns während des Abendessens mit seinem Gespräche und eingemischten Erzählungen auf das anmutigste. Mein Bruder hatte ein so großes Wohlgefallen an ihm, daß er ihn bat, ein paar Tage bei uns zu verweilen, wozu er nach einigem Weigern einwilligte. Wir standen erst spät in der Nacht vom Tische auf, dem Fremden wurde ein Zimmer angewiesen, und ich eilte, ermüdet, wie ich war, meine Glieder in die weichen Federn zu senken. Kaum war ich ein wenig eingeschlummert, so weckten mich die Töne einer zarten und lieblichen Musik. Da ich nicht begreifen konnte, woher sie kamen, so wollte ich mein im Nebenzimmer schlafendes Kammermädchen rufen, allein zu meinem Erstaunen fand ich, daß mir, als lastete ein Alp auf meiner Brust, von einer unbekannten Gewalt die Sprache benommen und ich unvermögend war, den geringsten Laut von mir zu geben. Indem sah ich bei dem Schein der Nachtlampe den Fremden in mein durch zwei Türen fest verschlossenes Zimmer eintreten. Er näherte sich mir und sagte, daß er durch Zauberkräfte, die ihm zu Gebote ständen, die liebliche Musik habe ertönen lassen, um mich aufzuwecken, und dringe jetzt selbst durch alle Schlösser in der

Absicht, mir Herz und Hand anzubieten. Mein Widerwille aber gegen seine Zauberkünste war so groß, daß ich ihn keiner Antwort würdigte. Er blieb eine Zeitlang unbeweglich stehen, wahrscheinlich in der Absicht, einen günstigen Entschluß zu erwarten, als ich aber fortfuhr zu schweigen, erklärte er zornig, daß er sich rächen und Mittel finden werde, meinen Hochmut zu bestrafen, worauf er das Zimmer wieder verließ. Ich brachte die Nacht in höchster Unruhe zu und schlummerte erst gegen Morgen ein. Als ich erwacht war, eilte ich zu meinem Bruder, um ihn von dem, was vorgefallen war, zu benachrichtigen, allein ich fand ihn nicht auf seinem Zimmer, und der Bediente sagte mir, daß er bei anbrechendem Tage mit dem Fremden auf die Jagd geritten sei.

Mir ahnete gleich nichts Gutes. Ich kleidete mich schnell an, ließ meinen Leibzelter satteln und ritt, nur von einem Diener begleitet, in vollem Jagen nach dem Walde. Der Diener stürzte mit dem Pferde und konnte mir, da das Pferd den Fuß gebrochen hatte, nicht folgen. Ich setzte, ohne mich aufzuhalten, meinen Weg fort, und in wenigen Minuten sah ich den Fremden mit einem schönen Hirsch, den er an der Leine führte, auf mich zukommen. Ich fragte ihn, wo er meinen Bruder gelassen habe und wie er zu diesem Hirsche gelangt sei, aus dessen großen Augen ich Tränen fließen sah. Anstatt mir zu antworten, fing er an laut aufzulachen. Ich geriet darüber in höchsten Zorn, zog eine Pistole und drückte sie gegen das Ungeheuer ab, aber die Kugel prallte von seiner Brust zurück und fuhr in den Kopf meines Pferdes. Ich stürzte zur Erde, und der Fremde murmelte einige Worte, die mir das Bewußtsein raubten.

Als ich wieder zur Besinnung kam, fand ich mich in dieser unterirdischen Gruft in einem gläsernen Sarge. Der Schwarzkünstler erschien nochmals, sagte, daß er meinen Bruder in einen Hirsch verwandelt, mein Schloß mit allem Zubehör verkleinert in den andern Glaskasten eingeschlossen und meine in Rauch verwandelten Leute in Glasflaschen gebannt hätte. Wolle ich mich jetzt seinem Wunsche fügen, so sei ihm ein leichtes, alles wieder in den vorigen Stand zu setzen: er brauche nur die Gefäße zu öffnen, so werde alles wieder in die natürliche Gestalt zurückkehren. Ich antwortete ihm so wenig als das erstemal. Er verschwand und ließ mich in meinem Gefängnisse liegen, in welchem mich ein tiefer Schlaf befiel. Unter den Bildern, welche an meiner Seele vorübergingen, war auch das tröstliche, daß ein junger Mann kam und mich befreite, und als ich heute die Augen öffne, so erblicke ich dich und sehe meinen Traum erfüllt. Hilf mir vollbringen, was in jenem Gesichte noch weiter geschah. Das erste ist, daß wir den Glaskasten, in welchem mein Schloß sich befindet, auf jenen breiten Stein heben.«

Der Stein, sobald er beschwert war, hob sich mit dem Fräulein und dem Jüngling in die Höhe und stieg durch die Öffnung der Decke in den obern Saal, wo sie dann leicht ins Freie gelangen konnten. Hier öffnete das Fräulein den Deckel, und es war wunderbar anzusehen, wie Schloß, Häuser und Gehöfte sich ausdehnten und in größter Schnelligkeit zu natürlicher Größe heranwuchsen. Sie kehrten darauf in die unterirdische Höhle zurück und ließen die mit Rauch gefüllten Gläser von dem Steine herauftragen. Kaum hatte das Fräulein die Flaschen geöffnet, so drang der blaue Rauch heraus und verwandelte sich in lebendige Menschen, in welchen das Fräulein ihre Diener und Leute erkannte. Ihre Freude ward noch vermehrt, als ihr Bruder, der den Zauberer in dem Stier getötet hatte, in menschlicher Gestalt aus dem Walde herankam, und noch denselben Tag reichte das Fräulein, ihrem Versprechen gemäß, dem glücklichen Schneider die Hand am Altare.

164. Der faule Heinz.

Heinz war faul, und obgleich er weiter nichts zu tun hatte, als seine Ziege täglich auf die Weide zu treiben, so seufzte er dennoch, wenn er nach vollbrachtem Tagewerk abends nach Hause kam. »Es ist in Wahrheit eine schwere Last,« sagte er, »und ein mühseliges Geschäft, so eine Ziege Jahr aus Jahr ein bis in den späten Herbst ins Feld zu treiben. Und wenn man sich noch dabei hinlegen und schlafen könnte! aber nein, da muß man die Augen aufhaben, damit sie die jungen Bäume nicht beschädigt, durch die Hecke in einen Garten dringt oder gar davonläuft. Wie soll da einer zur Ruhe kommen und seines Lebens froh werden!« Er setzte sich, sammelte seine Gedanken und überlegte, wie er seine Schultern von dieser Bürde frei machen könnte. Lange war alles Nachsinnen vergeblich, plötzlich fiels ihm wie Schuppen von den Augen. »Ich weiß, was ich tue,« rief er aus, »ich heirate die dicke Trine, die hat auch eine Ziege und kann meine mit austreiben, so brauche ich mich nicht länger zu quälen.«

Heinz erhob sich also, setzte seine müden Glieder in Bewegung, ging quer über die Straße, denn weiter war der Weg nicht, wo die Eltern der dicken Trine wohnten, und hielt um ihre arbeitsame und tugendreiche Tochter an. Die Eltern besannen sich nicht lange, »gleich und gleich gesellt sich gern,« meinten sie und willigten ein. Nun ward die dicke Trine Heinzens Frau und trieb die beiden Ziegen aus. Heinz hatte gute Tage und brauchte sich von keiner andern Arbeit zu erholen als von seiner eigenen Faulheit. Nur dann und wann ging er mit hinaus und sagte »es geschieht bloß, damit mir die Ruhe hernach desto besser schmeckt: man verliert sonst alles Gefühl dafür.« Aber die dicke Trine war nicht minder faul. »Lieber Heinz,« sprach sie eines Tages, »warum sollen wir uns das Leben ohne Not sauer machen und unsere beste Jugendzeit verkümmern? Ist es nicht besser, wir geben die beiden Ziegen, die jeden Morgen einen mit ihrem Meckern im besten Schlafe stören, unserm Nachbar, und der gibt uns einen Bienenstock dafür? den Bienenstock stellen wir an einen sonnigen Platz hinter das Haus und bekümmern uns weiter nicht darum. Die Bienen brauchen nicht gehütet und nicht ins Feld getrieben zu werden: sie fliegen aus, finden den Weg nach Haus von selbst wieder und sammeln Honig, ohne daß es uns die geringste Mühe macht.« »Du hast wie eine verständige Frau gesprochen,« antwortete Heinz, »deinen Vorschlag wollen wir ohne Zaudern ausführen: außerdem schmeckt und nährt der Honig besser als die Ziegenmilch und läßt sich auch länger aufbewahren.«

Der Nachbar gab für die beiden Ziegen gerne einen Bienenstock. Die Bienen flogen unermüdlich vom frühen Morgen bis zum späten Abend aus und ein, und füllten den Stock mit dem schönsten Honig, so daß Heinz im Herbst einen ganzen Krug voll herausnehmen konnte.

Sie stellten den Krug auf ein Brett, das oben an der Wand in ihrer Schlafkammer befestigt war, und weil sie fürchteten, er könnte ihnen gestohlen werden oder die Mäuse könnten darüber geraten, so holte Trine einen starken Haselstock herbei und legte ihn neben ihr Bett, damit sie ihn, ohne unnötigerweise aufzustehen, mit der Hand erreichen und die ungebetenen Gäste von dem Bette aus verjagen könnte.

Der faule Heinz verließ das Bett nicht gerne vor Mittag: »wer früh aufsteht,« sprach er, »sein Gut verzehrt.« Eines Morgens, als er so am hellen Tage noch in den Federn lag und von dem langen Schlaf ausruhte, sprach er zu seiner Frau »die Weiber lieben die Süßigkeit, und du naschest von dem Honig, es ist besser, ehe er von dir allein ausgegessen wird, daß wir dafür eine Gans mit einem jungen Gänslein erhandeln.« »Aber nicht eher,« erwiderte Trine, »als bis wir ein Kind haben, das sie hütet. Soll ich mich etwa mit den jungen Gänsen plagen und meine Kräfte dabei unnötigerweise zusetzen?« »Meinst du,« sagte Heinz, »der Junge werde Gänse hüten? heutzutage gehorchen die Kinder nicht mehr: sie tun nach ihrem eigenen Willen, weil sie sich klüger dünken als die Eltern, gerade wie jener Knecht, der die Kuh suchen sollte und drei Amseln nachjagte.« »O,« antwortete Trine, »dem soll es schlecht bekommen, wenn er nicht tut, was ich sage. Einen Stock will ich nehmen und mit ungezählten Schlägen ihm die Haut gerben. Siehst du, Heinz,« rief sie in ihrem Eifer und faßte den Stock, mit dem sie die Mäuse verjagen wollte, »siehst du, so will ich auf ihn losschlagen.« Sie holte aus, traf aber unglücklicherweise den Honigkrug über dem Bette. Der Krug sprang wider die Wand und fiel in Scherben herab, und der schöne Honig floß auf den Boden. »Da liegt nun die Gans mit dem jungen Gänslein,« sagte Heinz, »und braucht nicht gehütet zu werden. Aber ein Glück ist es, daß mir der Krug nicht auf den Kopf gefallen ist, wir haben alle Ursache, mit unserm Schicksal zufrieden zu sein.« Und da er in einer Scherbe noch etwas Honig bemerkte, so langte er danach und sprach ganz vergnügt »das Restchen, Frau, wollen wir uns noch schmecken lassen und dann nach dem gehabten Schrecken ein wenig ausruhen, was tuts, wenn wir etwas später als gewöhnlich aufstehen, der Tag ist doch noch lang genug.« »Ja,« antwortete Trine, »man kommt immer noch zu rechter Zeit. Weißt du, die Schnecke war einmal zur Hochzeit eingeladen, machte sich auf den Weg, kam aber zur Kindtaufe an. Vor dem Hause stürzte sie noch über den Zaun und sagte »eilen tut nicht gut«.«

165. Der Vogel Greif.

S isch einisch e Chönig gsi, woner gregiert hat und wiener gheisse hat, weiß i nümme. De het kei Sohn gha, nummene einzige Tochter, die isch immer chrank gsi, und kei Dokter het se chönne heile. Do isch em Chönig profizeit worde, si Tochter werd se an Öpfle gsund esse. Do lot er dur sis ganz Land bchant mache, wer siner Tochter Öpfel bringe, daß se se gsund dar chönn esse, de müesse zur Frau ha und Chönig wärde. Das het au ne Pur verno, de drei Söhn gha het. Do säit er zum elste »gang ufs Gade ufe, nimm e Chratte (Handkorb) voll vo dene schöne Öpfle mit rote Bagge und träg se a Hof; villicht cha se d’ Chönigstochter gsund dra esse und de darfsche hürote und wirsch Chönig.« De Kärle hets e so gmacht und der Weg under d’ Füeß gno. Woner e Zitlang gange gsi isch, begegnet es chlis isigs Manndle, das frogt ne, was er do e dem Chratte häig, do seit der Üle, denn so het er gheisse, »Fröschebäi.« Das Manndle säit druf »no es sölle si und blibe,« und isch witer gange. Ändle chunt der Üle fürs Schloß un lot se anmelde, er hob Öpfel, die d’ Tochter gsund mache, wenn so dervo ässe tue. Das het der Chönig grüsele gfreut und lot der Üle vor se cho, aber, o häie! woner ufdeckt, so heter anstatt Öpfel Fröschebäi e dem Chratte, die no zapled händ. Drob isch der Chönig bös worde, und lot ne zum Hus us jage. Woner häi cho isch, so verzelter dem Ätte, wies em gange isch. Do schickt der Ätte der noelst Son, de Säme gheisse het; aber dem isch es ganz glich gange wie im Üle. Es isch em halt au es chlis isigs Manndle begegnet, und das het ne gfrogt, was er do e dem Chratte häig, der Säme säit »Seüborst,« und das isigs Manndle säit »no es söll si und blibe.« Woner do vor es Chönigsschloß cho isch, und säit, er heb Öpfel, a dene se d’ Chönigstochter gsund chönn esse, so händ se ne nid welle ine lo, und händ gsäit, es sig scho eine do gsi und heb se füre Nare gha. Der Säme het aber aghalte, er heb gwüß dere Öpfel, se solle ne nume ine lo. Ändle hend sem glaubt, un füre ne vor der Chönig. Aber woner er si Chratte ufdeckt, so het er halt Seüborst. Das het der Chönig gar schröckele erzürnt, so daß er der Säme us em Hus het lo peütsche. Woner häi cho isch, so het er gsäit, wies em gange isch. Do chunt der jüngst Bueb, dem händse nume der dumm Hans gsäit, und frogt der Ätte, ob er au mit Öpfel goh dörf. »Jo,« säit do der Ätte, »du wärst der rächt Kerle derzue, wenn die gschite nüt usrichte, was wettest denn du usrichte.« Der Bueb het aber nit no glo »e woll, Ätte, i will au goh.« »Gang mer doch ewäg, du dumme Kerle, du muest warte, bis gschiter wirsch,« säit druf der Ätte und chert em der Rügge. Der Hans aber zupft ne hinde am Chittel, »e woll, Ätte, i will au goh.« »No minetwäge, so gang, de wirsch woll wieder ome cho,« gitt der Ätte zur Antwort eme nidige Ton. Der Bueb hat se aber grüsele gfreut und isch ufgumpet. »Jo, tue jetz no wiene Nar, du wirsch vo äim Tag zum andere no dümmer,« säit der Ätte wieder. Das het aber im Hans nüt gmacht und het se e siner Freud nid lo störe. Wils aber gli Nacht gsi isch, so het er dänkt, er well warte bis am Morge, er möcht hüt doch nümme na Hof gcho. Z’ Nacht im Bett het er nid chönne schloffe, und wenn er au ne

ihli igschlummert isch, so hets em traumt vo schöne Jumpfere, vo Schlößern, Gold und Silber und allerhand dere Sache meh. Am Morge früe macht er se up der Wäg, und gli drufe bchuntem es chlis mutzigs Manndle, eme isige Chläidle, un frogt ne, was er do e dem Chratte häig. Der Hans gitt em zur Antwort, er heb Öpfel, a dene d' Chönigstochter se gsund äße sött. »No,« säit das Manndle, »es sölle söttige (solche) si und blibe.« Aber am Hof händ se der Hans partu nit welle ine lo, denn es sige scho zwee do gsi und hebe gsäit, se bringe Öpfel, und do heb äine Fröschebäi und der ander Seüborst gha. Der Hans het aber gar grüsele aghalte, er heb gwöß kene Fröschebäi, sondern von de schönste Öpfle, die im ganze Chönigreich wachse. Woner de so ordele gredt het, so dänke d' Törhüeter, de chönn nid lüge, und lönde ine, und se händ au rächt gha, denn wo der Hans si Chratte vor em Chönig abdeckt, so sind goldgäle Öpfel füre cho. De Chönig het se gfreut, und lot gli der Tochter dervo bringe, und wartet jetzt e banger Erwartig, bis menem der Bericht bringt, was se für Würkig to hebe. Aber nid lange Zit vergot, so bringt em öpper Bricht: aber was meineder, wer isch das gsi? d' Tochter selber isch es gsi. So bald se vo dene Öpfle ggäße gha het, isch e gsund us em Bett gsprunge. Wie der Chönig e Freud gha het, chame nid beschribe. Aber jetz het er d' Tochter dem Hans nid welle zur Frau ge un säit, er müeß em zerst none Wäidlig (Nachen) mache, de ufem drochne Land wäidliger geu as im Wasser. Der Hans nimmt de Betingig a und got häi und verzelts, wies eme gangen seig. Do schickt der Ätte der Üle is Holz, um se söttige Wäidlig z' mache. Er hat flißig gewärret (gearbeitet) und derzue gpfiffe. Z' Mittag, wo d' Sunne am höchste gstande isch, chunt es chlis isigs Manndle und frogt, was er do mach. Der Üle gitt em zur Antwort »Chelle (hölzernes Gerät).« Das isig Manndle säit »no es sölle si und blibe.« Z' Obe meint der Üle, er heb jetz e Wäidlig gmacht, aber woner het welle isitze, so sinds alles Chelle gsi. Der anner Tag got der Säme e Wald, aber s' isch em ganz gliche gange wie im Üle. Am dritte Tag got der dumm Hans. Er schafft rächt flißig, daß es im ganze Wald tönt vo sine chräftige Schläge, derzue singt er und pfift er rächt lustig. Da chunt wieder das chli Manndle z' Mittag, wos am heißeste gsi isch, und frogt, was er do mach. »E Wäidlig, de uf em drochne Land wäidliger got as uf em Wasser,« und wenn er dermit fertig seig, so chom er d' Chönigstochter zur Frau über. »No,« säit das Manndle, »es söll e so äine ge und bliebe.« Z' Obe, wo d' Sunne aber z' Gold gange isch, isch der Hans au fertig gsi mit sim Wäidlig und Schiff und Gscher. Er sitzt i und ruederet der Residenz zue. Der Wäidlig isch aber so gschwind gange wie der Wind. Der Chönig hets von witen gseh, will aber im Hans si Tochter nonig ge und säit, er müeß zerst no hundert Haase hüete vom Morge trüeh bis z' Obe spot, und wenn em äaine furt chömm, so chömm er d' Tochter nit über. Der Hans isch e des z' friede gsi, und gli am andre Tag got er mit siner Herd auf d' Wäid und paßt verwändt uf, daß em keine dervo laufe. Nid mänge Stund isch vergange, so chunt e Magd vom Schloß und säit zum Hans, er söll ere gschwind e Haas ge, so hebe Wisite über cho. Der Hans hett aber woll gmerkt, wo das use will, und säit, er gäb e keine, der Chönig chön denn morn siner Wisite mit Haasepfäffer ufwarte. D' Magd het

aber nid no glo und am Änd fot so no a resniere. Do säit der Hans, wenn d' Chönigstochter selber chömm, so woll er ene Haas ge. Dat het d' Magd im Schloß gsäit, und d' Tochter isch selber gange. Underdesse isch aber zum Hans das chli Manndle wieder cho und frogt der Hans, was er do tüej. »He, do müeß er hundert Haase hüete, daß em käine dervo lauf, und denn dörf er d' Chönigstochter hürote und wäre Chönig.« »Guet,« säit das Manndle, »do hesch e Pfifle, und wenn der äine furtlauft, so pfiff nume, denn chunt er wieder ume.« Wo do d' Tochter cho isch, so gitt ere der Hans e Haas is Fürtüchle. Aber wo se öppe hundert Schritt wit gsi isch, so pfift der Hans, und der Haas springt ere us em Schäubele use und, was gisch was hesch, wieder zu der Herd. Wo's Obe gsi isch, so pfift de Haasehirt no emol und luegt, ob alle do sige, und treibt se do zum Schloß. Der Chönig het se verwunderet, wie au der Hans im Stand gsi seig, hundert Haase z' hüete, daß em käine dervo glofe isch; er will em aber d' Tochter äine weg nonig ge, und säit, er müeß em no ne Fädere us d' Vogelgrife Stehl bringe. Der Hans macht se grad uf der Wäg und marschiert rächt handle vorwärts. Z' Obe chunt er zu neme Schloß, do frogt er umenes Nachtlager, denn sälbesmol het me no käine Wirtshüser gha, das säit em der Herr vom Schloß mit vele Freude zue und frogt ne, woner he well. Der Hans git druf zur Antwort »zum Vogelgrif.« »So, zum Vogelgrif, me säit ame, er wuß alles, und i hane Schlössel zue nere isige Gäldchiste verlore: ehr chöntet doch so guet si und ne froge, woner seig.« »Jo frile,« säit der Hans, »das wili scho tue.« Am Morgen früe isch er do witer gange, und chunt unterwägs zue mene andere Schloß, i dem er wieder übernacht blibt. Wo d' Lüt drus verno händ, daß er zum Vogelgrif well, so säge se, es sig im Hus ne Tochter chrank, und se hebe scho alle Mittel brucht, aber es well kais aschlo, er söll doch so guet si und der Vogelgrif froge, was die Tochter wieder chön gsund mache. Der Hans säit, das weller gärn tue, und goht witer. Do chunt er zue emne Wasser, und anstatt eme Feer isch e große große Ma do gsi, de alle Lüte het müesse übere träge. De Ma het der Hans gfrogt, wo sie Räis ane geu. »Zum Vogelgrif,« säit der Hans. »No, wenn er zue ume chömt,« säit do de Ma, »so froget ne an, worum i all Lüt müeß über das Wasser träge.« Do säit der Hans »jo, min Gott jo, das will scho tue.« De Ma het ne do uf d' Achsle gno und übere träit. Ändle chunt do der Hans zum Hus vom Vogelgrif, aber do isch nume d' Frau dehäime gsi und der Vogelgrif sälber nid. Do frogt ne d' Frau, was er well. Do het ere der Hans alles verzelt, daß ere Fädere sölt ha us s' Vogelgrife Stehl, und denn hebe se emene Schloß der Schlüssel zue nere Gäldchiste verlore, und er sött der Vogelgrif froge, wo der Schlüssel seig; denn seig eme andere Schloß e Tochter chrank, und er söt wüße, was die Tochter chönt gsund mache; denn seig nig wid vo do es Wasser und e Ma derbi, de d' Lüt müeß übere träge, und er möcht au gern wüsse, worum de Mall all Lüt mueß übere träge. Do säit di Frau »ja lueget, mi guete Fründ, s' cha käi Christ mit em Vogelgrif rede, er frißt se all; wenn er aber wänd, so chönneder under sis Bett undere ligge, und z' Nacht, wenn er rächt fest schloft, so chönneder denn use länge und em e Fädere usem Stehl riße; und wäge dene Sache, die ner wüße söttet, will i ne sälber froge.« Der Hans isch e das alles z' friede gsi und lit unders Bett undere. Z' Obe chunt der Vogelgrif häi, und wiener i d' Stube chunt, so säit er »Frau, i schmöke ne Christ.« »Jo,« säit do d' Frau, »s' isch hüt äine do gsi, aber er isch wieder furt;« und mit dem het der Vogelgrif nüt me gsäit. Z' mitzt e der Nacht, wo der Vogelgrif rächt geschnarchlet het, so längt der Hans ufe und rißt em e Fädere usem Stehl. Do isch der Vogelgrif plötzle ufgjuckt und säit »Frau, i schmöke ne Christ, und s' isch mer, s' heb me öpper am Stehl zehrt.« Do säit d' Frau »de hesch gwüß traumet, und i ho der jo hüt scho gsäit, s' isch e Christ do gsi, aber isch wieder furt. Do het mer allerhand Sache verzellt. Si hebe ime Schloß der Schlüssel zue nere Gäldchiste verlore und chönnene numme finde.« »O die Nare,« säit der Vogelgrif, »de Schlüssel lit im Holzhus hinder der Tör undere Holzbig.« »Und denn het er au gsäit, imene Schloß seig e Tochter chrank und se wüße kais Mittel für se gsund z' mache.« »O die Nare,« säit der Vogelgrif, »under der Chällerstäge het e Chrot es Näscht gmacht von ere Hoore, und wenn se die Hoor wieder het, so wers se gsund.« »Und denn het er au no gsäit s' sig amene Ort es Wasser un e Ma derbi, der müeß all Lüt drüber träge.« »O de Nar,« säit de Vogelgrif, »täter nome emol äine z' mitzt dri stelle, er müeßt denn käine me übere träge.« Am Morgen frue isch der Vogelgrif uf gstande und isch furt gange. Do chunt der Hans underem Bette füre und het e schöne Fädere gha; au het er ghört, was der Vogelgrif gsäit het wäge dem Schlüssel und der Tochter und dem Ma. D' Frau vom Vogelgrif het em do alles no nemol verzellt, daß er nüt vergäße, und denn isch er wieder häi zue gange. Zerst chunt er zum Ma bim Wasser, de frogt ne gli, was der Vogelgrif gsäit heb, do säit der Hans, er söll ne zerst übere träge, es well em's denn däne säge. Do träit ne der Ma übere. Woner däne gsi isch, so säit em der Hans, er söllt nume äinisch äine z' mitzt dri stelle, er müeß denn käine me übere träge. Do het se de Ma grüsele gfreut und säit zum Hans, er well ne zum Dank none mol ume und äne trage. Do säit der Hans näi, er well em die Müeh erspare, er seig sust mit em z'friede, und isch witer gange. Do chunt er zue dem Schloß, wo die Tochter chrank gsi isch, die nimmt er do uf d' Achsle, denn se het nit chönne laufe, und träit se d' Chellerstäge ab und nimmt das Chrotenäscht under dem underste Tritt füre und gits der Tochter i d' Händ, und die springt em ab der Achsle abe und vor im d' Stäge uf, und isch ganz gsund gsi. Jetz händ der Vater und d' Mueter e grüsliche Freud gha und händ dem Hans Gschänke gmacht vo Gold und Silber: und was er nume het welle, das händ sem gge. Wo do der Hans is ander Schloß cho isch, isch er gli is Holzhus gange, und het hinder der Tör under der Holzbige de Schlüssel richtig gfunde, und het ne do dem Herr brocht. De het se au nid wenig gfreut und het dem Hans zur Belohnig vill vo dem Gold gge, das e der Chiste gsi isch, und sust no aller derhand für Sache, so Chüe und Schoof und Gäiße. Wo der Hans zum Chönig cho isch mit deme Sache alle, mit dem Gäld und dem Gold und Silber und dene Chüene, Schoofe und Gäiße, so frogt ne der Chönig, woner au das alles übercho heb. Do säit der Hans, der Vogelgrif gäb äin, so vill me well. Do dänkt der Chönig, er chönt das au bruche und macht se au uf der Wäg zum Vogelgrif, aber woner zue dem Wasser cho isch, so isch er halt der erst gsi, der sid em Hans cho isch,

und de Ma stellt e z’ mitzt ab und goht furt, und der Chönig isch ertrunke. Der Hans het do d’ Tochter ghürotet und isch Chönig worde.

166. Der starke Hans.

Es war einmal ein Mann und eine Frau, die hatten nur ein einziges Kind, und lebten in einem abseits gelegenen Tale ganz allein. Es trug sich zu, daß die Mutter einmal ins Holz ging, Tannenreiser zu lesen, und den kleinen Hans, der erst zwei Jahre alt war, mitnahm. Da es gerade in der Frühlingszeit war und das Kind seine Freude an den bunten Blumen hatte, so ging sie immer weiter mit ihm in den Wald hinein. Plötzlich sprangen aus dem Gebüsch zwei Räuber hervor, packten die Mutter und das Kind und führten sie tief in den schwarzen Wald, wo Jahr aus Jahr ein kein Mensch hinkam. Die arme Frau bat die Räuber inständig, sie mit ihrem Kinde freizulassen, aber das Herz der Räuber war von Stein: sie hörten nicht auf ihr Bitten und Flehen und trieben sie mit Gewalt an weiterzugehen. Nachdem sie etwa zwei Stunden durch Stauden und Dörner sich hatten durcharbeiten müssen, kamen sie zu einem Felsen, wo eine Türe war, an welche die Räuber klopften, und die sich alsbald öffnete. Sie mußten durch einen langen dunkelen Gang und kamen endlich in eine große Höhle, die von einem Feuer, das auf dem Herd brannte, erleuchtet war. An der Wand hingen Schwerter, Säbel und andere Mordgewehre, die in dem Lichte blinkten, und in der Mitte stand ein schwarzer Tisch, an dem vier andere Räuber saßen und spielten, und obenan saß der Hauptmann. Dieser kam, als er die Frau sah, herbei, redete sie an und sagte, sie sollte nur ruhig und ohne Angst sein, sie täten ihr nichts zuleid, aber sie müßte das Hauswesen besorgen, und wenn sie alles in Ordnung hielte, so sollte sie es nicht schlimm bei ihnen haben. Darauf gaben sie ihr etwas zu essen und zeigten ihr ein Bett, wo sie mit ihrem Kinde schlafen könnte.

Die Frau blieb viele Jahre bei den Räubern, und Hans ward groß und stark. Die Mutter erzählte ihm Geschichten und lehrte ihn in einem alten Ritterbuch, das sie in der Höhle fand, lesen. Als Hans neun Jahr alt war, machte er sich aus einem Tannenast einen starken Knüttel und versteckte ihn hinter das Bett: dann ging er zu seiner Mutter und sprach »liebe Mutter, sage mir jetzt einmal, wer mein Vater ist, ich will und muß es wissen.« Die Mutter schwieg still und wollte es ihm nicht sagen, damit er nicht das Heimweh bekäme; sie wußte auch, daß die gottlosen Räuber den Hans doch nicht fortlassen würden; aber es hätte ihr fast das Herz zersprengt, daß Hans nicht sollte zu seinem Vater kommen. In der Nacht, als die Räuber von ihrem Raubzug heimkehrten, holte Hans seinen Knüttel hervor, stellte sich vor den Hauptmann und sagte »jetzt will ich wissen, wer mein Vater ist, und wenn du mirs nicht gleich sagst, so schlag ich dich nieder.« Da lachte der Hauptmann und gab dem Hans eine Ohrfeige, daß er unter den Tisch kugelte.

Hans machte sich wieder auf, schwieg und dachte »ich will noch ein Jahr warten und es dann noch einmal versuchen, vielleicht gehts besser.« Als das Jahr herum war, holte er seinen Knüttel wieder hervor, wischte den Staub ab, betrachtete ihn und sprach »es ist ein tüchtiger wackerer Knüttel.« Nachts kamen die Räuber heim, tranken Wein, einen Krug nach dem anderen, und fingen an die Köpfe zu hängen. Da holte der Hans seinen Knüttel herbei, stellte sich wieder vor den Hauptmann und fragte ihn, wer sein Vater wäre. Der Hauptmann gab ihm abermals eine so kräftige Ohrfeige, daß Hans unter den Tisch rollte, aber es dauerte nicht lange, so war er wieder oben und schlug mit seinem Knüttel auf den Hauptmann und die Räuber, daß sie Arme und Beine nicht mehr regen konnten. Die Mutter stand in einer Ecke und war voll Verwunderung über seine Tapferkeit und Stärke. Als Hans mit seiner Arbeit fertig war, ging er zu seiner Mutter und sagte »jetzt ist mirs Ernst gewesen, aber jetzt muß ich auch wissen, wer mein Vater ist.« »Lieber Hans,« antwortete die Mutter, »komm, wir wollen gehen und ihn suchen, bis wir ihn finden.« Sie nahm dem Hauptmann den Schlüssel zu der Eingangstüre ab, und Hans holte einen großen Mehlsack, packte Gold, Silber, und was er sonst noch für schöne Sachen fand, zusammen, bis er voll war, und nahm ihn dann auf den Rücken. Sie verließen die Höhle, aber was tat Hans die Augen auf, als er aus der Finsternis heraus in das Tageslicht kam, und den grünen Wald, Blumen und Vögel und die Morgensonne am Himmel erblickte. Er stand da und staunte alles an, als wenn er nicht recht gescheit wäre. Die Mutter suchte den Weg nach Haus, und als sie ein paar Stunden gegangen waren, so kamen sie glücklich in ihr einsames Tal und zu ihrem Häuschen. Der Vater saß unter der Türe, er weinte vor Freude, als er seine Frau erkannte, und hörte, daß Hans sein Sohn war, die er beide längst für tot gehalten hatte. Aber Hans, obgleich erst zwölf Jahr alt, war doch einen Kopf größer als sein Vater. Sie gingen zusammen in das Stübchen, aber kaum hatte Hans seinen Sack auf die Ofenbank gesetzt, so fing das ganze Haus an zu krachen, die Bank brach ein und dann auch der Fußboden, und der schwere Sack sank in den Keller hinab. »Gott behüte uns,« rief der Vater, »was ist das? jetzt hast du unser Häuschen zerbrochen.« »Laßt Euch keine grauen Haare darüber wachsen, lieber Vater,« antwortete Hans, »da in dem Sack steckt mehr, als für ein neues Haus nötig ist.« Der Vater und Hans fingen auch gleich an, ein neues Haus zu bauen, Vieh zu erhandeln und Land zu kaufen und zu wirtschaften. Hans ackerte die Felder, und wenn er hinter dem Pflug ging und ihn in die Erde hineinschob, so hatten die Stiere fast nicht nötig zu ziehen. Den nächsten Frühling sagte Hans »Vater, behaltet alles Geld und laßt mir einen zentnerschweren Spazierstab machen, damit ich in die Fremde gehen kann.« Als der verlangte Stab fertig war, verließ er seines Vaters Haus, zog fort und kam in einen tiefen und finstern Wald. Da hörte er etwas knistern und knastern, schaute um sich und sah eine Tanne, die von unten bis oben wie ein Seil gewunden war: und wie er die Augen in die Höhe richtete, so erblickte er einen großen Kerl, der den Baum gepackt hatte und ihn wie eine Weidenrute umdrehte. »He!« rief Hans, »was machst du da droben?« Der Kerl antwortete »ich habe gestern Reiswellen zusammengetragen und will mir ein Seil dazu drehen.« »Das laß ich mir gefallen,« dachte Hans, »der hat Kräfte,« und rief ihm zu, »laß du das gut sein und komm mit mir.« Der Kerl kletterte von oben herab und war einen ganzen Kopf größer als Hans, und der war doch auch nicht klein. »Du heißest jetzt Tannendreher,« sagte Hans zu ihm. Sie gingen darauf weiter und hörten etwas klopfen und hämmern, so stark, daß bei jedem Schlag der Erdboden zitterte. Bald darauf kamen sie zu einem mächtigen Felsen, vor dem stand ein Riese und schlug mit der Faust große Stücke davon ab. Als Hans fragte, was er da vorhätte, antwortete er »wenn ich nachts schlafen will, so kommen Bären, Wölfe und anderes Ungeziefer der Art, die schnuppern und schnuffeln an mir herum und lassen mich nicht schlafen, da will ich mir ein Haus bauen und mich hineinlegen, damit ich Ruhe habe.« »Ei ja wohl,« dachte Hans, »den kannst du auch noch brauchen,« und sprach zu ihm »laß das Hausbauen gut sein und geh mit mir, du sollst der Felsenklipperer heißen!« Er willigte ein, und sie strichen alle drei durch den Wald hin, und wo sie hinkamen, da wurden die wilden Tiere aufgeschreckt und liefen vor ihnen weg. Abends kamen sie in ein altes verlassenes Schloß, stiegen hinauf und legten sich in den Saal schlafen. Am andern Morgen ging Hans hinab in den Garten, der war ganz verwildert und stand voll Dörner und Gebüsch. Und wie er so herumging, sprang ein Wildschwein auf ihn los: er gab ihm aber mit seinem Stab einen Schlag, daß es gleich niederfiel. Dann nahm er es auf die Schulter und brachte es hinauf; da steckten sie es an einen Spieß, machten sich einen Braten zurecht und waren guter Dinge. Nun verabredeten sie, daß jeden Tag, der Reihe nach, zwei auf die Jagd gehen sollten und einer daheim bleiben und kochen, für jeden neun Pfund Fleisch. Den ersten Tag blieb der Tannendreher daheim, und Hans und der Felsenklipperer gingen auf die Jagd. Als der Tannendreher beim Kochen beschäftigt war, kam ein kleines altes zusammengeschrumpeltes Männchen zu ihm auf das Schloß und forderte Fleisch. »Pack dich, Duckmäuser,« antwortete er, »du brauchst kein Fleisch.« Aber wie verwunderte sich der Tannendreher, als das kleine unscheinbare Männlein an ihm hinaufsprang und mit Fäusten so auf ihn losschlug, daß er sich nicht wehren konnte, zur Erde fiel und nach Atem schnappte. Das Männlein ging nicht eher fort, als bis es seinen Zorn völlig an ihm ausgelassen hatte. Als die zwei andern von der Jagd heimkamen, sagte ihnen der Tannendreher nichts von dem alten Männchen und den Schlägen, die er bekommen hatte, und dachte »wenn sie daheim bleiben, so können sies auch einmal mit der kleinen Kratzbürste versuchen,« und der bloße Gedanke machte ihm schon Vergnügen. Den folgenden Tag blieb der Steinklipperer daheim, und dem ging es gerade so wie dem Tannendreher, er ward von dem Männlein übel zugerichtet, weil er ihm kein Fleisch hatte geben wollen. Als die andern abends nach Haus kamen, sah es ihm der Tannendreher wohl an, was er erfahren hatte, aber beide schwiegen still und dachten »der Hans muß auch von der Suppe kosten.« Der Hans, der den nächsten Tag daheim bleiben mußte, tat seine Arbeit in der Küche, wie sichs gebührte, und als er oben stand und den Kessel abschaumte, kam das Männchen und forderte ohne weiteres ein Stück Fleisch. Da dachte Hans »es ist ein armer Wicht, ich will ihm von meinem Anteil geben, damit die andern nicht zu kurz kommen,« und reichte ihm ein Stück Fleisch. Als es der Zwerg verzehrt hatte, verlangte er nochmals Fleisch, und der gutmütige Hans gab es ihm und sagte, da wäre noch ein schönes Stück, damit sollte er zufrieden sein. Der Zwerg forderte aber zum drittenmal. »Du wirst unverschämt,« sagte Hans und gab ihm nichts. Da wollte der boshafte Zwerg an ihm hinaufspringen und ihn wie den Tannendreher und Felsenklipperer behandeln, aber er kam an den unrechten. Hans gab ihm, ohne sich anzustrengen, ein paar Hiebe, daß er die Schloßtreppe hinabsprang. Hans wollte ihm nachlaufen, fiel aber, so lang er war, über ihn hin. Als er sich wieder aufgerichtet hatte, war ihm der Zwerg voraus. Hans eilte ihm bis in den Wald nach und sah, wie er in eine Felsenhöhle schlüpfte. Hans kehrte nun heim, hatte sich aber die Stelle gemerkt. Die beiden andern, als sie nach Haus kamen, wunderten sich, daß Hans so wohlauf war. Er erzählte ihnen, was sich zugetragen hatte, und da verschwiegen sie nicht länger, wie es ihnen ergangen war. Hans lachte und sagte »es ist euch ganz recht, warum seid ihr so geizig mit eurem Fleisch gewesen, aber es ist eine Schande, ihr seid so groß und habt euch von dem Zwerge Schläge geben lassen.« Sie nahmen darauf Korb und Seil und gingen alle drei zu der Felsenhöhle, in welche der Zwerg geschlüpft war, und ließen den Hans mit seinem Stab im Korb hinab. Als Hans auf dem Grund angelangt war, fand er eine Türe, und als er sie öffnete, saß da eine bildschöne Jungfrau, nein so schön, daß es nicht zu sagen ist, und neben ihr saß der Zwerg und grinste den Hans an wie eine Meerkatze. Sie aber war mit Ketten gebunden und blickte ihn so traurig an, daß Hans großes Mitleid empfand und dachte »du mußt sie aus der Gewalt des bösen Zwerges erlösen,« und gab ihm einen Streich mit seinem Stab, daß er tot niedersank. Alsbald fielen die Ketten von der Jungfrau ab, und Hans war wie verzückt über ihre Schönheit. Sie erzählte ihm, sie wäre eine Königstochter, die ein wilder Graf aus ihrer Heimat geraubt und hier in den Felsen eingesperrt hätte, weil sie nichts von ihm hätte wissen wollen: den Zwerg aber hätte der Graf zum Wächter gesetzt, und er hätte ihr Leid und Drangsal genug angetan. Darauf setzte Hans die Jungfrau in den Korb und ließ sie hinaufziehen. Der Korb kam wieder herab, aber Hans traute den beiden Gesellen nicht und dachte »sie haben sich schon falsch gezeigt und dir nichts von dem Zwerg gesagt, wer weiß, was sie gegen dich im Schild führen.« Da legte er seinen Stab in den Korb, und das war sein Glück, denn als der Korb halb in der Höhe war, ließen sie ihn fallen, und hätte Hans wirklich darin gesessen, so wäre es sein Tod gewesen. Aber nun wußte er nicht, wie er sich aus der Tiefe herausarbeiten sollte, und wie er hin und her dachte, er fand keinen Rat. »Es ist doch traurig,« sagte er, »daß du da unten verschmachten sollst.« Und als er so auf- und abging, kam er wieder zu dem Kämmerchen, wo die Jungfrau gesessen hatte, und sah, daß der Zwerg einen Ring am Finger hatte, der glänzte und schimmerte. Da zog er ihn ab und steckte ihn an, und als er ihn am Finger umdrehte, so hörte er plötzlich etwas über seinem Kopf rauschen. Er blickte in die Höhe und sah da Luftgeister schweben, die sagten, er wäre ihr Herr, und fragten, was sein Begehren wäre. Hans war anfangs ganz verstummt, dann aber sagte er, sie sollten ihn hinauftragen. Augenblicklich gehorchten sie, und es war nicht anders, als flöge er hinauf. Als er aber oben war, so war kein Mensch mehr zu sehen, und als er in das Schloß ging, so fand er auch dort niemand. Der Tannendreher und der Felsenklipperer waren fortgeeilt und hatten die schöne Jungfrau mitgeführt. Aber Hans drehte den Ring, da kamen die Luftgeister und sagten ihm, die zwei wären auf dem Meer. Hans lief und lief in einem fort, bis er zu dem Meeresstrand kam, da erblickte er weit weit auf dem Wasser ein Schiffchen, in welchem seine treulosen Gefährten saßen. Und im heftigen Zorn sprang er, ohne sich zu besinnen, mitsamt seinem Stab ins Wasser und fing an zu schwimmen, aber der zentnerschwere Stab zog ihn tief hinab, daß er fast ertrunken wäre. Da drehte er noch zu rechter Zeit den Ring, alsbald kamen die Luftgeister und trugen ihn so schnell wie der Blitz in das Schiffchen. Da schwang er seinen Stab und gab den bösen Gesellen den verdienten Lohn und warf sie hinab ins Wasser; dann aber ruderte er mit der schönen Jungfrau, die in den größten Ängsten gewesen war, und die er zum zweiten Male befreit hatte, heim zu ihrem Vater und ihrer Mutter und ward mit ihr verheiratet, und haben sich alle gewaltig gefreut.

167. Das Bürle im Himmel.

S isch emol es arms fromms Bürle gstorbe, und chunt do vor d’ Himmelspforte. Zur gliche Zit isch au e riche riche Herr do gsi und het au i Himmel welle. Do chunt der heilige Petrus mitem Schlüssel und macht uf und lot der Herr ine; das Bürle het er aber, wies schint, nid gseh und macht d’ Pforte ämel wieder zue. Do het das Bürle vorusse ghört, wie de Herr mit alle Freude im Himmel uf gno worde isch, und wie se drin musiziert und gsunge händ. Ändle isch es do wider still worde, und der heilig Petrus chunt, macht d’ Himmelspforte uf un lot das Bürle au ine. S Bürle het do gmeint, s werd jetzt au musiziert und gsunge, wenn es chöm, aber do isch alles still gsi; me hets frile mit aller Liebe ufgno, und d’ Ängele sind em egäge cho, aber gsunge het niemer (niemand). Do frogt das Bürle der heilig Petrus, worum das me be im nid singe wie be dem riche Herr, s geu, schints, do im Himmel au parteiisch zue wie uf der Erde. Do säit der heilig Petrus »nai wäger, du bisch is so lieb wie alle andere und muesch alle himmlische Freude gniesse wie de rich Herr, aber lueg, so arme Bürle, wie du äis bisch, chömme alle Tage e Himmel, so ne riche Herr aber chunt nume alle hundert Johr öppe äine.«

168. Die hagere Liese.

Ganz anders als der faule Heinz und die dicke Trine, die sich von nichts aus ihrer Ruhe bringen ließen, dachte die hagere Liese. Sie äscherte sich ab von Morgen bis Abend und lud ihrem Mann, dem langen Lenz, so viel Arbeit auf, daß er schwerer zu tragen hatte als ein Esel an drei Säcken. Es war aber alles umsonst, sie hatten nichts und kamen zu nichts. Eines Abends, als sie im Bette lag und vor Müdigkeit kaum ein Glied regen konnte, ließen sie die Gedanken doch nicht einschlafen. Sie stieß ihren Mann mit dem Ellenbogen in die Seite und sprach »hörst du, Lenz, was ich gedacht habe? wenn ich einen Gulden fände, und einer mir geschenkt würde, so wollte ich einen dazu borgen, und du solltest mir auch noch einen geben: sobald ich dann die vier Gulden beisammen hätte, so wollte ich eine junge Kuh kaufen.« Dem Mann gefiel das recht gut, »ich weiß zwar nicht,« sprach er, »woher ich den Gulden nehmen soll, den du von mir willst geschenkt haben, aber wenn du dennoch das Geld zusammenbringst, und du kannst dafür eine Kuh kaufen, so tust du wohl, wenn du dein Vorhaben ausführst.« »Ich freue mich,« fügte er hinzu, »wenn die Kuh ein Kälbchen bringt, so werde ich doch manchmal zu meiner Erquickung einen Trank Milch erhalten.« »Die Milch ist nicht für dich,« sagte die Frau, »wir lassen das Kalb saugen, damit es groß und fett wird, und wir es gut verkaufen können.« »Freilich,« antwortete der Mann, »aber ein wenig Milch nehmen wir doch, das schadet nichts.« »Wer hat dich gelehrt mit Kühen umgehen?« sprach die Frau, »es mag schaden oder nicht, ich will es nicht haben: und wenn du dich auf den Kopf stellst, du kriegst keinen Tropfen Milch. Du langer Lenz, weil du nicht zu ersättigen bist, meinst du, du wolltest verzehren, was ich mit Mühe erwerbe.« »Frau,« sagte der Mann, »sei still, oder ich hänge dir eine Maultasche an.« »Was,« rief sie, »du willst mir drohen, du Nimmersatt, du Strick, du fauler Heinz.« Sie wollte ihm in die Haare fallen, aber der lange Lenz richtete sich auf, packte mit der einen Hand die dürren Arme der hagern Liese zusammen, mit der andern drückte er ihr den Kopf auf das Kissen, ließ sie schimpfen und hielt sie so lange, bis sie vor großer Müdigkeit eingeschlafen war. Ob sie am andern Morgen beim Erwachen fortfuhr zu zanken, oder ob sie ausging, den Gulden zu suchen, den sie finden wollte, das weiß ich nicht.

169. Das Waldhaus.

Ein armer Holzhauer lebte mit seiner Frau und drei Töchtern in einer kleinen Hütte an dem Rande eines einsamen Waldes. Eines Morgens, als er wieder an seine Arbeit wollte, sagte er zu seiner Frau »laß mir mein Mittagsbrot von dem ältesten Mädchen hinaus in den Wald bringen, ich werde sonst nicht fertig. Und damit es sich nicht verirrt,« setzte er hinzu, »so will ich einen Beutel mit Hirsen mitnehmen und die Körner auf den Weg streuen.« Als nun die Sonne mitten über dem Walde stand, machte sich das Mädchen mit einem Topf voll Suppe auf den Weg. Aber die Feld- und Waldsperlinge, die Lerchen und Finken, Amseln und Zeisige hatten den Hirsen schon längst aufgepickt, und das Mädchen konnte die Spur nicht finden. Da ging es auf gut Glück immer fort, bis die Sonne sank und die Nacht einbrach. Die Bäume rauschten in der Dunkelheit, die Eulen schnarrten, und es fing an ihm angst zu werden. Da erblickte es in der Ferne ein Licht, das zwischen den Bäumen blinkte. »Dort sollten wohl Leute wohnen,« dachte es, »die mich über Nacht behalten,« und ging auf das Licht zu. Nicht lange, so kam es an ein Haus, dessen Fenster erleuchtet waren. Es klopfte an, und eine rauhe Stimme rief von innen »herein«. Das Mädchen trat auf die dunkle Diele und pochte an der Stubentür. »Nur herein,« rief die Stimme, und als es öffnete, saß da ein alter eisgrauer Mann an dem Tisch, hatte das Gesicht auf die beiden Hände gestützt, und sein weißer Bart floß über den Tisch herab fast bis auf die Erde. Am Ofen aber lagen drei Tiere, ein Hühnchen, ein Hähnchen und eine buntgescheckte Kuh. Das Mädchen erzählte dem Alten sein Schicksal und bat um ein Nachtlager. Der Mann sprach

»schön Hühnchen,
schön Hähnchen,
und du schöne bunte Kuh,
was sagst du dazu?«

»duks!« antworteten die Tiere: und das mußte wohl heißen »wir sind es zufrieden,« denn der Alte sprach weiter »hier ist Hülle und Fülle, geh hinaus an den Herd und koch uns ein Abendessen.« Das Mädchen fand in der Küche Überfluß an allem und kochte eine gute Speise, aber an die Tiere dachte es nicht. Es trug die volle Schüssel auf den Tisch, setzte sich zu dem grauen Mann, aß und stillte seinen Hunger. Als es satt war, sprach es »aber jetzt bin ich müde, wo ist ein Bett, in das ich mich legen und schlafen kann?« Die Tiere antworteten

»du hast mit ihm gegessen,
du hast mit ihm getrunken,
du hast an uns gar nicht gedacht,
nun sieh auch, wo du bleibst die Nacht.«

Da sprach der Alte »steig nur die Treppe hinauf, so wirst du eine Kammer mit zwei Betten finden, schüttle sie auf und decke sie mit weißem Linnen, so will ich auch kommen und mich schlafen legen.« Das Mädchen stieg hinauf, und als es die Betten geschüttelt und frisch gedeckt hatte, legte es sich in das eine, ohne weiter auf den Alten zu warten. Nach einiger Zeit aber kam der graue Mann, beleuchtete das Mädchen mit dem Licht und schüttelte mit dem Kopf. Und als er sah, daß es fest eingeschlafen war, öffnete er eine Falltüre und ließ es in den Keller sinken.

Der Holzhauer kam am späten Abend nach Hause und machte seiner Frau Vorwürfe, daß sie ihn den ganzen Tag habe hungern lassen. »Ich habe keine Schuld,« antwortete sie, »das Mädchen ist mit dem Mittagsessen hinausgegangen, es muß sich verirrt haben: morgen wird es schon wiederkommen.« Vor Tag aber stand der Holzhauer auf, wollte in den Wald und verlangte, die zweite Tochter sollte ihm diesmal das Essen bringen. »Ich will einen Beutel mit Linsen mitnehmen,« sagte er, »die Körner sind größer als Hirsen, das Mädchen wird sie besser sehen und kann den Weg nicht verfehlen.« Zur Mittagszeit trug auch das Mädchen die Speise hinaus, aber die Linsen waren verschwunden: die Waldvögel hatten sie, wie am vorigen Tag, aufgepickt und keine übrig gelassen. Das Mädchen irrte im Walde umher, bis es Nacht ward, da kam es ebenfalls zu dem Haus des Alten, ward hereingerufen, und bat um Speise und Nachtlager. Der Mann mit dem weißen Bart fragte wieder die Tiere
»schön Hühnchen,
schön Hähnchen,
und du schöne bunte Kuh,
was sagst du dazu?«

Die Tiere antworteten abermals »duks,« und es geschah alles wie am vorigen Tag. Das Mädchen kochte eine gute Speise, aß und trank mit dem Alten und kümmerte sich nicht um die Tiere. Und als es sich nach seinem Nachtlager erkundigte, antworteten sie

»du hast mit ihm gegessen,
du hast mit ihm getrunken,
du hast an uns gar nicht gedacht,
nun sieh auch, wo du bleibst die Nacht.«

Als es eingeschlafen war, kam der Alte, betrachtete es mit Kopfschütteln und ließ es in den Keller hinab.

Am dritten Morgen sprach der Holzhacker zu seiner Frau »schicke mir heute unser jüngstes Kind mit dem Essen hinaus, das ist immer gut und gehorsam gewesen, das wird auf dem rechten Weg bleiben und nicht wie seine Schwestern, die wilden Hummeln, herumschwärmen.« Die Mutter wollte nicht und sprach »soll ich mein liebstes Kind auch noch verlieren?« »Sei ohne Sorge,« antwortete er, »das Mädchen verirrt sich nicht, es ist zu klug und verständig; zum Überfluß will ich Erbsen mitnehmen und ausstreuen, die sind noch größer als Linsen und werden ihm den Weg zeigen.« Aber als das Mädchen mit dem Korb am Arm hinauskam, so hatten die Waldtauben die Erbsen schon im Kropf, und es wußte nicht, wohin es sich wenden sollte. Es war voll Sorgen und dachte beständig daran, wie der arme Vater hungern und die gute Mutter jammern würde, wenn es ausbliebe. Endlich, als es finster ward, erblickte es das Lichtchen und kam an das Waldhaus. Es bat ganz freundlich, sie möchten es über Nacht beherbergen, und der Mann mit dem weißen Bart fragte wieder seine Tiere.

»schön Hühnchen,
schön Hähnchen,
und du schöne bunte Kuh,
was sagst du dazu?«

»duks,« sagten sie. Da trat das Mädchen an den Ofen, wo die Tiere lagen, und liebkoste Hühnchen und Hähnchen, indem es mit der Hand über die glatten Federn hinstrich, und die bunte Kuh kraulte es zwischen den Hörnern. Und als es auf Geheiß des Alten ein gute Suppe bereitet hatte und die Schüssel auf dem Tisch stand, so sprach es »soll ich mich sättigen und die guten Tiere sollen nichts haben? Draußen ist die Hülle und Fülle, erst will ich für sie sorgen.« Da ging es, holte Gerste und streute sie dem Hühnchen und Hähnchen vor, und brachte der Kuh wohlriechendes Heu, einen ganzen Arm voll. »Laßts euch schmecken, ihr lieben Tiere,« sagte es, »und wenn ihr durstig seid, sollt ihr auch einen frischen Trunk haben.« Dann trug es einen Eimer voll Wasser herein, und Hühnchen und Hähnchen sprangen auf den Rand, steckten den Schnabel hinein und hielten den Kopf dann in die Höhe, wie die Vögel trinken, und die bunte Kuh tat auch einen herzhaften Zug. Als die Tiere gefüttert waren, setzte sich das Mädchen zu dem Alten an den Tisch und aß, was er ihm übrig gelassen hatte. Nicht lange, so fing Hühnchen und Hähnchen an, das Köpfchen zwischen die Flügel zu stecken, und die bunte Kuh blinzelte mit den Augen. Da sprach das Mädchen »sollen wir uns nicht zur Ruhe begeben?

schön Hühnchen,
schön Hähnchen,
und du schöne bunte Kuh,
was sagst du dazu?«

Die Tiere antworteten »duks,

du hast mit uns gegessen,
du hast mit uns getrunken,
du hast uns alle wohl bedacht,
wir wünschen dir eine gute Nacht.«

Da ging das Mädchen die Treppe hinauf, schüttelte die Federkissen und deckte frisches Linnen auf, und als es fertig war, kam der Alte und legte sich in das eine Bett, und sein weißer Bart reichte ihm bis an die Füße. Das Mädchen legte sich in das andere, tat sein Gebet und schlief ein.

Es schlief ruhig bis Mitternacht, da ward es so unruhig in dem Hause, daß das Mädchen erwachte. Da fing es an in den Ecken zu knittern und zu knattern, und die Türe sprang auf und schlug an die Wand: die Balken dröhnten, als wenn sie aus ihren Fugen gerissen würden, und es war, als wenn die Treppe herabstürzte, und endlich krachte es, als wenn das ganze Dach zusammenfiele. Da es aber wieder still ward und dem Mädchen nichts zuleid geschah, so blieb es ruhig liegen und schlief wieder ein. Als es aber am Morgen bei hellem Sonnenschein aufwachte, was erblickten seine Augen? Es lag in einem großen Saal, und ringsumher glänzte alles in königlicher Pracht: an den Wänden wuchsen auf grünseidenem Grund goldene Blumen in die Höhe, das Bett war von Elfenbein und die Decke darauf von rotem Samt, und auf einem Stuhl daneben standen ein Paar mit Perlen gestickte Pantoffel. Das Mädchen glaubte, es wäre ein Traum, aber es traten drei reichgekleidete Diener herein und fragten, was es zu befehlen hätte. »Geht nur,« antwortete das Mädchen, »ich will gleich aufstehen und dem Alten eine Suppe kochen und dann auch schön Hühnchen, schön Hähnchen und die schöne bunte Kuh füttern.« Es dachte, der Alte wäre schon aufgestanden, und sah sich nach seinem Bette um, aber er lag nicht darin, sondern ein fremder Mann. Und als es ihn betrachtete und sah, daß er jung und schön war, erwachte er, richtete sich auf und sprach »ich bin ein Königssohn und war von einer bösen Hexe verwünscht worden, als ein alter eisgrauer Mann in dem Wald zu leben: niemand durfte um mich sein als meine drei Diener in der Gestalt eines Hühnchens, eines Hähnchens und einer bunten Kuh. Und nicht eher sollte die Verwünschung aufhören, als bis ein Mädchen zu uns käme, so gut von Herzen, daß es nicht gegen die Menschen allein, sondern auch gegen die Tiere sich lieb reich bezeigte, und das bist du gewesen, und heute um Mitternacht sind wir durch dich erlöst und das alte Waldhaus ist wieder in meinen königlichen Palast verwandelt worden.« Und als sie aufgestanden waren, sagte der Königssohn den drei Dienern, sie sollten hinfahren und Vater und Mutter des Mädchens zur Hochzeitsfeier herbeiholen. »Aber wo sind meine zwei Schwestern?« fragte das Mädchen. »Die habe ich in den Keller gesperrt, und morgen sollen sie in den Wald geführt werden und sollen bei einem Köhler so lange als Mägde dienen, bis sie sich gebessert haben und auch die armen Tiere nicht hungern lassen.«

170. Lieb und Leid teilen.

Es war einmal ein Schneider, der war ein zänkischer Mensch, und seine Frau, die gut, fleißig und fromm war, konnte es ihm niemals recht machen. Was sie tat, er war unzufrieden, brummte, schalt, raufte und schlug sie. Als die Obrigkeit endlich davon hörte, ließ sie ihn vorfordern und ins Gefängnis setzen, damit er sich bessern sollte. Er saß eine Zeitlang bei Wasser und Brot, dann wurde er wieder freigelassen, mußte aber geloben, seine Frau nicht mehr zu schlagen, sondern friedlich mit ihr zu leben, Lieb und Leid zu teilen, wie sichs unter Eheleuten gebührt. Eine Zeitlang ging es gut, dann aber geriet er wieder in seine alte Weise, war mürrisch und zänkisch.. Und weil er sie nicht schlagen durfte, wollte er sie bei den Haaren packen und raufen. Die Frau entwischte ihm und sprang auf den Hof hinaus, er lief aber mit der Elle und Schere hinter ihr her, jagte sie herum und warf ihr die Elle und Schere, und was ihm sonst zur Hand war, nach. Wenn er sie traf, so lachte er, und wenn er sie fehlte, so tobte und wetterte er. Er trieb es so lange, bis die Nachbarn der Frau zu Hilfe kamen. Der Schneider ward wieder vor die Obrigkeit gerufen und an sein Versprechen erinnert. »Liebe Herren,« antwortete er, »ich habe gehalten, was ich gelobt habe, ich habe sie nicht geschlagen, sondern Lieb und Leid mit ihr geteilt.« »Wie kann das sein,« sprach der Richter, »da sie abermals so große Klage über Euch führt?« »Ich habe sie nicht geschlagen, sondern ihr nur, weil sie so wunderlich aussah, die Haare mit der Hand kämmen wollen: sie ist mir aber entwichen und hat mich böslich verlassen. Da bin ich ihr nachgeeilt und habe, damit sie zu ihrer Pflicht zurückkehre, als eine gutgemeinte Erinnerung nachgeworfen, was mir eben zur Hand war. Ich habe auch Lieb und Leid mit ihr geteilt, denn sooft ich sie getroffen habe, ist es mir lieb gewesen und ihr leid: habe ich sie aber gefehlt, so ist es ihr lieb gewesen, mir aber leid.« Die Richter waren mit dieser Antwort nicht zufrieden, sondern ließen ihm seinen verdienten Lohn auszahlen.

171. Der Zaunkönig.

In den alten Zeiten, da hatte jeder Klang noch Sinn und Bedeutung. Wenn der Hammer des Schmieds ertönte, so rief er »smiet mi to! smiet mi to!« Wenn der Hobel des Tischlers schnarrte, so sprach er »dor häst! dor, dor häst!« Fing das Räderwerk der Mühle an zu klappern, so sprach es »help, Herr Gott! help, Herr Gott!« und war der Müller ein Betrüger, und ließ die Mühle an, so sprach sie hochdeutsch und fragte erst langsam »wer ist da? wer ist da?« dann antwortete sie schnell »der Müller! der Müller!« und endlich ganz geschwind »stiehlt tapfer, stiehlt tapfer, vom Achtel drei Sechter.«

Zu dieser Zeit hatten auch die Vögel ihre eigene Sprache, die jedermann verstand, jetzt lautet es nur wie ein Zwitschern, Kreischen und Pfeifen, und bei einigen wie Musik ohne Worte. Es kam aber den Vögeln in den Sinn, sie wollten nicht länger ohne Herrn sein und einen unter sich zu ihrem König wählen. Nur einer von ihnen, der Kiebitz, war dagegen: frei hatte er gelebt und frei wollte er sterben, und angstvoll hin-und herfliegend rief er »wo bliew ick? wo bliew ick?« Er zog sich zurück in einsame und unbesuchte Sümpfe und zeigte sich nicht wieder unter seinesgleichen.

Die Vögel wollten sich nun über die Sache besprechen, und an einem schönen Maimorgen kamen sie alle aus Wäldern und Feldern zusammen, Adler und Buchfinke, Eule und Krähe, Lerche und Sperling, was soll ich sie alle nennen? selbst der Kuckuck kam und der Wiedehopf, sein Küster, der so heißt, weil er sich immer ein paar Tage früher hören läßt; auch ein ganz kleiner Vogel, der noch keinen Namen hatte, mischte sich unter die Schar. Das Huhn, das zufällig von der ganzen Sache nichts gehört hatte, verwunderte sich über die große Versammlung. »Wat, wat, wat is den dar to don?« gackerte es, aber der Hahn beruhigte seine liebe Henne und sagte »luter riek Lüd,« erzählte ihr auch, was sie vorhätten. Es ward aber beschlossen, daß der König sein sollte, der am höchsten fliegen könnte. Ein Laubfrosch, der im Gebüsch saß, rief, als er das hörte, warnend »natt, natt, natt! natt, natt, natt!« weil er meinte, es würden deshalb viel Tränen vergossen werden. Die Krähe aber sagte »Quark ok,« es sollte alles friedlich abgehen.

Es ward nun beschlossen, sie wollten gleich an diesem schönen Morgen aufsteigen, damit niemand hinterher sagen könnte »ich wäre wohl noch höher geflogen, aber der Abend kam, da konnte ich nicht mehr.« Auf ein gegebenes Zeichen erhob sich also die ganze Schar in die Lüfte. Der Staub stieg da von dem Felde auf, es war ein gewaltiges Sausen und Brausen und Fittichschlagen, und es sah aus, als wenn eine schwarze Wolke dahinzöge. Die kleinern Vögel aber blieben bald zurück, konnten nicht weiter und fielen wieder auf die Erde. Die größern hieltens länger aus, aber keiner konnte es dem Adler gleich tun, der stieg so hoch, daß er der Sonne hätte die Augen aushacken können. Und als er sah, daß die andern nicht zu ihm herauf konnten, so dachte er »was willst du noch höher fliegen, du bist doch der

König,« und fing an sich wieder herabzulassen. Die Vögel unter ihm riefen ihm alle gleich zu »du mußt unser König sein, keiner ist höher geflogen als du.« »Ausgenommen ich,« schrie der kleine Kerl ohne Namen, der sich in die Brustfedern des Adlers verkrochen hatte. Und da er nicht müde war, so stieg er auf und stieg so hoch, daß er Gott auf seinem Stuhle konnte sitzen sehen. Als er aber so weit gekommen war, legte er seine Flügel zusammen, sank herab und rief unten mit feiner durchdringender Stimme »König bün ick! König bün ick!«

»Du unser König?« schrien die Vögel zornig, »durch Ränke und Listen hast du es dahin gebracht.« Sie machten eine andere Bedingung, der sollte ihr König sein, der am tiefsten in die Erde fallen könnte. Wie klatschte da die Gans mit ihrer breiten Brust wieder auf das Land! Wie scharrte der Hahn schnell ein Loch! Die Ente kam am schlimmsten weg, sie sprang in einen Graben, verrenkte sich aber die Beine und watschelte fort zum nahen Teiche mit dem Ausruf »Pracherwerk! Pracherwerk!« Der Kleine ohne Namen aber suchte ein Mäuseloch, schlüpfte hinab und rief mit seiner feinen Stimme heraus »König bün ick! König bün ick!«

»Du unser König?« riefen die Vögel noch zorniger, »meinst du, deine Listen sollten gelten?« Sie beschlossen, ihn in seinem Loch gefangen zu halten und auszuhungern. Die Eule ward als Wache davor gestellt: sie sollte den Schelm nicht herauslassen, so lieb ihr das Leben wäre. Als es aber Abend geworden war und die Vögel von der Anstrengung beim Fliegen große Müdigkeit empfanden, so gingen sie mit Weib und Kind zu Bett. Die Eule allein blieb bei dem Mäuseloch stehen und blickte mit ihren großen Augen unverwandt hinein. Indessen war sie auch müde geworden und dachte »ein Auge kannst du wohl zutun, da wachst ja noch mit dem andern, und der kleine Bösewicht soll nicht aus seinem Loch heraus!« Also tat sie das eine Auge zu und schaute mit dem andern steif auf das Mäuseloch. Der kleine Kerl guckte mit dem Kopf heraus und wollte wegwitschen, aber die Eule trat gleich davor, und er zog den Kopf wieder zurück. Dann tat die Eule das eine Auge wieder auf und das andere zu, und wollte so die ganze Nacht abwechseln. Aber als sie das eine Auge wieder zumachte, vergaß sie das andere aufzutun, und sobald die beiden Augen zu waren, schlief sie ein. Der Kleine merkte das bald und schlüpfte weg.

Von der Zeit an darf sich die Eule nicht mehr am Tage sehen lassen, sonst sind die andern Vögel hinter ihr her und zerzausen ihr das Fell. Sie fliegt nur zur Nachtzeit aus, haßt aber und verfolgt die Mäuse, weil sie solche böse Löcher machen. Auch der kleine Vogel läßt sich nicht gerne sehen, weil er fürchtet, es ginge ihm an den Kragen, wenn er erwischt würde. Er schlüpft in den Zäunen herum, und wenn er ganz sicher ist, ruft er wohl zuweilen »König bün ick!« und deshalb nennen ihn die andern Vögel aus Spott Zaunkönig.

Niemand aber war froher als die Lerche, daß sie dem Zaunkönig nicht zu gehorchen brauchte. Wie sich die Sonne blicken läßt, steigt sie in die Lüfte und ruft »ach, wo is dat schön! schön is dat! schön! schön! ach, wo is dat schön!«

172. Die Scholle.

Die Fische waren schon lange unzufrieden, daß keine Ordnung in ihrem Reich herrschte. Keiner kehrte sich an den andern, schwamm rechts und links, wie es ihm einfiel, fuhr zwischen denen durch, die zusammenbleiben wollten, oder sperrte ihnen den Weg, und der Stärkere gab dem Schwächeren einen Schlag mit dem Schwanz, daß er weit wegfuhr, oder er verschlang ihn ohne weiteres. »Wie schön wäre es, wenn wir einen König hätten, der Recht und Gerechtigkeit bei uns übte,« sagten sie und vereinigten sich, den zu ihrem Herrn zu wählen, der am schnellsten die Fluten durchstreichen und dem Schwachen Hilfe bringen könnte.

Sie stellten sich also am Ufer in Reihe und Glied auf, und der Hecht gab mit dem Schwanz ein Zeichen, worauf sie alle zusammen aufbrachen. Wie ein Pfeil schoß der Hecht dahin und mit ihm der Hering, der Gründling, der Barsch, die Karpfe, und wie sie alle heißen. Auch die Scholle schwamm mit und hoffte das Ziel zu erreichen.

Auf einmal ertönte der Ruf »der Hering ist vor! der Hering ist vor.« »Wen is vör?« schrie verdrießlich die platte mißgünstige Scholle, die weit zurückgeblieben war, »wen is vör?« »Der Hering, der Hering,« war die Antwort. »De nackte Hiering?« rief die Neidische, »de nackte Hiering?« Seit der Zeit steht der Scholle zur Strafe das Maul schief.

173. Rohrdommel und Wiedehopf.

»Wo weidet Ihr Eure Herde am liebsten?« fragte einer einen alten Kuhhirten. »Hier, Herr, wo das Gras nicht zu fett ist und nicht zu mager; es tut sonst kein gut.« »Warum nicht?« fragte der Herr. »Hört Ihr dort von der Wiese her den dumpfen Ruf?« antwortete der Hirt, »das ist der Rohrdommel, der war sonst ein Hirte, und der Wiedehopf war es auch. Ich will Euch die Geschichte erzählen.

Der Rohrdommel hütete seine Herde auf fetten grünen Wiesen, wo Blumen im Überfluß standen, davon wurden seine Kühe mutig und wild. Der Wiedehopf aber trieb das Vieh auf hohe dürre Berge, wo der Wind mit dem Sand spielt, und seine Kühe wurden mager und kamen nicht zu Kräften. Wenn es Abend war und die Hirten heimwärts trieben, konnte Rohrdommel seine Kühe nicht zusammenbringen, sie waren übermütig und sprangen ihm davon. Er rief »bunt, herüm« (bunte Kuh, herum), doch vergebens, sie hörten nicht auf seinen Ruf. Wiedehopf aber konnte sein Vieh nicht auf die Beine bringen, so matt und kraftlos war es geworden. »Up, up, up!« schrie er, aber es half nicht, sie blieben auf dem Sand liegen. So gehts, wenn man kein Maß hält. Noch heute, wo sie keine Herde mehr hüten, schreit Rohrdommel »bunt, herüm,« und der Wiedehopf »up, up,up!«

174. Die Eule.

Vor ein paar hundert Jahren, als die Leute noch lange nicht so klug und verschmitzt waren, als sie heutzutage sind, hat sich in einer kleinen Stadt eine seltsame Geschichte zugetragen. Von ungefähr war eine von den großen Eulen, die man Schuhu nennt, aus dem benachbarten Walde bei nächtlicher Weile in die Scheuer eines Bürgers geraten und wagte sich, als der Tag anbrach, aus Furcht vor den andern Vögeln, die, wenn sie sich blicken läßt, ein furchtbares Geschrei erheben, nicht wieder aus ihrem Schlupfwinkel heraus. Als nun der Hausknecht morgens in die Scheuer kam, um Stroh zu holen, erschrak er bei dem Anblick der Eule, die da in einer Ecke saß, so gewaltig, daß er fortlief und seinem Herrn ankündigte, ein Ungeheuer, wie er zeit seines Lebens keins erblickt hätte, säße in der Scheuer, drehte die Augen im Kopf herum und könnte einen ohne Umstände verschlingen. »Ich kenne dich schon,« sagte der Herr, »einer Amsel im Felde nachzujagen, dazu hast du Mut genug, aber wenn du ein totes Huhn liegen siehst, so holst du dir erst einen Stock, ehe du ihm nahe kommst. Ich muß nur selbst einmal nachsehen, was das für ein Ungeheuer ist,« setzte der Herr hinzu, ging ganz tapfer zur Scheuer hinein und blickte umher. Als er aber das seltsame und greuliche Tier mit eigenen Augen sah, so geriet er in nicht geringere Angst als der Knecht. Mit ein paar Sätzen sprang er hinaus, lief zu seinen Nachbarn und bat sie flehentlich, ihm gegen ein unbekanntes und gefährliches Tier Beistand zu leisten; ohnehin könnte die ganze Stadt in Gefahr kommen, wenn es aus der Scheuer, wo es säße, herausbräche. Es entstand großer Lärm und Geschrei in allen Straßen: die Bürger kamen mit Spießen, Heugabeln, Sensen und Äxten bewaffnet herbei, als wollten sie gegen den Feind ausziehen: zuletzt erschienen auch die Herren des Rats mit dem Bürgermeister an der Spitze. Als sie sich auf dem Markt geordnet hatten, zogen sie zu der Scheuer und umringten sie von allen Seiten. Hierauf trat einer der beherztesten hervor und ging mit gefälltem Spieß hinein, kam aber gleich darauf mit einem Schrei und totenbleich wieder herausgelaufen, und konnte kein Wort hervorbringen. Noch zwei andere wagten sich hinein, es erging ihnen aber nicht besser. Endlich trat einer hervor, ein großer starker Mann, der wegen seiner Kriegstaten berühmt war, und sprach »mit bloßem Ansehen werdet ihr das Ungetüm nicht vertreiben, hier muß Ernst gebraucht werden, aber ich sehe, daß ihr alle zu Weibern geworden seid und keiner den Fuchs beißen will.« Er ließ sich Harnisch, Schwert und Spieß bringen und rüstete sich. Alle rühmten seinen Mut, obgleich viele um sein Leben besorgt waren. Die beiden Scheuertore wurden aufgetan, und man erblickte die Eule, die sich indessen in die Mitte auf einen großen Querbalken gesetzt hatte. Er ließ eine Leiter herbeibringen, und als er sie anlegte und sich bereitete hinaufzusteigen, so riefen ihm alle zu, er solle sich männlich halten, und empfahlen ihn dem heiligen Georg, der den Drachen getötet hatte. Als er bald oben war, und die Eule sah, daß er an sie wollte, auch von der Menge und dem Geschrei des Volks verwirrt war und nicht wußte, wohinaus, so verdrehte sie die Augen, sträubte die Federn, sperrte die Flügel auf, gnappte mit dem Schnabel und ließ ihr schuhu, schuhu mit rauher Stimme hören. »Stoß zu, stoß zu!« rief die Menge draußen dem tapfern Helden zu. »Wer hier stände, wo ich stehe,« antwortete er, »der würde nicht stoß zu rufen.« Er setzte zwar den Fuß noch eine Staffel höher, dann aber fing er an zu zittern und machte sich halb ohnmächtig auf den Rückweg.

Nun war keiner mehr übrig, der sich in die Gefahr hätte begeben wollen. »Das Ungeheuer,« sagten sie, »hat den stärksten Mann, der unter uns zu finden war, durch sein Gnappen und Anhauchen allein vergiftet und tödlich verwundet, sollen wir andern auch unser Leben in die Schanze schlagen?« Sie ratschlagten, was zu tun wäre, wenn die ganze Stadt nicht sollte zugrunde gehen. Lange Zeit schien alles vergeblich, bis endlich der Bürgermeister einen Ausweg fand. »Meine Meinung geht dahin,« sprach er, »daß wir aus gemeinem Säckel diese Scheuer samt allem, was darinliegt, Getreide, Stroh und Heu, dem Eigentümer bezahlen und ihn schadlos halten, dann aber das ganze Gebäude und mit ihm das fürchterliche Tier abbrennen, so braucht doch niemand sein Leben daran zu setzen. Hier ist keine Gelegenheit zu sparen, und Knauserei wäre übel angewendet.« Alle stimmten ihm bei. Also ward die Scheuer an vier Ecken angezündet, und mit ihr die Eule jämmerlich verbrannt. Wers nicht glauben will, der gehe hin und frage selbst nach.

175. Der Mond.

Vorzeiten gab es ein Land, wo die Nacht immer dunkel und der Himmel wie ein schwarzes Tuch darüber gebreitet war, denn es ging dort niemals der Mond auf, und kein Stern blinkte in der Finsternis. Bei Erschaffung der Welt hatte das nächtliche Licht ausgereicht. Aus diesem Land gingen einmal vier Bursche auf die Wanderschaft und gelangten in ein anderes Reich, wo abends, wenn die Sonne hinter den Bergen verschwunden war, auf einem Eichbaum eine leuchtende Kugel stand, die weit und breit ein sanftes Licht ausgoß. Man konnte dabei alles wohl sehen und unterscheiden, wenn es auch nicht so glänzend wie die Sonne war. Die Wanderer standen still und fragten einen Bauer, der da mit seinem Wagen vorbeifuhr, was das für ein Licht sei. »Das ist der Mond,« antwortete dieser, »unser Schultheiß hat ihn für drei Taler gekauft und an den Eichbaum befestigt. Er muß täglich Öl aufgießen und ihn rein erhalten, damit er immer hell brennt. Dafür erhält er von uns wöchentlich einen Taler.«

Als der Bauer weggefahren war, sagte der eine von ihnen »diese Lampe könnten wir brauchen, wir haben daheim einen Eichbaum, der ebenso groß ist, daran können wir sie hängen. Was für eine Freude, wenn wir nachts nicht in der Finsternis herumtappen!« »Wißt ihr was?« sprach der zweite, »wir wollen Wagen und Pferde holen und den Mond wegführen. Sie können sich hier einen andern kaufen.« »Ich kann gut klettern,« sprach der dritte, »ich will ihn schon herunterholen!« Der vierte brachte einen Wagen mit Pferden herbei, und der dritte stieg den Baum hinauf, bohrte ein Loch in den Mond, zog ein Seil hindurch und ließ ihn herab. Als die glänzende Kugel auf dem Wagen lag, deckten sie ein Tuch darüber, damit niemand den Raub bemerken sollte. Sie brachten ihn glücklich in ihr Land und stellten ihn auf eine hohe Eiche. Alte und Junge freuten sich, als die neue Lampe ihr Licht über alle Felder leuchten ließ und Stuben und Kammern damit erfüllte. Die Zwerge kamen aus den Felsenhöhlen hervor, und die kleinen Wichtelmänner tanzten in ihren roten Röckchen auf den Wiesen den Ringeltanz.

Die vier versorgten den Mond mit Öl, putzten den Docht und erhielten wöchentlich ihren Taler. Aber sie wurden alte Greise, und als der eine erkrankte und seinen Tod voraussah, verordnete er, daß der vierte Teil des Mondes als sein Eigentum ihm mit in das Grab sollte gegeben werden. Als er gestorben war, stieg der Schultheiß auf den Baum und schnitt mit der Heckenschere ein Viertel ab, das in den Sarg gelegt ward. Das Licht des Mondes nahm ab, aber noch nicht merklich. Als der zweite starb, ward ihm das zweite Viertel mitgegeben, und das Licht minderte sich. Noch schwächer ward es nach dem Tod des dritten, der gleichfalls seinen Teil mitnahm, und als der vierte ins Grab kam, trat die alte Finsternis wieder ein. Wenn die Leute abends ohne Laterne ausgingen, stießen sie mit den Köpfen zusammen.

Als aber die Teile des Monds in der Unterwelt sich wieder vereinigten, so wurden dort, wo immer Dunkelheit geherrscht hatte, die Toten unruhig und erwachten aus ihrem Schlaf. Sie erstaunten, als sie wieder sehen konnten: das Mondlicht war ihnen genug, denn ihre Augen waren so schwach geworden, daß sie den Glanz der Sonne nicht ertragen hätten. Sie erhoben sich, wurden lustig und nahmen ihre alte Lebensweise wieder an. Ein Teil ging zum Spiel und Tanz, andere liefen in die Wirtshäuser, wo sie Wein forderten, sich betranken, tobten und zankten, und endlich ihre Knüppel aufhoben und sich prügelten. Der Lärm ward immer ärger und drang endlich bis in den Himmel hinauf.

Der heilige Petrus, der das Himmelstor bewacht, glaubte, die Unterwelt wäre in Aufruhr geraten, und rief die himmlischen Heerscharen zusammen, die den bösen Feind, wenn er mit seinen Gesellen den Aufenthalt der Seligen stürmen wollte, zurückjagen sollten. Da sie aber nicht kamen, so setzte er sich auf sein Pferd und ritt durch das Himmelstor hinab in die Unterwelt. Da brachte er die Toten zur Ruhe, hieß sie sich wieder in ihre Gräber legen und nahm den Mond mit fort, den er oben am Himmel aufhing.

176. Die Lebenszeit.

Als Gott die Welt geschaffen hatte und allen Kreaturen ihre Lebenszeit bestimmen wollte, kam der Esel und fragte »Herr, wie lange soll ich leben?« »Dreißig Jahre,« antwortete Gott, »ist dir das recht?« »Ach Herr,« erwiderte der Esel, »das ist eine lange Zeit. Bedenke mein mühseliges Dasein: von Morgen bis in die Nacht schwere Lasten tragen, Kornsäcke in die Mühle schleppen, damit andere das Brot essen, mit nichts als mit Schlägen und Fußtritten ermuntert und aufgefrischt zu werden! erlaß mir einen Teil der langen Zeit.« Da erbarmte sich Gott und schenkte ihm achtzehn Jahre. Der Esel ging getröstet weg, und der Hund erschien. »Wie lange willst du leben?« sprach Gott zu ihm, »dem Esel sind dreißig Jahre zuviel, du aber wirst damit zufrieden sein.« »Herr,« antwortete der Hund, »ist das dein Wille? bedenke, was ich laufen muß, das halten meine Füße so lange nicht aus; und habe ich erst die Stimme zum Bellen verloren und die Zähne zum Beißen, was bleibt mir übrig, als aus einer Ecke in die andere zu laufen und zu knurren?« Gott sah, daß er recht hatte, und erließ ihm zwölf Jahre. Darauf kam der Affe. »Du willst wohl gerne dreißig Jahre leben?« sprach der Herr zu ihm, »du brauchst nicht zu arbeiten wie der Esel und der Hund, und bist immer guter Dinge.« »Ach Herr,« antwortete er, »das sieht so aus, ist aber anders. Wenns Hirsenbrei regnet, habe ich keinen Löffel. Ich soll immer lustige Streiche machen, Gesichter schneiden, damit die Leute lachen, und wenn sie mir einen Apfel reichen und ich beiße hinein, so ist er sauer. Wie oft steckt die Traurigkeit hinter dem Spaß! Dreißig Jahre halte ich das nicht aus.« Gott war gnädig und schenkte ihm zehn Jahre.

Endlich erschien der Mensch, war freudig, gesund und frisch und bat Gott, ihm seine Zeit zu bestimmen. »Dreißig Jahre sollst du leben,« sprach der Herr, »ist dir das genug?« »Welch eine kurze Zeit!« rief der Mensch, »wenn ich mein Haus gebaut habe, und das Feuer auf meinem eigenen Herde brennt: wenn ich Bäume gepflanzt habe, die blühen und Früchte tragen, und ich meines Lebens froh zu werden gedenke, so soll ich sterben! o Herr, verlängere meine Zeit.« »Ich will dir die achtzehn Jahre des Esels zulegen,« sagte Gott. »Das ist nicht genug,« erwiderte der Mensch. »Du sollst auch die zwölf Jahre des Hundes haben.« »Immer noch zu wenig.« »Wohlan,« sagte Gott, »ich will dir noch die zehn Jahre des Affen geben, aber mehr erhältst du nicht.« Der Mensch ging fort, war aber nicht zufriedengestellt.

Also lebt der Mensch siebenzig Jahr. Die ersten dreißig sind seine menschlichen Jahre, die gehen schnell dahin; da ist er gesund, heiter, arbeitet mit Lust und freut sich seines Daseins. Hierauf folgen die achtzehn Jahre des Esels, da wird ihm eine Last nach der andern aufgelegt: er muß das Korn tragen, das andere nährt, und Schläge und Tritte sind der Lohn seiner treuen Dienste. Dann kommen die zwölf Jahre des Hundes, da liegt er in den Ecken, knurrt und hat keine Zähne mehr zum Beißen. Und wenn diese Zeit vorüber ist, so machen die zehn Jahre des Affen den Beschluß. Da ist der

Mensch schwachköpfig und närrisch, treibt alberne Dinge und wird ein Spott der Kinder.

177. Die Boten des Todes.

Vor alten Zeiten wanderte einmal ein Riese auf der großen Landstraße, da sprang ihm plötzlich ein unbekannter Mann entgegen und rief »halt! keinen Schritt weiter!« »Was,« sprach der Riese, »du Wicht, den ich zwischen den Fingern zerdrücken kann, du willst mir den Weg vertreten? Wer bist du, daß du so keck reden darfst?« »Ich bin der Tod,« erwiderte der andere, »mir widersteht niemand, und auch du mußt meinen Befehlen gehorchen.« Der Riese aber weigerte sich und fing an mit dem Tode zu ringen. Es war ein langer heftiger Kampf, zuletzt behielt der Riese die Oberhand und schlug den Tod mit seiner Faust nieder, daß er neben einen Stein zusammensank. Der Riese ging seiner Wege, und der Tod lag da besiegt und war so kraftlos, daß er sich nicht wieder erheben konnte. »Was soll daraus werden,« sprach er, »wenn ich da in der Ecke liegen bleibe? es stirbt niemand mehr auf der Welt, und sie wird so mit Menschen angefüllt werden, daß sie nicht mehr Platz haben, nebeneinander zu stehen.« Indem kam ein junger Mensch des Wegs, frisch und gesund, sang ein Lied und warf seine Augen hin und her. Als er den halb Ohnmächtigen erblickte, ging er mitleidig heran, richtete ihn auf, flößte ihm aus seiner Flasche einen stärkenden Trank ein und wartete, bis er wieder zu Kräften kam. »Weißt du auch,« fragte der Fremde, indem er sich aufrichtete, »wer ich bin, und wem du wieder auf die Beine geholfen hast?« »Nein,« antwortete der Jüngling, »ich kenne dich nicht.« »Ich bin der Tod,« sprach er, »ich verschone niemand und kann auch mit dir keine Ausnahme machen. Damit du aber siehst, daß ich dankbar bin, so verspreche ich dir, daß ich dich nicht unversehens überfallen, sondern dir erst meine Boten senden will, bevor ich komme und dich abhole.« »Wohlan,« sprach der Jüngling, »immer ein Gewinn, daß ich weiß, wann du kommst, und so lange wenigstens sicher vor dir bin.« Dann zog er weiter, war lustig und guter Dinge und lebte in den Tag hinein. Allein Jugend und Gesundheit hielten nicht lange aus, bald kamen Krankheiten und Schmerzen, die ihn bei Tag plagten und ihm nachts die Ruhe wegnahmen. »Sterben werde ich nicht,« sprach er zu sich selbst, »denn der Tod sendet erst seine Boten, ich wollte nur, die bösen Tage der Krankheit wären erst vorüber.« Sobald er sich gesund fühlte, fing er wieder an in Freuden zu leben. Da klopfte ihn eines Tages jemand auf die Schulter: er blickte sich um, und der Tod stand hinter ihm und sprach »folge mir, die Stunde deines Abschieds von der Welt ist gekommen.« »Wie,« antwortete der Mensch, »willst du dein Wort brechen? hast du mir nicht versprochen, daß du mir, bevor du selbst kämest, deine Boten senden wolltest? ich habe keinen gesehen.« »Schweig,« erwiderte der Tod, »habe ich dir nicht einen Boten über den andern geschickt? kam nicht das Fieber, stieß dich an, rüttelte dich und warf dich nieder? hat der Schwindel dir nicht den Kopf betäubt? zwickte dich nicht die Gicht in allen Gliedern? brauste dirs nicht in den Ohren? nagte nicht der Zahnschmerz in deinen Backen? wird dirs nicht dunkel vor den Augen? Über das alles, hat nicht mein leiblicher Bruder, der Schlaf, dich jeden Abend an mich erinnert?

lagst du nicht in der Nacht, als wärst du schon gestorben?« Der Mensch wußte nichts zu erwidern, ergab sich in sein Geschick und ging mit dem Tode fort.

178. Meister Pfriem.

Meister Pfriem war ein kleiner hagerer, aber lebhafter Mann, der keinen Augenblick Ruhe hatte. Sein Gesicht, aus dem nur die aufgestülpte Nase vorragte, war pockennarbig und leichenblaß, sein Haar grau und struppig, seine Augen klein, aber sie blitzten unaufhörlich rechts und links hin. Er bemerkte alles, tadelte alles, wußte alles besser und hatte in allem recht. Ging er auf der Straße, so ruderte er heftig mit beiden Armen, und einmal schlug er einem Mädchen, das Wasser trug, den Eimer so hoch in die Luft, daß er selbst davon begossen ward. »Schafskopf,« rief er ihr zu, indem er sich schüttelte, »konntest du nicht sehen, daß ich hinter dir herkam?« Seines Handwerks war er ein Schuster, und wenn er arbeitete, so fuhr er mit dem Draht so gewaltig aus, daß er jedem, der sich nicht weit genug in der Ferne hielt, die Faust in den Leib stieß. Kein Geselle blieb länger als einen Monat bei ihm, denn er hatte an der besten Arbeit immer etwas auszusetzen. Bald waren die Stiche nicht gleich, bald war ein Schuh länger, bald ein Absatz höher als der andere, bald war das Leder nicht hinlänglich geschlagen. »Warte,« sagte er zu dem Lehrjungen, »ich will dir schon zeigen, wie man die Haut weich schlägt,« holte den Riemen und gab ihm ein paar Hiebe über den Rücken. Faulenzer nannte er sie alle. Er selber brachte aber doch nicht viel vor sich, weil er keine Viertelstunde ruhig sitzen blieb. War seine Frau frühmorgens aufgestanden und hatte Feuer angezündet, so sprang er aus dem Bett und lief mit bloßen Füßen in die Küche. »Wollt ihr mir das Haus anzünden?« schrie er, »das ist ja ein Feuer, daß man einen Ochsen dabei braten könnte! oder kostet das Holz etwa kein Geld?« Standen die Mägde am Waschfaß, lachten und erzählten sich, was sie wußten, so schalt er sie aus »da stehen die Gänse und schnattern und vergessen über dem Geschwätz ihre Arbeit. Und wozu die frische Seife? heillose Verschwendung und obendrein eine schändliche Faulheit: sie wollen die Hände schonen und das Zeug nicht ordentlich reiben.« Er sprang fort, stieß aber einen Eimer voll Lauge um, so daß die ganze Küche überschwemmt ward. Richtete man ein neues Haus auf, so lief er ans Fenster und sah zu. »Da vermauern sie wieder den roten Sandstein,« rief er, »der niemals austrocknet; in dem Haus bleibt kein Mensch gesund. Und seht einmal, wie schlecht die Gesellen die Steine aufsetzen. Der Mörtel taugt auch nichts: Kies muß hinein, nicht Sand. Ich erlebe noch, daß den Leuten das Haus über dem Kopf zusammenfällt.« Er setzte sich und tat ein paar Stiche, dann sprang er wieder auf, hakte sein Schurzfell los und rief »ich will nur hinaus und den Menschen ins Gewissen reden.« Er geriet aber an die Zimmerleute. »Was ist das?« rief er, »ihr haut ja nicht nach der Schnur. Meint ihr, die Balken würden gerad stehen? es weicht einmal alles aus den Fugen.« Er riß einem Zimmermann die Axt aus der Hand und wollte ihm zeigen, wie er hauen müßte, als aber ein mit Lehm beladener Wagen herangefahren kam, warf er die Axt weg und sprang zu dem Bauer, der nebenher ging. »Ihr seid nicht recht bei Trost,« rief er, »wer spannt junge Pferde vor einen schwer beladenen Wagen? die armen Tiere werden Euch auf dem Platz umfallen.« Der Bauer gab ihm keine Antwort, und Pfriem lief vor Ärger in seine Werkstätte zurück. Als er sich wieder zur Arbeit setzen wollte, reichte ihm der Lehrjunge einen Schuh. »Was ist das wieder?« schrie er ihn an, »habe ich euch nicht gesagt, ihr solltet die Schuhe nicht so weit ausschneiden? wer wird einen solchen Schuh kaufen, an dem fast nichts ist als die Sohle? ich verlange, daß meine Befehle unmangelhaft befolgt werden.« »Meister,« antwortete der Lehrjunge, »Ihr mögt wohl recht haben, daß der Schuh nichts taugt, aber es ist derselbe, den Ihr zugeschnitten und selbst in Arbeit genommen habt. Als Ihr vorhin aufgesprungen seid, habt Ihr ihn vom Tisch herabgeworfen, und ich habe ihn nur aufgehoben. Euch könnte es aber ein Engel vom Himmel nicht recht machen.«

Meister Pfriem träumte in einer Nacht, er wäre gestorben und befände sich auf dem Weg nach dem Himmel. Als er anlangte, klopfte er heftig an die Pforte: »es wundert mich,« sprach er, »daß sie nicht einen Ring am Tor haben, man klopft sich die Knöchel wund.« Der Apostel Petrus öffnete und wollte sehen, wer so ungestüm Einlaß begehrte. »Ach, Ihr seids, Meister Pfriem,« sagte er, »ich will Euch wohl einlassen, aber ich warne Euch, daß Ihr von Eurer Gewohnheit ablaßt und nichts tadelt, was Ihr im Himmel seht: es könnte Euch übel bekommen.« »Ihr hättet Euch die Ermahnung sparen können,« erwiderte Pfriem, »ich weiß schon, was sich ziemt, und hier ist, Gott sei Dank, alles vollkommen und nichts zu tadeln wie auf Erden.« Er trat also ein und ging in den weiten Räumen des Himmels auf und ab. Er sah sich um, rechts und links, schüttelte aber zuweilen mit dem Kopf oder brummte etwas vor sich hin. Indem erblickte er zwei Engel, die einen Balken wegtrugen. Es war der Balken, den einer im Auge gehabt hatte, während er nach dem Splitter in den Augen anderer suchte. Sie trugen aber den Balken nicht der Länge nach, sondern quer. »Hat man je einen solchen Unverstand gesehen?« dachte Meister Pfriem; doch schwieg er und gab sich zufrieden: »es ist im Grunde einerlei, wie man den Balken trägt, geradeaus oder quer, wenn man nur damit durchkommt, und wahrhaftig, ich sehe, sie stoßen nirgend an.« Bald hernach erblickte er zwei Engel, welche Wasser aus einem Brunnen in ein Faß schöpften, zugleich bemerkte er, daß das Faß durchlöchert war und das Wasser von allen Seiten herauslief. Sie tränkten die Erde mit Regen. »Alle Hagel!« platzte er heraus, besann sich aber glücklicherweise und dachte »vielleicht ists bloßer Zeitvertreib; machts einem Spaß, so kann man dergleichen unnütze Dinge tun, zumal hier im Himmel, wo man, wie ich schon bemerkt habe, doch nur faulenzt.« Er ging weiter und sah einen Wagen, der in einem tiefen Loch stecken geblieben war. »Kein Wunder,« sprach er zu dem Mann, der dabeistand, »wer wird so unvernünftig aufladen? was habt Ihr da?« »Fromme Wünsche,« antwortete der Mann, »ich konnte damit nicht auf den rechten Weg kommen, aber ich habe den Wagen noch glücklich heraufgeschoben, und hier werden sie mich nicht stecken lassen.« Wirklich kam ein Engel und spannte zwei Pferde vor. »Ganz gut,« meinte Pfriem, »aber zwei Pferde bringen den Wagen nicht heraus, viere müssen wenigstens davor.« Ein anderer Engel kam und führte noch zwei Pferde herbei, spannte sie aber nicht vorn, sondern hinten an. Das war dem Meister Pfriem zu viel. »Talpatsch,« brach er los, »was machst du da? hat man je, solange die Welt steht, auf diese Weise einen Wagen herausgezogen? da meinen sie aber in ihrem dünkelhaften Übermut alles besser zu wissen.« Er wollte weiterreden, aber einer von den Himmelsbewohnern hatte ihn am Kragen gepackt und schob ihn mit unwiderstehlicher Gewalt hinaus. Unter der Pforte drehte der Meister noch einmal den Kopf nach dem Wagen und sah, wie er von vier Flügelpferden in die Höhe gehoben ward.

In diesem Augenblick erwachte Meister Pfriem. »Es geht freilich im Himmel etwas anders her als auf Erden,« sprach er zu sich selbst, »und da läßt sich manches entschuldigen, aber wer kann geduldig mit ansehen, daß man die Pferde zugleich hinten und vorn anspannt? freilich, sie hatten Flügel, aber wer kann das wissen? Es ist übrigens eine gewaltige Dummheit, Pferden, die vier Beine zum Laufen haben, noch ein paar Flügel anzuheften. Aber ich muß aufstehen, sonst machen sie mir im Haus lauter verkehrtes Zeug. Es ist nur ein Glück, daß ich nicht wirklich gestorben bin.«

179. Die Gänsehirtin am Brunnen.

Es war einmal ein steinaltes Mütterchen, das lebte mit seiner Herde Gänse in einer Einöde zwischen Bergen und hatte da ein kleines Haus. Die Einöde war von einem großen Wald umgeben, und jeden Morgen nahm die Alte ihre Krücke und wackelte in den Wald. Da war aber das Mütterchen ganz geschäftig, mehr als man ihm bei seinen hohen Jahren zugetraut hätte, sammelte Gras für seine Gänse, brach sich das wilde Obst ab, so weit es mit den Händen reichen konnte, und trug alles auf seinem Rücken heim. Man hätte meinen sollen, die schwere Last müßte sie zu Boden drücken, aber sie brachte sie immer glücklich nach Haus. Wenn ihr jemand begegnete, so grüßte sie ganz freundlich »guten Tag, lieber Landsmann, heute ist schönes Wetter. Ja, Ihr wundert Euch, daß ich das Gras schleppe, aber jeder muß seine Last auf den Rücken nehmen.« Doch die Leute begegneten ihr nicht gerne und nahmen lieber einen Umweg, und wenn ein Vater mit seinem Knaben an ihr vorüberging, so sprach er leise zu ihm »nimm dich in acht vor der Alten, die hats faustdick hinter den Ohren: es ist eine Hexe.«

Eines Morgens ging ein hübscher junger Mann durch den Wald. Die Sonne schien hell, die Vögel sangen, und ein kühles Lüftchen strich durch das Laub, und er war voll Freude und Lust. Noch war ihm kein Mensch begegnet, als er plötzlich die alte Hexe erblickte, die am Boden auf den Knien saß und Gras mit einer Sichel abschnitt. Eine ganze Last hatte sie schon in ihr Tragtuch geschoben, und daneben standen zwei Körbe, die mit wilden Birnen und Äpfeln angefüllt waren. »Aber Mütterchen,« sprach er, »wie kannst du das alles fortschaffen?« »Ich muß sie tragen, lieber Herr,« antwortete sie, »reicher Leute Kinder brauchen es nicht. Aber beim Bauer heißts

schau dich nicht um,
dein Buckel ist krumm.

Wollt Ihr mir helfen?« sprach sie, als er bei ihr stehen blieb, »Ihr habt noch einen geraden Buckel und junge Beine, es wird Euch ein leichtes sein. Auch ist mein Haus nicht so weit von hier: hinter dem Berge dort steht es auf einer Heide. Wie bald seid Ihr da hinaufgesprungen.« Der junge Mann empfand Mitleiden mit der Alten, »zwar ist mein Vater kein Bauer,« antwortete er, »sondern ein reicher Graf, aber damit Ihr seht, daß die Bauern nicht allein tragen können, so will ich Euer Bündel aufnehmen.« »Wollt Ihrs versuchen,« sprach sie, »so soll mirs lieb sein. Eine Stunde weit werdet Ihr freilich gehen müssen, aber was macht Euch das aus! Dort die Äpfel und Birnen müßt Ihr auch tragen.« Es kam dem jungen Grafen doch ein wenig bedenklich vor, als er von einer Stunde Wegs hörte, aber die Alte ließ ihn nicht wieder los, packte ihm das Tragtuch auf den Rücken und hing ihm die beiden Körbe an den Arm. »Seht Ihr, es geht ganz leicht,« sagte sie. »Nein, es geht nicht leicht,« antwortete der Graf und machte ein schmerzliches

Gesicht, »der Bündel drückt ja so schwer, als wären lauter Wackersteine darin, und die Äpfel und Birnen haben ein Gewicht, als wären sie von Blei; ich kann kaum atmen.« Er hatte Lust, alles wieder abzulegen, aber die Alte ließ es nicht zu. »Seht einmal,« sprach sie spöttisch, »der junge Herr will nicht tragen, was ich alte Frau schon so oft fortgeschleppt habe. Mit schönen Worten sind sie bei der Hand, aber wenns Ernst wird, so wollen sie sich aus dem Staub machen. Was steht Ihr da,« fuhr sie fort, »und zaudert, hebt die Beine auf. Es nimmt Euch niemand den Bündel wieder ab.« Solange er auf ebener Erde ging, wars noch auszuhalten, aber als sie an den Berg kamen und steigen mußten, und die Steine hinter seinen Füßen hinabrollten, als wären sie lebendig, da gings über seine Kräfte. Die Schweißtropfen standen ihm auf der Stirne und liefen ihm bald heiß, bald kalt über den Rücken hinab. »Mütterchen,« sagte er, »ich kann nicht weiter, ich will ein wenig ruhen.« »Nichts da,« antwortete die Alte, »wenn wir angelangt sind, so könnt Ihr ausruhen, aber jetzt müßt Ihr vorwärts. Wer weiß, wozu Euch das gut ist.« »Alte, du wirst unverschämt,« sagte der Graf und wollte das Tragtuch abwerfen, aber er bemühte sich vergeblich: es hing so fest an seinem Rücken, als wenn es angewachsen wäre. Er drehte und wendete sich, aber er konnte es nicht wieder loswerden. Die Alte lachte dazu und sprang ganz vergnügt auf ihrer Krücke herum. »Erzürnt Euch nicht, lieber Herr,« sprach sie, »Ihr werdet ja so rot im Gesicht wie ein Zinshahn. Tragt Euern Bündel mit Geduld, wenn wir zu Hause angelangt sind, so will ich Euch schon ein gutes Trinkgeld geben.« Was wollte er machen? er mußte sich in sein Schicksal fügen und geduldig hinter der Alten herschleichen. Sie schien immer flinker zu werden und ihm seine Last immer schwerer. Auf einmal tat sie einen Satz, sprang auf das Tragtuch und setzte sich oben darauf; wie zaundürre sie war, so hatte sie doch mehr Gewicht als die dickste Bauerndirne. Dem Jünglinge zitterten die Knie, aber wenn er nicht fortging, so schlug ihn die Alte mit einer Gerte und mit Brennesseln auf die Beine. Unter beständigem Ächzen stieg er den Berg hinauf und langte endlich bei dem Haus der Alten an, als er eben niedersinken wollte. Als die Gänse die Alte erblickten, streckten sie die Flügel in die Höhe und die Hälse voraus, liefen ihr entgegen und schrien ihr »wulle, wulle.« Hinter der Herde mit einer Rute in der Hand ging eine bejahrte Trulle, stark und groß, aber häßlich wie die Nacht. »Frau Mutter,« sprach sie zur Alten, »ist Euch etwas begegnet? Ihr seid so lange ausgeblieben.« »Bewahre, mein Töchterchen,« erwiderte sie, »mir ist nichts Böses begegnet, im Gegenteil, der liebe Herr da hat mir meine Last getragen; denk dir, als ich müde war, hat er mich selbst noch auf den Rücken genommen. Der Weg ist uns auch gar nicht lang geworden, wir sind lustig gewesen und haben immer Spaß miteinander gemacht.« Endlich rutschte die Alte herab, nahm dem jungen Mann den Bündel vom Rücken und die Körbe vom Arm, sah ihn ganz freundlich an und sprach »nun setzt Euch auf die Bank vor die Türe und ruht Euch aus. Ihr habt Euern Lohn redlich verdient, der soll auch nicht ausbleiben.« Dann sprach sie zu der Gänsehirtin »geh du ins Haus hinein, mein Töchterchen, es schickt sich nicht, daß du mit einem jungen Herrn allein bist, man muß nicht

Öl ins Feuer gießen; er könnte sich in dich verlieben.« Der Graf wußte nicht, ob er weinen oder lachen sollte. »Solch ein Schätzchen,« dachte er, »und wenn es dreißig Jahre jünger wäre, könnte doch mein Herz nicht rühren.« Indessen hätschelte und streichelte die Alte ihre Gänse wie Kinder und ging dann mit ihrer Tochter in das Haus. Der Jüngling streckte sich auf die Bank unter einem wilden Apfelbaum. Die Luft war lau und mild: ringsumher breitete sich eine grüne Wiese aus, die mit Himmelsschlüsseln, wildem Thymian und tausend andern Blumen übersät war: mittendurch rauschte ein klarer Bach, auf dem die Sonne glitzerte: und die weißen Gänse gingen auf und ab spazieren oder pudelten sich im Wasser. »Es ist recht lieblich hier,« sagte er, »aber ich bin so müde, daß ich die Augen nicht aufbehalten mag: ich will ein wenig schlafen. Wenn nur kein Windstoß kommt und bläst mir meine Beine vom Leib weg, denn sie sind mürb wie Zunder.«

Als er ein Weilchen geschlafen hatte, kam die Alte und schüttelte ihn wach. »Steh auf,« sagte sie, »hier kannst du nicht bleiben. Freilich habe ich dirs sauer genug gemacht, aber das Leben hats doch nicht gekostet. Jetzt will ich dir deinen Lohn geben, Geld und Gut brauchst du nicht, da hast du etwas anderes.« Damit steckte sie ihm ein Büchslein in die Hand, das aus einem einzigen Smaragd geschnitten war. »Bewahrs wohl,« setzte sie hinzu, »es wird dir Glück bringen.« Der Graf sprang auf, und da er fühlte, daß er ganz frisch und wieder bei Kräften war, so dankte er der Alten für ihr Geschenk und machte sich auf den Weg, ohne nach dem schönen Töchterchen auch nur einmal umzublicken. Als er schon eine Strecke weg war, hörte er noch aus der Ferne das lustige Geschrei der Gänse.

Der Graf mußte drei Tage in der Wildnis herumirren, ehe er sich herausfinden konnte. Da kam er in eine große Stadt, und weil ihn niemand kannte, ward er in das königliche Schloß geführt, wo der König und die Königin auf dem Thron saßen. Der Graf ließ sich auf ein Knie nieder, zog das smaragdene Gefäß aus der Tasche und legte es der Königin zu Füßen. Sie hieß ihn aufstehen, und er mußte ihr das Büchslein hinaufreichen. Kaum aber hatte sie es geöffnet und hineingeblickt, so fiel sie wie tot zur Erde. Der Graf ward von den Dienern des Königs festgehalten und sollte in das Gefängnis geführt werden, da schlug die Königin die Augen auf und rief, sie sollten ihn freilassen, und jedermann sollte hinausgehen, sie wollte insgeheim mit ihm reden.

Als die Königin allein war, fing sie bitterlich an zu weinen und sprach »was hilft mir Glanz und Ehre, die mich umgeben, jeden Morgen erwache ich mit Sorgen und Kummer. Ich habe drei Töchter gehabt, davon war die jüngste so schön, daß sie alle Welt für ein Wunder hielt. Sie war so weiß wie Schnee, so rot wie Apfelblüte, und ihr Haar so glänzend wie Sonnenstrahlen. Wenn sie weinte, so fielen nicht Tränen aus ihren Augen, sondern lauter Perlen und Edelsteine. Als sie fünfzehn Jahr alt war, da ließ der König alle drei Schwestern vor seinen Thron kommen. Da hättet Ihr sehen sollen, was die Leute für Augen machten, als die jüngste eintrat, es war als wenn die Sonne aufging. Der König sprach »meine Töchter, ich weiß nicht, wann mein letzter Tag kommt, ich will heute bestimmen, was eine jede nach meinem Tode erhalten soll. Ihr alle habt mich lieb, aber welche mich von euch am liebsten hat, die soll das Beste haben.« Jede sagte, sie hätte ihn am liebsten. »Könnt ihr mirs nicht ausdrücken,« erwiderte der König, »wie lieb ihr mich habt? daran werde ichs sehen, wie ihrs meint.« Die älteste sprach »ich habe den Vater so lieb wie den süßesten Zucker.« Die zweite »ich habe den Vater so lieb wie mein schönstes Kleid.« Die jüngste aber schwieg. Da fragte der Vater »und du, mein liebstes Kind, wie lieb hast du mich?« »Ich weiß es nicht,« antwortete sie, »und kann meine Liebe mit nichts vergleichen.« Aber der Vater bestand darauf, sie müßte etwas nennen. Da sagte sie endlich »die beste Speise schmeckt mir nicht ohne Salz, darum habe ich den Vater so lieb wie Salz.« Als der König das hörte, geriet er in Zorn und sprach »wenn du mich so liebst als Salz, so soll deine Liebe auch mit Salz belohnt werden.« Da teilte er das Reich zwischen den beiden ältesten, der jüngsten aber ließ er einen Sack mit Salz auf den Rücken binden, und zwei Knechte mußten sie hinaus in den wilden Wald führen. »Wir haben alle für sie gefleht und gebeten,« sagte die Königin, »aber der Zorn des Königs war nicht zu erweichen. Wie hat sie geweint, als sie uns verlassen mußte! der ganze Weg ist mit Perlen besät worden, die ihr aus den Augen geflossen sind. Den König hat bald hernach seine große Härte gereut, und hat das arme Kind in dem ganzen Wald suchen lassen, aber niemand konnte sie finden. Wenn ich denke, daß sie die wilden Tiere gefressen haben, so weiß ich mich vor Traurigkeit nicht zu fassen; manchmal tröste ich mich mit der Hoffnung, sie sei noch am Leben und habe sich in einer Höhle versteckt oder bei mitleidigen Menschen Schutz gefunden. Aber stellt Euch vor, als ich Euer Smaragdbüchslein aufmachte, so lag eine Perle darin, gerade der Art, wie sie meiner Tochter aus den Augen geflossen sind, und da könnt Ihr Euch vorstellen, wie mir der Anblick das Herz bewegt hat. Ihr sollt mir sagen, wie Ihr zu der Perle gekommen seid.« Der Graf erzählte ihr, daß er sie von der Alten im Walde erhalten hätte, die ihm nicht geheuer vorgekommen wäre und eine Hexe sein müßte; von ihrem Kinde aber hätte er nichts gehört und gesehen. Der König und die Königin faßten den Entschluß, die Alte aufzusuchen; sie dachten, wo die Perle gewesen wäre, da müßten sie auch Nachricht von ihrer Tochter finden.

Die Alte saß draußen in der Einöde bei ihrem Spinnrad und spann. Es war schon dunkel geworden, und ein Span, der unten am Herd brannte, gab ein sparsames Licht. Auf einmal wards draußen laut, die Gänse kamen heim von der Weide und ließen ihr heiseres Gekreisch hören. Bald hernach trat auch die Tochter herein. Aber die Alte dankte ihr kaum und schüttelte nur ein wenig mit dem Kopf. Die Tochter setzte sich nieder, nahm ihr Spinnrad und drehte den Faden so flink wie ein junges Mädchen. So saßen beide zwei Stunden, und sprachen kein Wort miteinander. Endlich raschelte etwas am Fenster und zwei feurige Augen glotzten herein. Es war eine alte Nachteule, die dreimal »uhu« schrie. Die Alte schaute nur ein wenig in die Höhe, dann sprach sie »jetzt ists Zeit, Töchterchen, daß du hinausgehst, tu deine Arbeit.«

Sie stand auf und ging hinaus. »Wo ist sie denn hingegangen?« Über die Wiesen immer weiter bis in das Tal. Endlich kam sie zu einem Brunnen, bei dem drei alte Eichbäume standen. Der Mond war indessen rund und groß über dem Berg aufgestiegen, und es war so hell, daß man eine Stecknadel hätte finden können. Sie zog eine Haut ab, die auf ihrem Gesicht lag, bückte sich dann zu dem Brunnen und fing an sich zu waschen. Als sie fertig war, tauchte sie auch die Haut in das Wasser und legte sie dann auf die Wiese, damit sie wieder im Mondschein bleichen und trocknen sollte. Aber wie war das Mädchen verwandelt! So was habt ihr nie gesehen! Als der graue Zopf abfiel, da quollen die goldenen Haare wie Sonnen strahlen hervor und breiteten sich, als wärs ein Mantel, über ihre ganze Gestalt. Nur die Augen blitzten heraus so glänzend wie die Sterne am Himmel, und die Wangen schimmerten in sanfter Röte wie die Apfelblüte.

Aber das schöne Mädchen war traurig. Es setzte sich nieder und weinte bitterlich. Eine Träne nach der andern drang aus seinen Augen und rollte zwischen den langen Haaren auf den Boden. So saß es da und wäre lange sitzen geblieben, wenn es nicht in den Ästen des nahestehenden Baumes geknittert und gerauscht hätte. Sie sprang auf wie ein Reh, das den Schuß des Jägers vernimmt. Der Mond ward gerade von einer schwarzen Wolke bedeckt, und im Augenblick war das Mädchen wieder in die alte Haut geschlüpft, und verschwand wie ein Licht, das der Wind ausbläst.

Zitternd wie ein Espenlaub lief sie zu dem Haus zurück. Die Alte stand vor der Türe, und das Mädchen wollte ihr erzählen, was ihm begegnet war, aber die Alte lachte freundlich und sagte »ich weiß schon alles.« Sie führte es in die Stube und zündete einen neuen Span an. Aber sie setzte sich nicht wieder zu dem Spinnrad, sondern sie holte einen Besen und fing an zu kehren und zu scheuern. »Es muß alles rein und sauber sein,« sagte sie zu dem Mädchen. »Aber, Mutter,« sprach das Mädchen, »warum fangt Ihr in so später Stunde die Arbeit an? was habt Ihr vor!« »Weißt du denn, welche Stunde es ist?« fragte die Alte. »Noch nicht Mitternacht,« antwortete das Mädchen, »aber schon elf Uhr vorbei.« »Denkst du nicht daran,« fuhr die Alte fort, »daß du heute vor drei Jahren zu mir gekommen bist? Deine Zeit ist aus, wir können nicht länger beisammen bleiben.« Das Mädchen erschrak und sagte »ach, liebe Mutter, wollt Ihr mich verstoßen? wo soll ich hin? ich habe keine Freunde und keine Heimat, wohin ich mich wenden kann. Ich habe alles getan, was Ihr verlangt habt, und Ihr seid immer zufrieden mit mir gewesen: schickt mich nicht fort.« Die Alte wollte dem Mädchen nicht sagen, was ihm bevorstand. »Meines Bleibens ist nicht länger hier,« sprach sie zu ihm, »wenn ich aber ausziehe, muß Haus und Stube sauber sein: darum halt mich nicht auf in meiner Arbeit. Deinetwegen sei ohne Sorgen, du sollst ein Dach finden, unter dem du wohnen kannst, und mit dem Lohn, den ich dir geben will, wirst du auch zufrieden sein.« »Aber sagt mir nur, was ist vor?« fragte das Mädchen weiter. »Ich sage dir nochmals, störe mich nicht in meiner Arbeit. Rede kein Wort weiter, geh in deine Kammer, nimm die Haut vom Gesicht und zieh das seidene Kleid an, das du trugst, als du zu mir kamst, und dann harre in deiner Kammer, bis ich dich rufe.«

Aber ich muß wieder von dem König und der Königin erzählen, die mit dem Grafen ausgezogen waren und die Alte in der Einöde aufsuchen wollten. Der Graf war nachts in dem Walde von ihnen abgekommen, und mußte allein weitergehen. Am andern Tag kam es ihm vor, als befände er sich auf dem rechten Weg. Er ging immer fort, bis die Dunkelheit einbrach, da stieg er auf einen Baum und wollte da übernachten, denn er war besorgt, er möchte sich verirren. Als der Mond die Gegend erhellte, so erblickte er eine Gestalt, die den Berg herabwandelte. Sie hatte keine Rute in der Hand, aber er konnte doch sehen, daß es die Gänsehirtin war, die er früher bei dem Haus der Alten gesehen hatte. »Oho!« rief er, »da kommt sie, und habe ich erst die eine Hexe, so soll mir die andere auch nicht entgehen.« Wie erstaunte er aber, als sie zu dem Brunnen trat, die Haut ablegte und sich wusch, als die goldenen Haare über sie herabfielen, und sie so schön war, wie er noch niemand auf der Welt gesehen hatte. Kaum daß er zu atmen wagte, aber er streckte den Hals zwischen dem Laub so weit vor, als er nur konnte, und schaute sie mit unverwandten Blicken an. Ob er sich zu weit überbog, oder sonst schuld war, plötzlich krachte der Ast, und in demselben Augenblick schlüpfte das Mädchen in die Haut, sprang wie ein Reh davon, und da der Mond sich zugleich bedeckte, so war sie seinen Blicken entzogen.

Kaum war sie verschwunden, so stieg der Graf von dem Baum herab und eilte ihr mit behenden Schritten nach. Er war noch nicht lange gegangen, so sah er in der Dämmerung zwei Gestalten über die Wiese wandeln. Es war der König und die Königin, die hatten aus der Ferne das Licht in dem Häuschen der Alten erblickt und waren drauf zugegangen. Der Graf erzählte ihnen, was er für Wunderdinge bei dem Brunnen gesehen hätte, und sie zweifelten nicht, daß das ihre verlorene Tochter gewesen wäre. Voll Freude gingen sie weiter und kamen bald bei dem Häuschen an: die Gänse saßen ringsherum, hatten den Kopf in die Flügel gesteckt und schliefen, und keine regte sich nicht. Sie schauten zum Fenster hinein, da saß die Alte ganz still und spann, nickte mit dem Kopf und sah sich nicht um. Es war ganz sauber in der Stube, als wenn da die kleinen Nebelmännlein wohnten, die keinen Staub auf den Füßen tragen. Ihre Tochter aber sahen sie nicht. Sie schauten das alles eine Zeitlang an, endlich faßten sie sich ein Herz und klopften leise ans Fenster. Die Alte schien sie erwartet zu haben, sie stand auf und rief ganz freundlich »nur herein, ich kenne euch schon.« Als sie in die Stube eingetreten waren, sprach die Alte »den weiten Weg hättet ihr euch sparen können, wenn ihr euer Kind, das so gut und liebreich ist, nicht vor drei Jahren ungerechterweise verstoßen hättet. Ihr hats nichts geschadet, sie hat drei Jahre lang die Gänse hüten müssen: sie hat nichts Böses dabei gelernt, sondern ihr reines Herz behalten. Ihr aber seid durch die Angst, in der ihr gelebt habt, hinlänglich gestraft.« Dann ging sie an die Kammer und rief »komm heraus, mein Töchterchen.« Da ging die Türe auf, und die Königstochter trat heraus in ihrem seidenen Gewand mit ihren goldenen Haaren und ihren leuchtenden Augen, und es war, als ob ein Engel vom Himmel käme.

Sie ging auf ihren Vater und ihre Mutter zu, fiel ihnen um den Hals und küßte sie: es war nicht anders, sie mußten alle vor Freude weinen. Der junge

Graf stand neben ihnen, und als sie ihn erblickte, ward sie so rot im Gesicht wie eine Moosrose; sie wußte selbst nicht warum. Der König sprach »liebes Kind, mein Königreich habe ich verschenkt, was soll ich dir geben?« »Sie braucht nichts,« sagte die Alte, »ich schenke ihr die Tränen, die sie um euch geweint hat, das sind lauter Perlen, schöner, als sie im Meer gefunden werden, und sind mehr wert als euer ganzes Königreich. Und zum Lohn für ihre Dienste gebe ich ihr mein Häuschen.« Als die Alte das gesagt hatte, verschwand sie vor ihren Augen. Es knatterte ein wenig in den Wänden, und als sie sich umsahen, war das Häuschen in einen prächtigen Palast verwandelt, und eine königliche Tafel war gedeckt, und die Bedienten liefen hin und her.

Die Geschichte geht noch weiter, aber meiner Großmutter, die sie mir erzählt hat, war das Gedächtnis schwach geworden: sie hatte das übrige vergessen. Ich glaube immer, die schöne Königstochter ist mit dem Grafen vermählt worden, und sie sind zusammen in dem Schloß geblieben und haben da in aller Glückseligkeit gelebt, solange Gott wollte. Ob die schneeweißen Gänse, die bei dem Häuschen gehütet wurden, lauter Mädchen waren (es brauchts niemand übelzunehmen), welche die Alte zu sich genommen hatte, und ob sie jetzt ihre menschliche Gestalt wieder erhielten und als Dienerinnen bei der jungen Königin blieben, das weiß ich nicht genau, aber ich vermute es doch. Soviel ist gewiß, daß die Alte keine Hexe war, wie die Leute glaubten, sondern eine weise Frau, die es gut meinte. Wahrscheinlich ist sie es auch gewesen, die der Königstochter schon bei der Geburt die Gabe verliehen hat, Perlen zu weinen statt der Tränen. Heutzutage kommt das nicht mehr vor, sonst könnten die Armen bald reich werden.

180. Die ungleichen Kinder Evas.

Als Adam und Eva aus dem Paradies vertrieben waren, so mußten sie auf unfruchtbarer Erde sich ein Haus bauen und im Schweiße ihres Angesichts ihr Brot essen. Adam hackte das Feld und Eva spann Wolle. Eva brachte jedes Jahr ein Kind zur Welt, die Kinder waren aber ungleich, einige schön, andere häßlich. Nachdem eine geraume Zeit verlaufen war, sendete Gott einen Engel an die beiden und ließ ihnen entbieten, daß er kommen und ihren Haushalt schauen wollte. Eva, freudig, daß der Herr so gnädig war, säuberte emsig ihr Haus, schmückte es mit Blumen und streute Binsen auf den Estrich. Dann holte sie ihre Kinder herbei, aber nur die schönen. Sie wusch und badetete sie, kämmte ihnen die Haare, legte ihnen neugewaschene Hemden an und ermahnte sie, in der Gegenwart des Herrn sich anständig und züchtig zu betragen. Sie sollten sich vor ihm sittig neigen, die Hand darbieten und auf seine Fragen bescheiden und verständig antworten. Die häßlichen Kinder aber sollten sich nicht sehen lassen. Das eine verbarg sie unter das Heu, das andere unter das Dach, das dritte in das Stroh, das vierte in den Ofen, das fünfte in den Keller, das sechste unter eine Kufe, das siebente unter das Weinfaß, das achte unter ihren alten Pelz, das neunte und zehnte unter das Tuch, aus dem sie ihnen Kleider zu machen pflegte, und das elfte und zwölfte unter das Leder, aus dem sie ihnen die Schuhe zuschnitt. Eben war sie fertig geworden, als es an die Haustüre klopfte. Adam blickte durch eine Spalte und sah, daß es der Herr war. Ehrerbietig öffnete er, und der himmlische Vater trat ein. Da standen die schönen Kinder in der Reihe, neigten sich, boten ihm die Hände dar und knieten nieder. Der Herr aber fing an sie zu segnen, legte auf den ersten seine Hände und sprach »du sollst ein gewaltiger König werden,« ebenso zu dem zweiten »du ein Fürst,« zu dem dritten »du ein Graf,« zu dem vierten »du ein Ritter,« zu dem fünften »du ein Edelmann,« zu dem sechsten »du ein Bürger,« zum siebenten »du ein Kaufmann,« zu dem achten »du ein gelehrter Mann.« Er erteilte ihnen also allen seinen reichen Segen. Als Eva sah, daß der Herr so mild und gnädig war, dachte sie »ich will meine ungestalten Kinder herbeiholen, vielleicht, daß er ihnen auch seinen Segen gibt.« Sie lief also und holte sie aus dem Heu, Stroh, Ofen, und wo sie sonst hin versteckt waren, hervor. Da kam die ganze grobe, schmutzige, grindige und rußige Schar. Der Herr lächelte, betrachtete sie alle und sprach »auch diese will ich segnen.« Er legte auf den ersten die Hände und sprach zu ihm »du sollst werden ein Bauer,« zu dem zweiten »du ein Fischer,« zu dem dritten »du ein Schmied,« zu dem vierten »du ein Lohgerber,« zu dem fünften »du ein Weber,« zu dem sechsten »du ein Schuhmacher,« zu dem siebenten »du ein Schneider,« zu dem achten »du ein Töpfer,« zu dem neunten »du ein Karrenführer,« zu dem zehnten »du ein Schiffer,« zu dem elften »du ein Bote,« zu dem zwölften »du ein Hausknecht dein lebelang.« Als Eva das alles mit angehört hatte, sagte sie »Herr, wie teilst du deinen Segen so ungleich! Es sind doch alle meine Kinder, die ich geboren habe:

deine Gnade sollte über alle gleich ergehen.« Gott aber erwiderte »Eva, das verstehst du nicht. Mir gebührt und ist not, daß ich die ganze Welt mit deinen Kindern versehe: wenn sie alle Fürsten und Herren wären, wer sollte Korn bauen, dreschen, mahlen und backen? wer schmieden, weben, zimmern, bauen, graben, schneiden und mähen? Jeder soll seinen Stand vertreten, daß einer den andern erhalte und alle ernährt werden wie am Leib die Glieder.« Da antwortete Eva »ach Herr, vergib, ich war zu rasch, daß ich dir einredete, Dein göttlicher Wille geschehe auch an meinen Kindern.«

181. Die Nixe im Teich.

Es war einmal ein Müller, der führte mit seiner Frau ein vergnügtes Leben. Sie hatten Geld und Gut, und ihr Wohlstand nahm von Jahr zu Jahr noch zu. Aber Unglück kommt über Nacht: wie ihr Reichtum gewachsen war, so schwand er von Jahr zu Jahr wieder hin, und zuletzt konnte der Müller kaum noch die Mühle, in der er saß, sein Eigentum nennen. Er war voll Kummer, und wenn er sich nach der Arbeit des Tages niederlegte, so fand er keine Ruhe, sondern wälzte sich voll Sorgen in seinem Bett. Eines Morgens stand er schon vor Tagesanbruch auf, ging hinaus ins Freie und dachte, es sollte ihm leichter ums Herz werden. Als er über dem Mühldamm dahinschritt, brach eben der erste Sonnenstrahl hervor, und er hörte in dem Weiher etwas rauschen. Er wendete sich um und erblickte ein schönes Weib, das sich langsam aus dem Wasser erhob. Ihre langen Haare, die sie über den Schultern mit ihren zarten Händen gefaßt hatte, flossen an beiden Seiten herab und bedeckten ihren weißen Leib. Er sah wohl, daß es die Nixe des Teichs war, und wußte vor Furcht nicht, ob er davongehen oder stehen bleiben sollte. Aber die Nixe ließ ihre sanfte Stimme hören, nannte ihn bei Namen und fragte, warum er so traurig wäre. Der Müller war anfangs verstummt, als er sie aber so freundlich sprechen hörte, faßte er sich ein Herz und erzählte ihr, daß er sonst in Glück und Reichtum gelebt hätte, aber jetzt so arm wäre, daß er sich nicht zu raten wüßte. »Sei ruhig,« antwortete die Nixe, »ich will dich reicher und glücklicher machen, als du je gewesen bist, nur mußt du mir versprechen, daß du mir geben willst, was eben in deinem Hause jung geworden ist.« »Was kann das anders sein,« dachte der Müller, »als ein junger Hund oder ein junges Kätzchen?« und sagte ihr zu, was sie verlangte. Die Nixe stieg wieder in das Wasser hinab, und er eilte getröstet und gutes Mutes nach seiner Mühle. Noch hatte er sie nicht erreicht, da trat die Magd aus der Haustüre und rief ihm zu, er sollte sich freuen, seine Frau hätte ihm einen kleinen Knaben geboren. Der Müller stand wie vom Blitz gerührt, er sah wohl, daß die tückische Nixe das gewußt und ihn betrogen hatte. Mit gesenktem Haupt trat er zu dem Bett seiner Frau, und als sie ihn fragte »warum freust du dich nicht über den schönen Knaben?« so erzählte er ihr, was ihm begegnet war, und was für ein Versprechen er der Nixe gegeben hatte. »Was hilft mir Glück und Reichtum,« fügte er hinzu, »wenn ich mein Kind verlieren soll? aber was kann ich tun?« Auch die Verwandten, die herbeigekommen waren, Glück zu wünschen, wußten keinen Rat.

Indessen kehrte das Glück in das Haus des Müllers wieder ein. Was er unternahm, gelang, es war, als ob Kisten und Kasten von selbst sich füllten und das Geld im Schrank über Nacht sich mehrte. Es dauerte nicht lange, so war sein Reichtum größer als je zuvor. Aber er konnte sich nicht ungestört darüber freuen: die Zusage, die er der Nixe getan hatte, quälte sein Herz. Sooft er an dem Teich vorbeikam, fürchtete er, sie möchte auftauchen und ihn an seine Schuld mahnen. Den Knaben selbst ließ er nicht in die Nähe des

Wassers; »hüte dich,« sagte er zu ihm, »wenn du das Wasser berührst, so kommt eine Hand heraus, hascht dich und zieht dich hinab.« Doch als Jahr auf Jahr verging und die Nixe sich nicht wieder zeigte, so fing der Müller an sich zu beruhigen.

Der Knabe wuchs zum Jüngling heran und kam bei einem Jäger in die Lehre. Als er ausgelernt hatte und ein tüchtiger Jäger geworden war, nahm ihn der Herr des Dorfes in seine Dienste. In dem Dorf war ein schönes und treues Mädchen, das gefiel dem Jäger, und als sein Herr das bemerkte, schenkte er ihm ein kleines Haus; die beiden hielten Hochzeit, lebten ruhig und glücklich und liebten sich von Herzen.

Einstmals verfolgte der Jäger ein Reh. Als das Tier aus dem Wald in das freie Feld ausbog, setzte er ihm nach und streckte es endlich mit einem Schuß nieder. Er bemerkte nicht, daß er sich in der Nähe des gefährlichen Weihers befand, und ging, nachdem er das Tier ausgeweidet hatte, zu dem Wasser, um seine mit Blut befleckten Hände zu waschen. Kaum aber hatte er sie hineingetaucht, als die Nixe emporstieg, lachend mit ihren nassen Armen ihn umschlang und so schnell hinabzog, daß die Wellen über ihm zusammenschlugen.

Als es Abend war und der Jäger nicht nach Haus kam, so geriet seine Frau in Angst. Sie ging aus, ihn zu suchen, und da er ihr oft erzählt hatte, daß er sich vor den Nachstellungen der Nixe in acht nehmen müßte und nicht in die Nähe des Weihers sich wagen dürfte, so ahnte sie schon, was geschehen war. Sie eilte zu dem Wasser, und als sie am Ufer seine Jägertasche liegen fand, da konnte sie nicht länger an dem Unglück zweifeln. Wehklagend und händeringend rief sie ihren Liebsten mit Namen, aber vergeblich: sie eilte hinüber auf die andere Seite des Weihers, und rief ihn aufs neue: sie schalt die Nixe mit harten Worten, aber keine Antwort erfolgte. Der Spiegel des Wassers blieb ruhig, nur das halbe Gesicht des Mondes blickte unbeweglich zu ihr herauf.

Die arme Frau verließ den Teich nicht. Mit schnellen Schritten, ohne Rast und Ruhe, umkreiste sie ihn immer von neuem, manchmal still, manchmal einen heftigen Schrei ausstoßend, manchmal in leisem Wimmern. Endlich waren ihre Kräfte zu Ende: sie sank zur Erde nieder und verfiel in einen tiefen Schlaf. Bald überkam sie ein Traum.

Sie stieg zwischen großen Felsblöcken angstvoll aufwärts; Dornen und Ranken hakten sich an ihre Füße, der Regen schlug ihr ins Gesicht und der Wind zauste ihr langes Haar. Als sie die Anhöhe erreicht hatte, bot sich ein ganz anderer Anblick dar. Der Himmel war blau, die Luft mild, der Boden senkte sich sanft hinab und auf einer grünen, bunt beblümten Wiese stand eine reinliche Hütte. Sie ging darauf zu und öffnete die Türe, da saß eine Alte mit weißen Haaren, die ihr freundlich winkte. In dem Augenblick erwachte die arme Frau. Der Tag war schon angebrochen, und sie entschloß sich gleich, dem Traume Folge zu leisten. Sie stieg mühsam den Berg hinauf, und es war alles so, wie sie es in der Nacht gesehen hatte. Die Alte empfing sie freundlich und zeigte ihr einen Stuhl, auf den sie sich setzen sollte. »Du mußt ein Unglück erlebt haben,« sagte sie, »weil du meine einsame Hütte aufsuchst.« Die Frau erzählte ihr unter Tränen, was ihr begegnet war. »Tröste dich,« sagte die Alte, »ich will dir helfen: da hast du einen goldenen Kamm. Harre, bis der Vollmond aufgestiegen ist, dann geh zu dem Weiher, setze dich am Rand nieder und strähle dein langes schwarzes Haar mit diesem Kamm. Wenn du aber fertig bist, so lege ihn am Ufer nieder, und du wirst sehen, was geschieht.«

Die Frau kehrte zurück, aber die Zeit bis zum Vollmond verstrich ihr langsam. Endlich erschien die leuchtende Scheibe am Himmel, da ging sie hinaus an den Weiher, setzte sich nieder und kämmte ihre langen schwarzen Haare mit dem goldenen Kamm, und als sie fertig war, legte sie ihn an den Rand des Wassers nieder. Nicht lange, so brauste es aus der Tiefe, eine Welle erhob sich, rollte an das Ufer und führte den Kamm mit sich fort. Es dauerte nicht länger, als der Kamm nötig hatte, auf den Grund zu sinken, so teilte sich der Wasserspiegel, und der Kopf des Jägers stieg in die Höhe. Er sprach nicht, schaute aber seine Frau mit traurigen Blicken an. In demselben Augenblick kam eine zweite Welle herangerauscht und bedeckte das Haupt des Mannes. Alles war verschwunden, der Weiher lag so ruhig wie zuvor, und nur das Gesicht des Vollmondes glänzte darauf.

Trostlos kehrte die Frau zurück, doch der Traum zeigte ihr die Hütte der Alten. Abermals machte sie sich am nächsten Morgen auf den Weg und klagte der weisen Frau ihr Leid. Die Alte gab ihr eine goldene Flöte und sprach »harre, bis der Vollmond wiederkommt, dann nimm diese Flöte, setze dich an das Ufer, blas ein schönes Lied darauf, und wenn du damit fertig bist, so lege sie auf den Sand; du wirst sehen, was geschieht.«

Die Frau tat, wie die Alte gesagt hatte. Kaum lag die Flöte auf dem Sand, so brauste es aus der Tiefe: eine Welle erhob sich, zog heran, und führte die Flöte mit sich fort. Bald darauf teilte sich das Wasser, und nicht bloß der Kopf, auch der Mann bis zur Hälfte des Leibes stieg hervor. Er breitete voll Verlangen seine Arme nach ihr aus, aber eine zweite Welle rauschte heran, bedeckte ihn und zog ihn wieder hinab.

»Ach, was hilft es mir,« sagte die Unglückliche, »daß ich meinen Liebsten nur erblicke, um ihn wieder zu verlieren.« Der Gram erfüllte aufs neue ihr Herz, aber der Traum führte sie zum drittenmal in das Haus der Alten. Sie machte sich auf den Weg, und die weise Frau gab ihr ein goldenes Spinnrad, tröstete sie und sprach »es ist noch nicht alles vollbracht, harre bis der Vollmond kommt, dann nimm das Spinnrad, setze dich an das Ufer und spinn die Spule voll, und wenn du fertig bist, so stelle das Spinnrad nahe an das Wasser, und du wirst sehen, was geschieht.«

Die Frau befolgte alles genau. Sobald der Vollmond sich zeigte, trug sie das goldene Spinnrad an das Ufer und spann emsig, bis der Flachs zu Ende und die Spule mit dem Faden ganz angefüllt war. Kaum aber stand das Rad am Ufer, so brauste es noch heftiger als sonst in der Tiefe des Wassers, eine mächtige Welle eilte herbei und trug das Rad mit sich fort. Alsbald stieg mit einem Wasserstrahl der Kopf und der ganze Leib des Mannes in die Höhe. Schnell sprang er ans Ufer, faßte seine Frau an der Hand und entfloh. Aber kaum hatten sie sich eine kleine Strecke entfernt, so erhob sich mit entsetzlichem Brausen der ganze Weiher und strömte mit reißender Gewalt in das weite Feld hinein. Schon sahen die Fliehenden ihren Tod vor Augen, da rief die Frau in ihrer Angst die Hilfe der Alten an, und in dem Augenblick waren sie verwandelt, sie in eine Kröte, er in einen Frosch. Die Flut, die sie erreicht hatte, konnte sie nicht töten, aber sie riß sie beide voneinander und führte sie weit weg.

Als das Wasser sich verlaufen hatte und beide wieder den trocknen Boden berührten, so kam ihre menschliche Gestalt zurück. Aber keiner wußte, wo das andere geblieben war; sie befanden sich unter fremden Menschen, die ihre Heimat nicht kannten. Hohe Berge und tiefe Täler lagen zwischen ihnen. Um sich das Leben zu erhalten, mußten beide die Schafe hüten. Sie trieben lange Jahre ihre Herden durch Feld und Wald und waren voll Trauer und Sehnsucht.

Als wieder einmal der Frühling aus der Erde hervorgebrochen war, zogen beide an einem Tag mit ihren Herden aus, und der Zufall wollte, daß sie einander entgegenzogen. Er erblickte an einem fernen Bergesabhang eine Herde und trieb seine Schafe nach der Gegend hin. Sie kamen in einem Tal zusammen, aber sie erkannten sich nicht, doch freuten sie sich, daß sie nicht mehr so einsam waren. Von nun an trieben sie jeden Tag ihre Herde nebeneinander: sie sprachen nicht viel, aber sie fühlten sich getröstet. Eines Abends, als der Vollmond am Himmel schien und die Schafe schon ruhten, holte der Schäfer die Flöte aus seiner Tasche und blies ein schönes, aber trauriges Lied. Als er fertig war, bemerkte er, daß die Schäferin bitterlich weinte. »Warum weinst du?« fragte er. »Ach,« antwortete sie, »so schien auch der Vollmond, als ich zum letztenmal dieses Lied auf der Flöte blies und das Haupt meines Liebsten aus dem Wasser hervorkam.« Er sah sie an, und es war ihm, als fiele eine Decke von den Augen, er erkannte seine liebste Frau: und als sie ihn anschaute und der Mond auf sein Gesicht schien, erkannte sie ihn auch. Sie umarmten und küßten sich, und ob sie glückselig waren, braucht keiner zu fragen.

182. Die Geschenke des kleinen Volkes.

Ein Schneider und ein Goldschmied wanderten zusammen und vernahmen eines Abends, als die Sonne hinter die Berge gesunken war, den Klang einer fernen Musik, die immer deutlicher ward; sie tönte ungewöhnlich, aber so anmutig, daß sie aller Müdigkeit vergaßen und rasch weiterschritten. Der Mond war schon aufgestiegen, als sie zu einem Hügel gelangten, auf dem sie eine Menge kleiner Männer und Frauen erblickten, die sich bei den Händen gefaßt hatten und mit größter Lust und Freudigkeit im Tanze herumwirbelten: sie sangen dazu auf das lieblichste; und das war die Musik, die die Wanderer gehört hatten. In der Mitte saß ein Alter, der etwas größer war als die übrigen, der einen buntfarbigen Rock trug, und dem ein eisgrauer Bart über die Brust herabhing. Die beiden blieben voll Verwunderung stehen und sahen dem Tanz zu. Der Alte winkte, sie sollten eintreten, und das kleine Volk öffnete bereitwillig seinen Kreis. Der Goldschmied, der einen Höcker hatte und wie alle Buckeligen keck genug war, trat herzu: der Schneider empfand zuerst einige Scheu und hielt sich zurück, doch als er sah, wie es so lustig herging, faßte er sich ein Herz und kam nach. Alsbald schloß sich der Kreis wieder und die Kleinen sangen und tanzten in den wildesten Sprüngen weiter, der Alte aber nahm ein breites Messer, das an seinem Gürtel hing, wetzte es, und als es hinlänglich geschärft war, blickte er sich nach den Fremdlingen um. Es ward ihnen angst, aber sie hatten nicht lange Zeit, sich zu besinnen, der Alte packte den Goldschmied und schor in der größten Geschwindigkeit ihm Haupthaar und Bart glatt hinweg; ein gleiches geschah hierauf dem Schneider. Doch ihre Angst verschwand, als der Alte nach vollbrachter Arbeit beiden freundlich auf die Schulter klopfte, als wollte er sagen, sie hätten es gut gemacht, daß sie ohne Sträuben alles willig hätten geschehen lassen. Er zeigte mit dem Finger auf einen Haufen Kohlen, der zur Seite lag, und deutete ihnen durch Gebärden an, daß sie ihre Taschen damit füllen sollten. Beide gehorchten, obgleich sie nicht wußten, wozu ihnen die Kohlen dienen sollten, und gingen dann weiter, um ein Nachtlager zu suchen. Als sie ins Tal gekommen waren, schlug die Glocke des benachbarten Klosters zwölf Uhr: augenblicklich verstummte der Gesang, alles war verschwunden und der Hügel lag in einsamem Mondschein.

Die beiden Wanderer fanden eine Herberge und deckten sich auf dem Strohlager mit ihren Röcken zu, vergaßen aber wegen ihrer Müdigkeit, die Kohlen zuvor herauszunehmen. Ein schwerer Druck auf ihren Gliedern weckte sie früher als gewöhnlich. Sie griffen in die Taschen und wollten ihren Augen nicht trauen, als sie sahen, daß sie nicht mit Kohlen, sondern mit reinem Gold angefüllt waren; auch Haupthaar und Bart waren glücklich wieder in aller Fülle vorhanden. Sie waren nun reiche Leute geworden, doch besaß der Goldschmied, der seiner habgierigen Natur gemäß die Taschen besser gefüllt hatte, noch einmal soviel als der Schneider. Ein Habgieriger, wenn er viel hat, verlangt noch mehr, der Goldschmied machte dem Schneider den Vorschlag, noch einen Tag zu verweilen, am Abend wieder hinauszugehen, um sich bei dem Alten auf dem Berge noch größere Schätze zu holen. Der Schneider wollte nicht und sagte »ich habe genug und bin zufrieden: jetzt werde ich Meister, heirate meinen angenehmen Gegenstand (wie er seine Liebste nannte) und bin ein glücklicher Mann.« Doch wollte er, ihm zu Gefallen, den Tag noch bleiben. Abends hing der Goldschmied noch ein paar Taschen über die Schulter, um recht einsacken zu können, und machte sich auf den Weg zu dem Hügel. Er fand, wie in der vorigen Nacht, das kleine Volk bei Gesang und Tanz, der Alte schor ihn abermals glatt und deutete ihm an, Kohlen mitzunehmen. Er zögerte nicht, einzustecken, was nur in seine Taschen gehen wollte, kehrte ganz glückselig heim und deckte sich mit dem Rock zu. »Wenn das Gold auch drückt,« sprach er, »ich will das schon ertragen,« und schlief endlich mit dem süßen Vorgefühl ein, morgen als steinreicher Mann zu erwachen. Als er die Augen öffnete, erhob er sich schnell, um die Taschen zu untersuchen, aber wie erstaunte er, als er nichts herauszog als schwarze Kohlen, er mochte so oft hineingreifen, als er wollte. »Noch bleibt mir das Gold, das ich die Nacht vorher gewonnen habe,« dachte er und holte es herbei, aber wie erschrak er, als er sah, daß es ebenfalls wieder zu Kohle geworden war. Er schlug sich mit der schwarzbestäubten Hand an die Stirne, da fühlte er, daß der ganze Kopf kahl und glatt war wie der Bart. Aber sein Mißgeschick war noch nicht zu Ende, er merkte erst jetzt, daß ihm zu dem Höcker auf dem Rücken noch ein zweiter ebenso großer vorn auf der Brust gewachsen war. Da erkannte er die Strafe seiner Habgier und begann laut zu weinen. Der gute Schneider, der davon aufgeweckt ward, tröstete den Unglücklichen, so gut es gehen wollte, und sprach »du bist mein Geselle auf der Wanderschaft gewesen, du sollst bei mir bleiben und mit von meinem Schatz zehren.« Er hielt Wort, aber der arme Goldschmied mußte sein Lebtag die beiden Höcker tragen und seinen kahlen Kopf mit einer Mütze bedecken.

183. Der Riese und der Schneider.

Einem Schneider, der ein großer Prahler war, aber ein schlechter Zahler, kam es in den Sinn, ein wenig auszugehen und sich in dem Wald umzuschauen. Sobald er nur konnte, verließ er seine Werkstatt,

wanderte seinen Weg
über Brücke und Steg,
bald da, bald dort,
immer fort und fort.

Als er nun draußen war, erblickte er in der blauen Ferne einen steilen Berg und dahinter einen himmelhohen Turm, der aus einem wilden und finstern Wald hervorragte. »Potz Blitz!« rief der Schneider, »was ist das?« und weil ihn die Neugierde gewaltig stach, so ging er frisch drauf los. Was sperrte er aber Maul und Augen auf, als er in die Nähe kam, denn der Turm hatte Beine, sprang in einem Satz über den steilen Berg und stand als ein großmächtiger Riese vor dem Schneider. »Was willst du hier, du winziges Fliegenbein,« rief der mit einer Stimme, als wenns von allen Seiten donnerte. Der Schneider wisperte »ich will mich umschauen, ob ich mein Stückchen Brot in dem Wald verdienen kann.« »Wenns um die Zeit ist,« sagte der Riese, »so kannst du ja bei mir im Dienst eintreten.« »Wenns sein muß, warum das nicht? was krieg ich aber für einen Lohn?« »Was du für einen Lohn kriegst?« sagte der Riese, »das sollst du hören. Jährlich dreihundertfünfundsechzig Tage, und wenns ein Schaltjahr ist, noch einen obendrein. Ist dir das recht?« »Meinetwegen,« antwortete der Schneider und dachte in seinem Sinn »man muß sich strecken nach seiner Decke. Ich such mich bald wieder loszumachen.« Darauf sprach der Riese zu ihm »geh, kleiner Halunke, und hol mir einen Krug Wasser.« »Warum nicht lieber gleich den Brunnen mitsamt der Quelle?« fragte der Prahlhans und ging mit dem Krug zum Wasser. »Was? den Brunnen mitsamt der Quelle?« brummte der Riese, der ein bißchen tölpisch und albern war, in den Bart hinein und fing an sich zu fürchten, »der Kerl kann mehr als Äpfel braten: der hat einen Alraun im Leib. Sei auf deiner Hut, alter Hans, das ist kein Diener für dich.« Als der Schneider das Wasser gebracht hatte, befahl ihm der Riese, in dem Wald ein paar Scheite Holz zu hauen und heim zu tragen. »Warum nicht lieber den ganzen Wald mit einem Streich,

den ganzen Wald
mit jung und alt,
mit allem, was er hat,
knorzig und glatt?«

fragte das Schneiderlein, und ging das Holz hauen. »Was?

den ganzen Wald
mit jung und alt,
mit allem, was er hat,
knorzig und glatt?

und den Brunnen mitsamt der Quelle?« brummte der leichtgläubige Riese in den Bart und fürchtete sich noch mehr, »der Kerl kann mehr als Äpfel braten, der hat einen Alraun im Leib. Sei auf deiner Hut, alter Hans, das ist kein Diener für dich.« Wie der Schneider das Holz gebracht hatte, befahl ihm der Riese, zwei oder drei wilde Schweine zum Abendessen zu schießen. »Warum nicht lieber gleich tausend auf einen Schuß, und die alle hierher?« fragte der hoffärtige Schneider. »Was?« rief der Hasenfuß von einem Riesen und war heftig erschrocken, »laß es nur für heute gut sein und lege dich schlafen.«

Der Riese fürchtete sich so gewaltig, daß er die ganze Nacht kein Auge zutun konnte und hin- und herdachte, wie ers anfangen sollte, um sich den verwünschten Hexenmeister von Diener je eher je lieber vom Hals zu schaffen. Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat. Am andern Morgen gingen der Riese und der Schneider zu einem Sumpf, um den ringsherum eine Menge Weidenbäume standen. Da sprach der Riese »hör einmal, Schneider, setz dich auf eine von den Weidenruten, ich möchte um mein Leben gern sehen, ob du imstand bist, sie herabzubiegen.« Husch, saß das Schneiderlein oben, hielt den Atem ein und machte sich schwer, so schwer, daß sich die Gerte niederbog. Als er aber wieder Atem schöpfen mußte, da schnellte sie ihn, weil er zum Unglück kein Bügeleisen in die Tasche gesteckt hatte, zu großer Freude des Riesen so weit in die Höhe, daß man ihn gar nicht mehr sehen konnte. Wenn er nicht wieder heruntergefallen ist, so wird er wohl noch oben in der Luft herumschweben.

184. Der Nagel.

Ein Kaufmann hatte auf der Messe gute Geschäfte gemacht, alle Waren verkauft und seine Geldkatze mit Gold und Silber gespickt. Er wollte jetzt heimreisen und vor Einbruch der Nacht zu Haus sein. Er packte also den Mantelsack mit dem Geld auf sein Pferd und ritt fort. Zu Mittag rastete er in einer Stadt: als er weiter wollte, führte ihm der Hausknecht das Roß vor, sprach aber »Herr, am linken Hinterfuß fehlt im Hufeisen ein Nagel.« »Laß ihn fehlen,« erwiderte der Kaufmann, »die sechs Stunden, die ich noch zu machen habe, wird das Eisen wohl festhalten. Ich habe Eile.« Nachmittags, als er wieder abgestiegen war und dem Roß Brot geben ließ, kam der Knecht in die Stube und sagte »Herr, Eurem Pferd fehlt am linken Hinterfuß ein Hufeisen. Soll ichs zum Schmied führen?« »Laß es fehlen,« erwiderte der Herr, »die paar Stunden, die noch übrig sind, wird das Pferd wohl aushalten. Ich habe Eile.« Er ritt fort, aber nicht lange, so fing das Pferd zu hinken an. Es hinkte nicht lange, so fing es an zu stolpern, und es stolperte nicht lange, so fiel es nieder und brach ein Bein. Der Kaufmann mußte das Pferd liegen lassen, den Mantelsack abschnallen, auf die Schulter nehmen und zu Fuß nach Haus gehen, wo er erst spät in der Nacht anlangte. »An allem Unglück,« sprach er zu sich selbst, »ist der verwünschte Nagel schuld.«

Eile mit Weile.

185. Der arme Junge im Grab.

Es war einmal ein armer Hirtenjunge, dem war Vater und Mutter gestorben, und er war von der Obrigkeit einem reichen Mann in das Haus gegeben, der sollte ihn ernähren und erziehen. Der Mann aber und seine Frau hatten ein böses Herz, waren bei allem Reichtum geizig und mißgünstig, und ärgerten sich, wenn jemand einen Bissen von ihrem Brot in den Mund steckte. Der arme Junge mochte tun, was er wollte, er erhielt wenig zu essen, aber desto mehr Schläge.

Eines Tages sollte er die Glucke mit ihren Küchlein hüten. Sie verlief sich aber mit ihren Jungen durch einen Heckenzaun: gleich schoß der Habicht herab und entführte sie durch die Lüfte. Der Junge schrie aus Leibeskräften »Dieb, Dieb, Spitzbub.« Aber was half das? der Habicht brachte seinen Raub nicht wieder zurück. Der Mann hörte den Lärm, lief herbei, und als er vernahm, daß seine Henne weg war, so geriet er in Wut und gab dem Jungen eine solche Tracht Schläge, daß er sich ein paar Tage lang nicht regen konnte. Nun mußte er die Küchlein ohne die Henne hüten, aber da war die Not noch größer, das eine lief dahin, das andere dorthin. Da meinte er es klug zu machen, wenn er sie alle zusammen an eine Schnur bände, weil ihm dann der Habicht keins wegstehlen könnte. Aber weit gefehlt. Nach ein paar Tagen, als er von dem Herumlaufen und vom Hunger ermüdet einschlief, kam der Raubvogel und packte eins von den Küchlein, und da die andern daran festhingen, so trug er sie alle mit fort, setzte sich auf einen Baum und schluckte sie hinunter. Der Bauer kam eben nach Haus, und als er das Unglück sah, erboste er sich und schlug den Jungen so unbarmherzig, daß er mehrere Tage im Bette liegen mußte.

Als er wieder auf den Beinen war, sprach der Bauer zu ihm »du bist mir zu dumm, ich kann dich zum Hüter nicht brauchen, du sollst als Bote gehen.« Da schickte er ihn zum Richter, dem er einen Korb voll Trauben bringen sollte, und gab ihm noch einen Brief mit. Unterwegs plagte Hunger und Durst den armen Jungen so heftig, daß er zwei von den Trauben aß. Er brachte dem Richter den Korb, als dieser aber den Brief gelesen und die Trauben gezählt hatte, so sagte er »es fehlen zwei Stück.« Der Junge gestand ganz ehrlich, daß er, von Hunger und Durst getrieben, die fehlenden verzehrt habe. Der Richter schrieb einen Brief an den Bauer und verlangte noch einmal soviel Trauben. Auch diese mußte der Junge mit einem Brief hintragen. Als ihn wieder so gewaltig hungerte und durstete, so konnte er sich nicht anders helfen, er verzehrte abermals zwei Trauben. Doch nahm er vorher den Brief aus dem Korb, legte ihn unter einen Stein und setzte sich darauf, damit der Brief nicht zusehen und ihn verraten könnte. Der Richter aber stellte ihn doch der fehlenden Stücke wegen zur Rede. »Ach,« sagte der Junge, »wie habt Ihr das erfahren? der Brief konnte es nicht wissen, denn ich hatte ihn zuvor unter einen Stein gelegt.« Der Richter mußte über die Einfalt lachen, und schickte dem Mann einen Brief, worin er ihn ermahnte, den armen Jungen besser zu halten und es ihm an Speis und Trank nicht fehlen zu lassen; auch möchte er ihn lehren, was recht und unrecht sei.

»Ich will dir den Unterschied schon zeigen,« sagte der harte Mann; »willst du aber essen, so mußt du auch arbeiten, und tust du etwas Unrechtes, so sollst du durch Schläge hinlänglich belehrt werden.« Am folgenden Tag stellte er ihn an eine schwere Arbeit. Er sollte ein paar Bund Stroh zum Futter für die Pferde schneiden; dabei drohte der Mann: »in fünf Stunden,« sprach er, »bin ich wieder zurück, wenn dann das Stroh nicht zu Häcksel geschnitten ist, so schlage ich dich so lange, bis du kein Glied mehr regen kannst.« Der Bauer ging mit seiner Frau, dem Knecht und der Magd auf den Jahrmarkt und ließ dem Jungen nichts zurück als ein kleines Stück Brot. Der Junge stellte sich an den Strohstuhl und fing an, aus allen Leibeskräften zu arbeiten. Da ihm dabei heiß ward, so zog er sein Röcklein aus und warfs auf das Stroh. In der Angst, nicht fertig zu werden, schnitt er immerzu, und in seinem Eifer zerschnitt er unvermerkt mit dem Stroh auch sein Röcklein. Zu spät ward er das Unglück gewahr, das sich nicht wieder gutmachen ließ. »Ach,« rief er, »jetzt ist es aus mit mir. Der böse Mann hat mir nicht umsonst gedroht, kommt er zurück und sieht, was ich getan habe, so schlägt er mich tot. Lieber will ich mir selbst das Leben nehmen.«

Der Junge hatte einmal gehört, wie die Bäuerin sprach »unter dem Bett habe ich einen Topf mit Gift stehen.« Sie hatte es aber nur gesagt, um die Näscher zurückzuhalten, denn es war Honig darin. Der Junge kroch unter das Bett, holte den Topf hervor und aß ihn ganz aus. »Ich weiß nicht,« sprach er, »die Leute sagen, der Tod sei bitter, mir schmeckt er süß. Kein Wunder, daß die Bäuerin sich so oft den Tod wünscht.« Er setzte sich auf ein Stühlchen und war gefaßt zu sterben. Aber statt daß er schwächer werden sollte, fühlte er sich von der nahrhaften Speise gestärkt. »Es muß kein Gift gewesen sein,« sagte er, »aber der Bauer hat einmal gesagt, in seinem Kleiderkasten läge ein Fläschchen mit Fliegengift, das wird wohl das wahre Gift sein und mir den Tod bringen.« Es war aber kein Fliegengift, sondern Ungarwein. Der Junge holte die Flasche heraus und trank sie aus. »Auch dieser Tod schmeckt süß,« sagte er, doch als bald hernach der Wein anfing ihm ins Gehirn zu steigen und ihn zu betäuben, so meinte er, sein Ende nahte sich heran. »Ich fühle, daß ich sterben muß,« sprach er, »ich will hinaus auf den Kirchhof gehen und ein Grab suchen.« Er taumelte fort, erreichte den Kirchhof und legte sich in ein frisch geöffnetes Grab. Die Sinne verschwanden ihm immer mehr. In der Nähe stand ein Wirtshaus, wo eine Hochzeit gefeiert wurde: als er die Musik hörte, deuchte er sich schon im Paradies zu sein, bis er endlich alle Besinnung verlor. Der arme Junge erwachte nicht wieder, die Glut des heißen Weines und der kalte Tau der Nacht nahmen ihm das Leben, und er verblieb in dem Grab, in das er sich selbst gelegt hatte.

Als der Bauer die Nachricht von dem Tod des Jungen erhielt, erschrak er und fürchtete, vor das Gericht geführt zu werden: ja die Angst faßte ihn so gewaltig, daß er ohnmächtig zur Erde sank. Die Frau, die mit einer Pfanne voll Schmalz am Herde stand, lief herzu, um ihm Beistand zu leisten. Aber das Feuer schlug in die Pfanne, ergriff das ganze Haus, und nach wenigen

Stunden lag es schon in Asche. Die Jahre, die sie noch zu leben hatten, brachten sie, von Gewissensbissen geplagt, in Armut und Elend zu.

186. Die wahre Braut.

Es war einmal ein Mädchen, das war jung und schön, aber seine Mutter war ihm früh gestorben, und die Stiefmutter tat ihm alles gebrannte Herzeleid an. Wenn sie ihm eine Arbeit auftrug, sie mochte noch so schwer sein, so ging es unverdrossen daran und tat, was in seinen Kräften stand. Aber es konnte damit das Herz der bösen Frau nicht rühren, immer war sie unzufrieden, immer war es nicht genug. Je fleißiger es arbeitete, je mehr ward ihm aufgelegt, und sie hatte keinen andern Gedanken, als wie sie ihm eine immer größere Last aufbürden und das Leben recht sauer machen wollte.

Eines Tages sagte sie zu ihm »da hast du zwölf Pfund Federn, die sollst du abschleißen, und wenn du nicht heute abend damit fertig bist, so wartet eine Tracht Schläge auf dich. Meinst du, du könntest den ganzen Tag faulenzen?« Das arme Mädchen setzte sich zu der Arbeit nieder, aber die Tränen flossen ihm dabei über die Wangen herab, denn es sah wohl, daß es unmöglich war, mit der Arbeit in einem Tage zu Ende zu kommen. Wenn es ein Häufchen Federn vor sich liegen hatte und es seufzte oder schlug in seiner Angst die Hände zusammen, so stoben sie auseinander, und es mußte sie wieder auflesen und von neuem anfangen. Da stützte es einmal die Ellbogen auf den Tisch, legte sein Gesicht in beide Hände und rief »ist denn niemand auf Gottes Erdboden, der sich meiner erbarmt?« Indem hörte es eine sanfte Stimme, die sprach »tröste dich, mein Kind, ich bin gekommen, dir zu helfen.« Das Mädchen blickte auf und eine alte Frau stand neben ihm. Sie faßte das Mädchen freundlich an der Hand und sprach »vertraue mir nur an, was dich drückt.« Da sie so herzlich sprach, so erzählte ihr das Mädchen von seinem traurigen Leben, daß ihm eine Last auf die andere gelegt würde und es mit den aufgegebenen Arbeiten nicht mehr zu Ende kommen könnte. »Wenn ich mit diesen Federn heute abend nicht fertig bin, so schlägt mich die Stiefmutter; sie hat mirs angedroht, und ich weiß, sie hält Wort.« Ihre Tränen fingen wieder an zu fließen, aber die gute Alte sprach »sei unbesorgt, mein Kind, ruhe dich aus, ich will derweil deine Arbeit verrichten.« Das Mädchen legte sich auf sein Bett und schlief bald ein. Die Alte setzte sich an den Tisch bei die Federn, hu! wie flogen sie von den Kielen ab, die sie mit ihren dürren Händen kaum berührte. Bald war sie mit den zwölf Pfund fertig. Als das Mädchen erwachte, lagen große schneeweiße Haufen aufgetürmt, und alles war im Zimmer reinlich aufgeräumt, aber die Alte war verschwunden. Das Mädchen dankte Gott und saß still, bis der Abend kam. Da trat die Stiefmutter herein und staunte über die vollbrachte Arbeit. »Siehst du, Trulle,« sprach sie, »was man ausrichtet, wenn man fleißig ist? hättest du nicht noch etwas anderes vornehmen können? aber da sitzest du und legst die Hände in den Schoß.« Als sie hinausging, sprach sie, »die Kreatur kann mehr als Brot essen, ich muß ihr schwerere Arbeit auflegen.«

Am andern Morgen rief sie das Mädchen und sprach »da hast du einen Löffel, damit schöpfe mir den großen Teich aus, der bei dem Garten liegt. Und wenn du damit abends nicht zu Rand gekommen bist, so weißt du, was erfolgt.« Das Mädchen nahm den Löffel und sah, daß er durchlöchert war, und wenn er es auch nicht gewesen wäre, es hätte nimmermehr damit den Teich ausgeschöpft. Es machte sich gleich an die Arbeit, kniete am Wasser, in das seine Tränen fielen, und schöpfte. Aber die gute Alte erschien wieder, und als sie die Ursache von seinem Kummer erfuhr, sprach sie »sei getrost, mein Kind, geh in das Gebüsch und lege dich schlafen, ich will deine Arbeit schon tun.« Als die Alte allein war, berührte sie nur den Teich: wie ein Dunst stieg das Wasser in die Höhe und vermischte sich mit den Wolken. Allmählich ward der Teich leer, und als das Mädchen vor Sonnenuntergang erwachte und herbeikam, so sah es nur noch die Fische, die in dem Schlamm zappelten. Es ging zu der Stiefmutter und zeigte ihr an, daß die Arbeit vollbracht wäre. »Du hättest längst fertig sein sollen,« sagte sie und ward blaß vor Ärger, aber sie sann etwas Neues aus.

Am dritten Morgen sprach sie zu dem Mädchen »dort in der Ebene mußt du mir ein schönes Schloß bauen, und zum Abend muß es fertig sein.« Das Mädchen erschrak und sagte »wie kann ich ein so großes Werk vollbringen?« »Ich dulde keinen Widerspruch,« schrie die Stiefmutter, »kannst du mit einem durchlöcherten Löffel einen Teich ausschöpfen, so kannst du auch ein Schloß bauen. Noch heute will ich es beziehen, und wenn etwas fehlt, sei es das Geringste in Küche oder Keller, so weißt du, was dir bevorsteht.« Sie trieb das Mädchen fort, und als es in das Tal kam, so lagen da die Felsen übereinander aufgetürmt; mit aller seiner Kraft konnte es den kleinsten nicht einmal bewegen. Es setzte sich nieder und weinte, doch hoffte es auf den Beistand der guten Alten. Sie ließ auch nicht lange auf sich warten, kam und sprach ihm Trost ein »lege dich nur dort in den Schatten und schlaf, ich will dir das Schloß schon bauen. Wenn es dir Freude macht, so kannst du selbst darin wohnen.« Als das Mädchen weggegangen war, rührte die Alte die grauen Felsen an. Alsbald regten sie sich, rückten zusammen und standen da, als hätten Riesen die Mauer gebaut: darauf erhob sich das Gebäude, und es war, als ob unzählige Hände unsichtbar arbeiteten und Stein auf Stein legten. Der Boden dröhnte, große Säulen stiegen von selbst in die Höhe und stellten sich nebeneinander in Ordnung. Auf dem Dach legten sich die Ziegeln zurecht, und als es Mittag war, drehte sich schon die große Wetterfahne wie eine goldene Jungfrau mit fliegendem Gewand auf der Spitze des Turms. Das Innere des Schlosses war bis zum Abend vollendet. Wie es die Alte anfing, weiß ich nicht, aber die Wände der Zimmer waren mit Seide und Sammet bezogen, buntgestickte Stühle standen da und reichverzierte Armsessel an Tischen von Marmor, kristallne Kronleuchter hingen von der Bühne herab und spiegelten sich in dem glatten Boden: grüne Papageien saßen in goldenen Käfigen und fremde Vögel, die lieblich sangen: überall war eine Pracht, als wenn ein König da einziehen sollte. Die Sonne wollte eben untergehen, als das Mädchen erwachte und ihm der Glanz von tausend Lichtern entgegenleuchtete. Mit schnellen Schritten kam es heran und trat durch das geöffnete Tor in das Schloß. Die Treppe war mit rotem Tuch belegt und das goldene Geländer mit blühenden Bäumen besetzt. Als es die Pracht der Zimmer erblickte, blieb es wie erstarrt stehen. Wer weiß, wie lang es so gestanden hätte, wenn ihm nicht der Gedanke an die Stiefmutter gekommen wäre. »Ach,« sprach es zu sich selbst, »wenn sie doch endlich zufriedengestellt wäre und mir das Leben nicht länger zur Qual machen wollte.« Das Mädchen ging und zeigte ihr an, daß das Schloß fertig wäre. »Gleich will ich einziehen,« sagte sie und erhob sich von ihrem Sitz. Als sie in das Schloß eintrat, mußte sie die Hand vor die Augen halten, so blendete sie der Glanz. »Siehst du,« sagte sie zu dem Mädchen, »wie leicht dirs geworden ist, ich hätte dir etwas Schwereres aufgeben sollen.« Sie ging durch alle Zimmer und spürte in allen Ecken, ob etwas fehlte oder mangelhaft wäre, aber sie konnte nichts auffinden. »Jetzt wollen wir hinabsteigen,« sprach sie und sah das Mädchen mit boshaften Blicken an, »Küche und Keller muß noch untersucht werden, und hast du etwas vergessen, so sollst du deiner Strafe nicht entgehen.« Aber das Feuer brannte auf dem Herd, in den Töpfen kochten die Speisen, Kluft und Schippe waren angelehnt, und an den Wänden das blanke Geschirr von Messing aufgestellt. Nichts fehlte, selbst nicht der Kohlenkasten und die Wassereimer. »Wo ist der Eingang zum Keller?« rief sie, »wo der nicht mit Weinfässern reichlich angefüllt ist, so wird dirs schlimm ergehen.« Sie hob selbst die Falltüre auf und stieg die Treppe hinab, aber kaum hatte sie zwei Schritte getan, so stürzte die schwere Falltüre, die nur angelehnt war, nieder. Das Mädchen hörte einen Schrei, hob die Türe schnell auf, um ihr zu Hilfe zu kommen, aber sie war hinabgestürzt, und es fand sie entseelt auf dem Boden liegen.

Nun gehörte das prächtige Schloß dem Mädchen ganz allein. Es wußte sich in der ersten Zeit gar nicht in seinem Glück zu finden, schöne Kleider hingen in den Schränken, die Truhen waren mit Gold und Silber oder mit Perlen und Edelsteinen angefüllt, und es hatte keinen Wunsch, den es nicht erfüllen konnte. Bald ging der Ruf von der Schönheit und dem Reichtum des Mädchens durch die ganze Welt. Alle Tage meldeten sich Freier, aber keiner gefiel ihr. Endlich kam auch der Sohn eines Königs, der ihr Herz zu rühren wußte, und sie verlobte sich mit ihm. In dem Schloßgarten stand eine grüne Linde, darunter saßen sie eines Tages vertraulich zusammen, da sagte er zu ihr »ich will heimziehen und die Einwilligung meines Vaters zu unserer Vermählung holen; ich bitte dich, harre mein hier unter dieser Linde, in wenigen Stunden bin ich wieder zurück.« Das Mädchen küßte ihn auf den linken Backen und sprach »bleib mir treu, und laß dich von keiner andern auf diesen Backen küssen. Ich will hier unter der Linde warten, bis du wieder zurückkommst.«

Das Mädchen blieb unter der Linde sitzen, bis die Sonne unterging, aber er kam nicht wieder zurück. Sie saß drei Tage von Morgen bis Abend und erwartete ihn, aber vergeblich. Als er am vierten Tag noch nicht da war, so sagte sie »gewiß ist ihm ein Unglück begegnet, ich will ausgehen und ihn suchen und nicht eher wiederkommen, als bis ich ihn gefunden habe.« Sie packte drei von ihren schönsten Kleidern zusammen, eins mit glänzenden Sternen gestickt, das zweite mit silbernen Monden, das dritte mit goldenen Sonnen, band eine Handvoll Edelsteine in ihr Tuch und machte sich auf. Sie fragte allerorten nach ihrem Bräutigam, aber niemand hatte ihn gesehen, niemand wußte von ihm. Weit und breit wanderte sie durch die Welt, aber sie fand ihn nicht. Endlich vermietete sie sich bei einem Bauer als Hirtin, und vergrub ihre Kleider und Edelsteine unter einem Stein.

Nun lebte sie als eine Hirtin, hütete ihre Herde, war traurig und voll Sehnsucht nach ihrem Geliebten. Sie hatte ein Kälbchen, das gewöhnte sie an sich, fütterte es aus der Hand, und wenn sie sprach

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vergiß nicht deine Hirtin wieder,
wie der Königssohn die Braut vergaß,
die unter der grünen Linde saß,«

so kniete das Kälbchen nieder und ward von ihr gestreichelt.

Als sie ein paar Jahre einsam und kummervoll gelebt hatte, so verbreitete sich im Lande das Gerücht, daß die Tochter des Königs ihre Hochzeit feiern wollte. Der Weg nach der Stadt ging an dem Dorf vorbei, wo das Mädchen wohnte, und es trug sich zu, als sie einmal ihre Herde austrieb, daß der Bräutigam vorüberzog. Er saß stolz auf seinem Pferd und sah sie nicht an, aber als sie ihn ansah, so erkannte sie ihren Liebsten. Es war, als ob ihr ein scharfes Messer in das Herz schnitte. »Ach,« sagte sie, »ich glaubte, er wäre mir treu geblieben, aber er hat mich vergessen.«

Am andern Tag kam er wieder des Wegs. Als er in ihrer Nähe war, sprach sie zum Kälbchen

»Kälbchen, Kälbchen, knie nieder,
vergiß nicht deine Hirtin wieder,
wie der Königssohn die Braut vergaß,
die unter der grünen Linde saß.«

Als er die Stimme vernahm, blickte er herab und hielt sein Pferd an. Er schaute der Hirtin ins Gesicht, hielt dann die Hand vor die Augen, als wollte er sich auf etwas besinnen, aber schnell ritt er weiter und war bald verschwunden. »Ach,« sagte sie, »er kennt mich nicht mehr,« und ihre Trauer ward immer größer.

Bald darauf sollte an dem Hofe des Königs drei Tage lang ein großes Fest gefeiert werden, und das ganze Land ward dazu eingeladen. »Nun will ich das letzte versuchen,« dachte das Mädchen, und als der Abend kam, ging es zu dem Stein, unter dem es seine Schätze vergraben hatte. Sie holte das Kleid mit den goldnen Sonnen hervor, legte es an und schmückte sich mit den Edelsteinen. Ihre Haare, die sie unter einem Tuch verborgen hatte, band sie auf, und sie fielen in langen Locken an ihr herab. So ging sie nach der Stadt und ward in der Dunkelheit von niemand bemerkt. Als sie in den hell erleuchteten Saal trat, wichen alle voll Verwunderung zurück, aber niemand wußte, wer sie war. Der Königssohn ging ihr entgegen, doch er erkannte sie nicht. Er führte sie zum Tanz und war so entzückt über ihre Schönheit, daß er an die andere Braut gar nicht mehr dachte. Als das Fest vorüber war, verschwand sie im Gedränge und eilte vor Tagesanbruch in das Dorf, wo sie ihr Hirtenkleid wieder anlegte.

Am andern Abend nahm sie das Kleid mit den silbernen Monden heraus und steckte einen Halbmond von Edelsteinen in ihre Haare. Als sie auf dem Fest sich zeigte, wendeten sich alle Augen nach ihr, aber der Königssohn eilte ihr entgegen, und ganz voll Liebe erfüllt tanzte er mit ihr allein und blickte keine andere mehr an. Ehe sie wegging, mußte sie ihm versprechen, den letzten Abend nochmals zum Fest zu kommen. Als sie zum drittenmal erschien, hatte sie das Sternenkleid an, das bei jedem ihrer Schritte funkelte, und Haarband und Gürtel waren Sterne von Edelsteinen. Der Königssohn hatte schon lange auf sie gewartet und drängte sich zu ihr hin. »Sage mir nur, wer du bist,« sprach er, »mir ist, als wenn ich dich schon lange gekannt hätte.« »Weißt du nicht,« antwortete sie, »was ich tat, als du von mir schiedest?« Da trat sie zu ihm heran und küßte ihn auf den linken Backen: in dem Augenblick fiel es wie Schuppen von seinen Augen, und er erkannte die wahre Braut. »Komm,« sagte er zu ihr, »hier ist meines Bleibens nicht länger,« reichte ihr die Hand und führte sie hinab zu dem Wagen. Als wäre der Wind vorgespannt, so eilten die Pferde zu dem Wunderschloß. Schon von weitem glänzten die erleuchteten Fenster. Als sie bei der Linde vorbeifuhren, schwärmten unzählige Glühwürmer darin, sie schüttelte ihre Äste und sendete ihre Düfte herab. Auf der Treppe blühten die Blumen, aus dem Zimmer schallte der Gesang der fremden Vögel, aber in dem Saal stand der ganze Hof versammelt, und der Priester wartete, um den Bräutigam mit der wahren Braut zu vermählen.

187. Der Hase und der Igel.

Disse Geschichte is lögenhaft to vertellen, Jungens, aver wahr is se doch, denn mien Grootvader, von den ick se hew, plegg jümmer, wenn he se mie vortüerde (mit Behaglichkeit vortrug), dabi to seggen »wahr mutt se doch sien, mien Söhn, anners kunn man se jo nich vertellen.« De Geschicht hett sick aber so todragen. Et wöör an einen Sündagmorgen tor Harvesttied, jüst as de Bookweeten bloihde: de Sünn wöör hellig upgaen am Hewen, de Morgenwind güng warm över de Stoppeln, de Larken süngen inn'r Lucht (Luft), de Immen sumsten in den Bookweeten un de Lühde güngen in ehren Sündagsstaht nah'r Kerken, un alle Kreatur wöör vergnögt, un de Swinegel ook. De Swinegel aver stünd vör siener Döhr, harr de Arm ünnerslagen, keek dabi in den Morgenwind hinut un quinkeleerde en lütjet Leedken vör sick hin, so good un so slecht, as nu eben am leewen Sündagmorgen en Swinegel to singen pleggt. Indem he nu noch so half liese vör sick hin sung, füll em up eenmal in, he künn ook wol, mittlerwiel sien Fro de Kinner wüsch un anträcke, en beeten in't Feld spazeeren un tosehen, wie sien Stähkröwen stünden. De Stähkröwen wöören aver de nöchsten bi sienem Huuse, un he pleggte mit siener Familie davon to eten, darüm sahg he se as de sienigen an. Gesagt, gedahn. De Swinegel makte de Huusdör achter sick to un slög den Weg nah'n Felde in. He wöör noch nich gans wiet von Huuse un wull jüst um den Slöbusch (Schlehenbusch), de dar vörm Felde liggt, nah den Stähkröwenacker hinup dreien, as em de Haas bemött, de in ähnlichen Geschäften uutgahn wöör, nämlich um sienen Kohl to besehen. As de Swinegel den Haasen ansichtig wöör, so böhd he em en fründlichen go'n Morgen. De Haas aver, de up siene Wies en vörnehmer Herr was, un grausahm hachfahrtig dabi, antwoorde nicks up den Swinegel sienen Gruß, sondern segte tom Swinegel, wobi he en gewaltig höhnische Miene annöhm, »wie kummt et denn, dat du hier all bi so fröhem Morgen im Felde rumlöppst?« »Ick gah spazeeren,« segt de Swinegel. »Spazeeren?« lachte de Haas, »mi ducht, du kunnst de Been ook wol to betern Dingen gebruuken.« Disse Antword verdröööt den Swinegel ungeheuer, denn alles kunn he verdregen, aver up siene Been laet he nicks kommen, eben weil se von Natur scheef wöören. »Du bildst di wol in,« seggt nu de Swinegel tom Haasen, »as wenn du mit diene Beene mehr utrichten kunnst?« »Dat denk ick,« seggt de Haas. »Dat kummt up'n Versöök an,« meent de Swinegel, »ick pareer, wenn wi in de Wett loopt, ick loop di vörbi.« »Dat is tum Lachen, du mit diene scheefen Been,« seggt de Haas, »aver mienetwegen macht't sien, wenn du so övergroote Lust hest. Wat gilt de Wett?« »En goldne Lujedor un'n Buddel Branwien,« seggt de Swinegel. »Angenahmen,« spröök de Haas, »sla in, un denn kann't gliek los gahn.« »Nä, so groote Ihl hett et nich,« meen de Swinegel, »ick bün noch gans nüchdern; eerst will ick to Huus gahn un en beeten fröhstücken: inner halwen Stünd bün ick weder hier upp'n Platz.« Damit güng de Swinegel, denn de Haas wöör et tofreeden. Ünnerweges dachte de Swinegel bi sick »de Haas verlett sick up siene langen Been, aver ick will em wol kriegen. He is zwar ehn vörnehm Herr, aver doch man'n dummen Keerl, un betahlen sall he doch.« As nu de Swinegel to Huuse ankööm, spröök he to sien Fro »Fro, treck die gau (schnell) an, du must mit mi nah'n Felde hinuut.« »Wat givt et denn?« seggt sien Fro. »Ick hew mit'n Haasen wett't üm'n golden Lujedor un'n Buddel Branwien, ick will mit em inn Wett loopen, un da salst du mit dabi sien.« »O mien Gott, Mann,« füng nu den Swinegel sien Fro an to schreen, »büst do nich klook, hest du denn ganz den Verstand verlaaren? Wie kannst du mit den Haasen in de Weet loopen wollen?« »Holt dat Muul, Wief,« seggt de Swinegel, »dat is mien Saak. Resonehr nich in Männergeschäfte. Marsch, treck di an un denn kumm mit.« Wat sull den Swinegel sien Fro maken? se mußt wol folgen, se mugg nu wollen oder nich. As se nu mit eenander ünnerwegs wöören, spröök de Swinegel to sien Fro »nu pass up, wat ick seggen will. Sühst du, up den langen Acker, dar wüll wi unsen Wettloop maken. De Haas löppt nemlich in der eenen Föhr (Furche) un ick inner andern, un von baben (oben) fang wie an to loopen. Nu hast du wieder nicks to dohn, as du stellst di her unnen in de Föhr, un wenn de Haas up de andere Siet ankummt, so röpst du em entgegen »ick bün all (schon) hier.« Damit wöören se bi den Acker anlangt, de Swinegel wiesde siener Fro ehren Platz an un gung nu den Acker hinup. As he baben ankööm, wöör de Haas all da. »Kann et losgahn?« seggt de Haas. »Ja wol,« seggt de Swinegel. »Denn man to!« Un damit stellde jeder sick in siene Föhr. De Haas tellde (zählte) »hahl een, hahl twee, hahl dree,« un los güng he wie en Stormwind den Acker hindahl (hinab). De Swinegel aver lööp ungefähr man dree Schritt, dann duhkde he sick dahl (herab) in de Föhr un bleev ruhig sitten.

As nu de Haas in vullen Loopen ünnen am Acker ankööm, rööp em den Swinegel sien Fro entgegen »ick bün all hier.« De Haas stutzd un verwunderde sick nich wenig: he meende nich anders, als et wöör de Swinegel sülvst, de em dat torööp, denn bekanntlich süht den Swinegel sien Fro jüst so uut wie ehr Mann. De Haas aver meende »datt geiht nich to mit rechten Dingen.« He rööp »nochmal geloopen, wedder üm!« Un fort güng he wedder wie en Stormwind, dat em de Ohren am Koppe flögen. Den Swinegel sien Fro aver blev ruhig up ehren Platze. As nu de Haas baben ankööm, rööp em de Swinegel entgegen »ick bün all hier.« De Haas aver, ganz uuter sick vör Ihwer (Ärger), schreede »nochmal geloopen, wedder um!« »Mi nich to schlimm,« antwoorde de Swinegel, »mienetwegen so oft, as du Lust hest.« So löp de Haas noch dreeunsöbentigmal, un de Swinegel höhl (hielt) et ümmer mit em uut. Jedesmal, wenn de Haas ünnen oder baben ankööm, seggten de Swinegel oder sien Fro »ick bün all hier.«

Tum veerunsöbentigstenmal aver köm de Haas nich mehr to ende. Midden am Acker stört he tor Eerde, datt Blohd flög em utn Halse, un he bleev doot upn Platze. De Swinegel aver nöhm siene gewunnene Lujedor un den Buddel Branwien, rööp siene Fro uut der Föhr aff, un beide güngen vergnögt mit eenanner nah Huus: nu wenn se nich storben sünd, lewet se noch.

So begev et sick, dat up der Buxtehuder Heid de Swinegel den Haasen dodt lopen hett, un sied jener Tied hatt et sick keen Haas wedder infallen laten, mit'n Buxtehuder Swinegel in de Wett to lopen.

De Lehre aver uut disser Geschicht is erstens, datt keener, un wenn he sick ook noch so vörnehm dücht, sick sall bikommen laten, övern geringen Mann sick lustig to maken, un wöört ook man'n Swinegel. Un tweetens, datt et gerahden is, wenn eener freet, datt he sick 'ne Fro uut sienem Stande nimmt, un de jüst so uutsüht as he sülwst. Wer also en Swinegel is, de mutt tosehn, datt siene Fro ook en Swinegel is, un so wieder.

188. Spindel, Weberschiffchen und Nadel.

Es war einmal ein Mädchen, dem starb Vater und Mutter, als es noch ein kleines Kind war. Am Ende des Dorfes wohnte in einem Häuschen ganz allein seine Pate, die sich von Spinnen, Weben und Nähen ernährte. Die Alte nahm das verlassene Kind zu sich, hielt es zur Arbeit an und erzog es in aller Frömmigkeit. Als das Mädchen fünfzehn Jahre alt war, erkrankte sie, rief das Kind an ihr Bett und sagte »liebe Tochter, ich fühle, daß mein Ende herannaht, ich hinterlasse dir das Häuschen, darin bist du vor Wind und Wetter geschützt, dazu Spindel, Weberschiffchen und Nadel, damit kannst du dir dein Brot verdienen.« Sie legte noch die Hände auf seinen Kopf, segnete es und sprach »behalt nur Gott in dem Herzen, so wird dirs wohl gehen.« Darauf schloß sie die Augen, und als sie zur Erde bestattet wurde, ging das Mädchen bitterlich weinend hinter dem Sarg und erwies ihr die letzte Ehre.

Das Mädchen lebte nun in dem kleinen Haus ganz allein, war fleißig, spann, webte und nähte, und auf allem, was es tat, ruhte der Segen der guten Alten. Es war, als ob sich der Flachs in der Kammer von selbst mehrte, und wenn sie ein Stück Tuch oder einen Teppich gewebt oder ein Hemd genäht hatte, so fand sich gleich ein Käufer, der es reichlich bezahlte, so daß sie keine Not empfand und andern noch etwas mitteilen konnte.

Um diese Zeit zog der Sohn des Königs im Land umher und wollte sich eine Braut suchen. Eine arme sollte er nicht wählen und eine reiche wollte er nicht. Da sprach er »die soll meine Frau werden, die zugleich die ärmste und die reichste ist.« Als er in das Dorf kam, wo das Mädchen lebte, fragte er, wie er überall tat, wer in dem Ort die reichste und die ärmste wäre. Sie nannten ihm die reichste zuerst: die ärmste, sagten sie, wäre das Mädchen, das in dem kleinen Haus ganz am Ende wohnte. Die Reiche saß vor der Haustür in vollem Putz, und als der Königssohn sich näherte, stand sie auf, ging ihm entgegen und neigte sich vor ihm. Er sah sie an, sprach kein Wort und ritt weiter. Als er zu dem Haus der Armen kam, stand das Mädchen nicht an der Türe, sondern saß in seinem Stübchen. Er hielt das Pferd an und sah durch das Fenster, durch das die helle Sonne schien, das Mädchen an dem Spinnrad sitzen und emsig spinnen. Es blickte auf, und als es bemerkte, daß der Königssohn hereinschaute, ward es über und über rot, schlug die Augen nieder und spann weiter; ob der Faden diesmal ganz gleich ward, weiß ich nicht, aber es spann so lange, bis der Königssohn wieder weggeritten war. Dann trat es ans Fenster, öffnete es und sagte »es ist so heiß in der Stube,« aber es blickte ihm nach, solange es noch die weißen Federn an seinem Hut erkennen konnte.

Das Mädchen setzte sich wieder in seine Stube zur Arbeit und spann weiter. Da kam ihm ein Spruch in den Sinn, den die Alte manchmal gesagt hatte, wenn es bei der Arbeit saß, und es sang so vor sich hin

»Spindel, Spindel, geh du aus,

bring den Freier in mein Haus.«

Was geschah? Die Spindel sprang ihm augenblicklich aus der Hand und zur Türe hinaus; und als es vor Verwunderung aufstand und ihr nachblickte, so sah es, daß sie lustig in das Feld hineintanzte und einen glänzenden goldenen Faden hinter sich herzog. Nicht lange, so war sie ihm aus den Augen entschwunden. Das Mädchen, da es keine Spindel mehr hatte, nahm das Weberschiffchen in die Hand, setzte sich an den Webstuhl und fing an zu weben.

Die Spindel aber tanzte immer weiter, und eben als der Faden zu Ende war, hatte sie den Königssohn erreicht. »Was sehe ich?« rief er, »die Spindel will mir wohl den Weg zeigen?« drehte sein Pferd um und ritt an dem goldenen Faden zurück. Das Mädchen aber saß an seiner Arbeit und sang

»Schiffchen, Schiffchen, webe fein,
führ den Freier mir herein.«

Alsbald sprang ihr das Schiffchen aus der Hand und sprang zur Türe hinaus. Vor der Türschwelle aber fing es an einen Teppich zu weben, schöner, als man je einen gesehen hat. Auf beiden Seiten blühten Rosen und Lilien, und in der Mitte auf goldenem Grund stiegen grüne Ranken herauf, darin sprangen Hasen und Kaninchen: Hirsche und Rehe streckten die Köpfe dazwischen: oben in den Zweigen saßen bunte Vögel; es fehlte nichts, als daß sie gesungen hätten. Das Schiffchen sprang hin und her, und es war, als wüchse alles von selber.

Weil das Schiffchen fortgelaufen war, hatte sich das Mädchen zum Nähen hingesetzt: es hielt die Nadel in der Hand und sang

»Nadel, Nadel, spitz und fein,
Mach das Haus dem Freier rein.«

Da sprang ihr die Nadel aus den Fingern und flog in der Stube hin und her, so schnell wie der Blitz. Es war nicht anders, als wenn unsichtbare Geister arbeiteten, alsbald überzogen sich Tisch und Bänke mit grünem Tuch, die Stühle mit Sammet, und an den Fenstern hingen seidene Vorhänge herab. Kaum hatte die Nadel den letzten Stich getan, so sah das Mädchen schon durch das Fenster die weißen Federn von dem Hut des Königssohns, den die Spindel an dem goldenen Faden herbeigeholt hatte. Er stieg ab, schritt über den Teppich in das Haus herein, und als er in die Stube trat, stand das Mädchen da in seinem ärmlichen Kleid, aber es glühte darin wie eine Rose im Busch. »Du bist die ärmste und auch die reichste,« sprach er zu ihr, »komm mit mir, du sollst meine Braut sein.« Sie schwieg, aber sie reichte ihm die Hand. Da gab er ihr einen Kuß, führte sie hinaus, hob sie auf sein Pferd und brachte sie in das königliche Schloß, wo die Hochzeit mit großer Freude gefeiert ward. Spindel, Weberschiffchen und Nadel wurden in der Schatzkammer verwahrt und in großen Ehren gehalten.

189. Der Bauer und der Teufel.

Es war einmal ein kluges und verschmitztes Bäuerlein, von dessen Streichen viel zu erzählen wäre: die schönste Geschichte ist aber doch, wie er den Teufel einmal dran gekriegt und zum Narren gehabt hat.

Das Bäuerlein hatte eines Tages seinen Acker bestellt und rüstete sich zur Heimfahrt, als die Dämmerung schon eingetreten war. Da erblickte er mitten auf seinem Acker einen Haufen feuriger Kohlen, und als er voll Verwunderung hinzuging, so saß oben auf der Glut ein kleiner schwarzer Teufel. »Du sitzest wohl auf einem Schatz?« sprach das Bäuerlein. »Jawohl,« antwortete der Teufel, »auf einem Schatz, der mehr Gold und Silber enthält, als du dein Lebtag gesehen hast.« »Der Schatz liegt auf meinem Feld und gehört mir,« sprach das Bäuerlein. »Er ist dein,« antwortete der Teufel, »wenn du mir zwei Jahre lang die Hälfte von dem gibst, was dein Acker hervorbringt: Geld habe ich genug, aber ich trage Verlangen nach den Früchten der Erde.« Das Bäuerlein ging auf den Handel ein. »Damit aber kein Streit bei der Teilung entsteht,« sprach es, »so soll dir gehören, was über der Erde ist, und mir, was unter der Erde ist.« Dem Teufel gefiel das wohl, aber das listige Bäuerlein hatte Rüben gesät. Als nun die Zeit der Ernte kam, so er schien der Teufel und wollte seine Frucht holen, er fand aber nichts als die gelben welken Blätter, und das Bäuerlein, ganz vergnügt, grub seine Rüben aus. »Einmal hast du den Vorteil gehabt,« sprach der Teufel, »aber für das nächstemal soll das nicht gelten. Dein ist, was über der Erde wächst, und mein, was darunter ist.« »Mir auch recht,« antwortete das Bäuerlein. Als aber die Zeit zur Aussaat kam, säte das Bäuerlein nicht wieder Rüben, sondern Weizen. Die Frucht ward reif, das Bäuerlein ging auf den Acker und schnitt die vollen Halme bis zur Erde ab. Als der Teufel kam, fand er nichts als die Stoppeln und fuhr wütend in eine Felsenschlucht hinab. »So muß man die Füchse prellen,« sprach das Bäuerlein, ging hin und holte sich den Schatz.

190. Die Brosamen auf dem Tisch.

Der Güggel het einisch zue sine Hüendlene gseit »chömmet weidli i d’Stuben ufe, go Brotbrösmele zämmebicke ufem Tisch: euse Frau isch ußgange, go ne Visite mache.« Do säge do d’Hüendli »nei nei, mer chömme nit: weist, d’Frau balget amme mit is.« Do seit der Güggel »se weiß jo nüt dervo, chömmet er numme: se git is doch au nie nit Guets.« Do säge d’Hüendli wider »nei, nei, sisch uß und verby, mer gönd nit ufe.« Aber der Güggel het ene kei Ruei glo, bis se endlig gange sind und ufe Tisch, und do Brotbrösmeli zämme gläse hend in aller Strenge. Do chunt justement d’Frau derzue und nimmt gschwind e Stäcke und steubt se abe und regiert gar grüseli mit ene. Und wo se do vor em Hus unde gsi sind, do säge do d’Hüendli zum Güggel »gse gse gse gse gse gse gsehst aber?« Do het der Güggel glachet und numme gseit »ha ha han is nit gwüßt?« Do händ se chönne goh.

191. Das Meerhäschen.

Es war einmal eine Königstochter, die hatte in ihrem Schloß hoch unter der Zinne einen Saal mit zwölf Fenstern, die gingen nach allen Himmelsgegenden, und wenn sie hinaufstieg und umherschaute, so konnte sie ihr ganzes Reich übersehen. Aus dem ersten sah sie schon schärfer als andere Menschen, in dem zweiten noch besser, in dem dritten noch deutlicher, und so immer weiter, bis in dem zwölften, wo sie alles sah, was über und unter der Erde war, und ihr nichts verborgen bleiben konnte. Weil sie aber stolz war, sich niemand unterwerfen wollte und die Herrschaft allein behalten, so ließ sie bekanntmachen, es sollte niemand ihr Gemahl werden, der sich nicht so vor ihr verstecken könnte, daß es ihr unmöglich wäre, ihn zu finden. Wer es aber versuche und sie entdecke ihn, so werde ihm das Haupt abgeschlagen und auf einen Pfahl gesteckt. Es standen schon siebenundneunzig Pfähle mit toten Häuptern vor dem Schloß, und in langer Zeit meldete sich niemand. Die Königstochter war vergnügt und dachte »ich werde nun für mein Lebtag frei bleiben.« Da erschienen drei Brüder vor ihr und kündigten ihr an, daß sie ihr Glück versuchen wollten. Der älteste glaubte sicher zu sein, wenn er in ein Kalkloch krieche, aber sie erblickte ihn schon aus dem ersten Fenster, ließ ihn herausziehen und ihm das Haupt abschlagen. Der zweite kroch in den Keller des Schlosses, aber auch diesen erblickte sie aus dem ersten Fenster, und es war um ihn geschehen: sein Haupt kam auf den neunundneunzigsten Pfahl. Da trat der jüngste vor sie hin und bat, sie möchte ihm einen Tag Bedenkzeit geben, auch so gnädig sein, es ihm zweimal zu schenken, wenn sie ihn entdecke: mißlinge es ihm zum drittenmal, so wolle er sich nichts mehr aus seinem Leben machen. Weil er so schön war und so herzlich bat, so sagte sie »ja, ich will dir das bewilligen, aber es wird dir nicht glücken.«

Den folgenden Tag sann er lange nach, wie er sich verstecken wollte, aber es war vergeblich. Da ergriff er seine Büchse und ging hinaus auf die Jagd. Er sah einen Raben und nahm ihn aufs Korn; eben wollte er losdrücken, da rief der Rabe »schieß nicht, ich will dirs vergelten!« Er setzte ab, ging weiter und kam an einen See, wo er einen großen Fisch überraschte, der aus der Tiefe herauf an die Oberfläche des Wassers gekommen war. Als er angelegt hatte, rief der Fisch »schieß nicht, ich will dirs vergelten!« Er ließ ihn untertauchen, ging weiter und begegnete einem Fuchs, der hinkte. Er schoß und verfehlte ihn, da rief der Fuchs »komm lieber her und zieh mir den Dorn aus dem Fuß.« Er tat es zwar, wollte aber dann den Fuchs töten und ihm den Balg abziehen. Der Fuchs sprach »laß ab, ich will dirs vergelten!« Der Jüngling ließ ihn laufen, und da es Abend war, kehrte er heim.

Am andern Tag sollte er sich verkriechen, aber wie er sich auch den Kopf darüber zerbrach, er wußte nicht wohin. Er ging in den Wald zu dem Raben und sprach »ich habe dich leben lassen, jetzt sage mir, wohin ich mich verkriechen soll, damit mich die Königstochter nicht sieht.« Der Rabe senkte den Kopf und bedachte sich lange. Endlich schnarrte er »ich habs heraus!« Er holte ein Ei aus seinem Nest, zerlegte es in zwei Teile und schloß den Jüngling hinein: dann machte er es wieder ganz und setzte sich darauf. Als die Königstochter an das erste Fenster trat, konnte sie ihn nicht entdecken, auch nicht in den folgenden, und es fing an ihr bange zu werden, doch im elften erblickte sie ihn. Sie ließ den Raben schießen, das Ei holen und zerbrechen, und der Jüngling mußte herauskommen. Sie sprach »einmal ist es dir geschenkt, wenn du es nicht besser machst, so bist du verloren.«

Am folgenden Tag ging er an den See, rief den Fisch herbei und sprach »ich habe dich leben lassen, nun sage, wohin soll ich mich verbergen, damit mich die Königstochter nicht sieht.« Der Fisch besann sich, endlich rief er »ich habs heraus! ich will dich in meinem Bauch verschließen.« Er verschluckte ihn und fuhr hinab auf den Grund des Sees. Die Königstochter blickte durch ihre Fenster, auch im elften sah sie ihn nicht und war bestürzt, doch endlich im zwölften entdeckte sie ihn. Sie ließ den Fisch fangen und töten, und der Jüngling kam zum Vorschein. Es kann sich jeder denken, wie ihm zumut war. Sie sprach »zweimal ist dirs geschenkt, aber dein Haupt wird wohl auf den hundertsten Pfahl kommen.«

An dem letzten Tag ging er mit schwerem Herzen aufs Feld und begegnete dem Fuchs. »Du weißt alle Schlupfwinkel zu finden,« sprach er, »ich habe dich leben lassen, jetzt rat mir, wohin ich mich verstecken soll, damit mich die Königstochter nicht findet.« »Ein schweres Stück,« antwortete der Fuchs und machte ein bedenkliches Gesicht. Endlich rief er »ich habs heraus!« Er ging mit ihm zu einer Quelle, tauchte sich hinein und kam als ein Marktkrämer und Tierhändler heraus. Der Jüngling mußte sich auch in das Wasser tauchen, und ward in ein kleines Meerhäschen verwandelt. Der Kaufmann zog in die Stadt und zeigte das artige Tierchen. Es lief viel Volk zusammen, um es anzusehen. Zuletzt kam auch die Königstochter, und weil sie großen Gefallen daran hatte, kaufte sie es und gab dem Kaufmann viel Geld dafür. Bevor er es ihr hinreichte, sagte er zu ihm »wenn die Königstochter ans Fenster geht, so krieche schnell unter ihren Zopf.« Nun kam die Zeit, wo sie ihn suchen sollte. Sie trat nach der Reihe an die Fenster vom ersten bis zum elften und sah ihn nicht. Als sie ihn auch bei dem zwölften nicht sah, war sie voll Angst und Zorn und schlug es so gewaltig zu, daß das Glas in allen Fenstern in tausend Stücke zersprang und das ganze Schloß erzitterte.

Sie ging zurück und fühlte das Meerhäschen unter ihrem Zopf, da packte sie es, warf es zu Boden und rief »fort mir aus den Augen!« Es lief zum Kaufmann, und beide eilten zur Quelle, wo sie sich untertauchten und ihre wahre Gestalt zurückerhielten. Der Jüngling dankte dem Fuchs und sprach »der Rabe und der Fisch sind blitzdumm gegen dich, du weißt die rechten Pfiffe, das muß wahr sein!«

Der Jüngling ging geradezu in das Schloß. Die Königstochter wartete schon auf ihn und fügte sich ihrem Schicksal. Die Hochzeit ward gefeiert, und er war jetzt der König und Herr des ganzen Reichs. Er erzählte ihr niemals, wohin er sich zum drittenmal versteckt und wer ihm geholfen hatte, und so glaubte sie, er habe alles aus eigener Kunst getan und hatte Achtung vor ihm, denn sie dachte bei sich »der kann doch mehr als du!«

192. Der Meisterdieb.

Eines Tages saß vor einem ärmlichen Hause ein alter Mann mit seiner Frau, und wollten von der Arbeit ein wenig ausruhen. Da kam auf einmal ein prächtiger, mit vier Rappen bespannter Wagen herbeigefahren, aus dem ein reichgekleideter Herr stieg. Der Bauer stand auf, trat zu dem Herrn und fragte, was sein Verlangen wäre, und worin er ihm dienen könnte. Der Fremde reichte dem Alten die Hand und sagte »ich wünsche nichts als einmal ein ländliches Gericht zu genießen. Bereitet mir Kartoffel, wie Ihr sie zu essen pflegt, damit will ich mich zu Euerm Tisch setzen, und sie mit Freude verzehren.« Der Bauer lächelte und sagte »Ihr seid ein Graf oder Fürst, oder gar ein Herzog, vornehme Herren haben manchmal solch ein Gelüsten; Euer Wunsch soll aber erfüllt werden.« Die Frau ging in die Küche, und sie fing an Kartoffeln zu waschen und zu reiben und wollte Klöße daraus bereiten, wie sie die Bauern essen. Während sie bei der Arbeit stand, sagte der Bauer zu dem Fremden »kommt einstweilen mit mir in meinen Hausgarten, wo ich noch etwas zu schaffen habe.« In dem Garten hatte er Löcher gegraben und wollte jetzt Bäume einsetzen. »Habt Ihr keine Kinder,« fragte der Fremde, »die Euch bei der Arbeit behilflich sein könnten?« »Nein,« antwortete der Bauer; »ich habe freilich einen Sohn gehabt,« setzte er hinzu, »aber der ist schon seit langer Zeit in die weite Welt gegangen. Es war ein ungeratener Junge, klug und verschlagen, aber er wollte nichts lernen und machte lauter böse Streiche; zuletzt lief er mir fort, und seitdem habe ich nichts von ihm gehört.« Der Alte nahm ein Bäumchen, setzte es in ein Loch und stieß einen Pfahl daneben: und als er Erde hineingeschaufelt und sie festgestampft hatte, band er den Stamm unten, oben und in der Mitte mit einem Strohseil fest an den Pfahl. »Aber sagt mir,« sprach der Herr, »warum bindet Ihr den krummen knorrichten Baum, der dort in der Ecke fast bis auf den Boden gebückt liegt, nicht auch an einen Pfahl wie diesen, damit er strack wächst?« Der Alte lächelte und sagte »Herr, Ihr redet, wie Ihrs versteht: man sieht wohl, daß Ihr Euch mit der Gärtnerei nicht abgegeben habt. Der Baum dort ist alt und verknorzt, den kann niemand mehr gerad machen: Bäume muß man ziehen, solange sie jung sind.« »Es ist wie bei Euerm Sohn,« sagte der Fremde, »hättet Ihr den gezogen, wie er noch jung war, so wäre er nicht fortgelaufen; jetzt wird er auch hart und knorzig geworden sein.« »Freilich,« antwortete der Alte, »es ist schon lange, seit er fortgegangen ist; er wird sich verändert haben.« »Würdet Ihr ihn noch erkennen, wenn er vor Euch träte?« fragte der Fremde. »Am Gesicht schwerlich,« antwortete der Bauer, »aber er hat ein Zeichen an sich, ein Muttermal auf der Schulter, das wie eine Bohne aussieht.« Als er dies gesagt hatte, zog der Fremde den Rock aus, entblößte seine Schulter und zeigte dem Bauer die Bohne. »Herr Gott,« rief der Alte, »du bist wahrhaftig mein Sohn,« und die Liebe zu seinem Kind regte sich in seinem Herzen. »Aber,« setzte er hinzu, »wie kannst du mein Sohn sein, du bist ein großer Herr geworden und lebst in Reichtum und Überfluß! auf welchem

Weg bist du dazu gelangt?« »Ach, Vater,« erwiderte der Sohn, »der junge Baum war an keinen Pfahl gebunden und ist krumm gewachsen: jetzt ist er zu alt; er wird nicht wieder gerad. Wie ich das alles erworben habe? ich bin ein Dieb geworden. Aber erschreckt Euch nicht, ich bin ein Meisterdieb. Für mich gibt es weder Schloß noch Riegel: wonach mich gelüstet, das ist mein. Glaubt nicht, daß ich stehle wie ein gemeiner Dieb, ich nehme nur vom Überfluß der Reichen. Arme Leute sind sicher: ich gebe ihnen lieber, als daß ich ihnen etwas nehme. So auch, was ich ohne Mühe, List und Gewandtheit haben kann, das rühre ich nicht an.« »Ach, mein Sohn,« sagte der Vater, »es gefällt mir doch nicht, ein Dieb bleibt ein Dieb; ich sage dir, es nimmt kein gutes Ende.« Er führte ihn zu der Mutter, und als sie hörte, daß es ihr Sohn war, weinte sie vor Freude, als er ihr aber sagte, daß er ein Meisterdieb geworden wäre, so flossen ihr zwei Ströme über das Gesicht. Endlich sagte sie »wenn er auch ein Dieb geworden ist, so ist er doch mein Sohn, und meine Augen haben ihn noch einmal gesehen.«

Sie setzten sich an den Tisch, und er aß mit seinen Eltern wieder einmal die schlechte Kost, die er lange nicht gegessen hatte. Der Vater sprach »wenn unser Herr, der Graf drüben im Schlosse, erfährt, wer du bist und was du treibst, so nimmt er dich nicht auf die Arme und wiegt dich darin, wie er tat, als er dich am Taufstein hielt, sondern er läßt dich am Galgenstrick schaukeln.« »Seid ohne Sorge, mein Vater, er wird mir nichts tun, denn ich verstehe mein Handwerk. Ich will heute noch selbst zu ihm gehen.« Als die Abendzeit sich näherte, setzte sich der Meisterdieb in seinen Wagen und fuhr nach dem Schloß. Der Graf empfing ihn mit Artigkeit, weil er ihn für einen vornehmen Mann hielt. Als aber der Fremde sich zu erkennen gab, so erbleichte er und schwieg eine Zeitlang ganz still. Endlich sprach er »du bist mein Pate, deshalb will ich Gnade für Recht ergehen lassen und nachsichtig mit dir verfahren. Weil du dich rühmst, ein Meisterdieb zu sein, so will ich deine Kunst auf die Probe stellen, wenn du aber nicht bestehst, so mußt du mit des Seilers Tochter Hochzeit halten, und das Gekrächze der Raben soll deine Musik dabei sein.« »Herr Graf,« antwortete der Meister, »denkt Euch drei Stücke aus, so schwer Ihr wollt, und wenn ich Eure Aufgabe nicht löse, so tut mit mir, wie Euch gefällt.« Der Graf sann einige Augenblicke nach, dann sprach er »wohlan, zum ersten sollst du mir mein Leibpferd aus dem Stalle stehlen, zum andern sollst du mir und meiner Gemahlin, wenn wir eingeschlafen sind, das Bettuch unter dem Leib wegnehmen, ohne daß wirs merken, und dazu meiner Gemahlin den Trauring vom Finger: zum dritten und letzten sollst du mir den Pfarrer und Küster aus der Kirche wegstehlen. Merke dir alles wohl, denn es geht dir an den Hals.«

Der Meister begab sich in die zunächst liegende Stadt. Dort kaufte er einer alten Bauerfrau die Kleider ab und zog sie an. Dann färbte er sich das Gesicht braun und malte sich noch Runzeln hinein, so daß ihn kein Mensch wiedererkannt hätte. Endlich füllte er ein Fäßchen mit altem Ungarwein, in welchen ein starker Schlaftrunk gemischt war. Das Fäßchen legte er auf eine Kötze, die er auf den Rücken nahm, und ging mit bedächtigen, schwankenden Schritten zu dem Schloß des Grafen. Es war schon dunkel, als er anlangte: er setzte sich in den Hof auf einen Stein, fing an zu husten wie eine alte brustkranke Frau und rieb die Hände, als wenn er fröre. Vor der Türe des Pferdestalls lagen Soldaten um ein Feuer: einer von ihnen bemerkte die Frau und rief ihr zu »komm näher, altes Mütterchen, und wärme dich bei uns. Du hast doch kein Nachtlager und nimmst es an, wo du es findest.« Die Alte trippelte herbei, bat, ihr die Kötze vom Rücken zu heben, und setzte sich zu ihnen ans Feuer. »Was hast du da in deinem Fäßchen, du alte Schachtel?« fragte einer. »Einen guten Schluck Wein,« antwortete sie, »ich ernähre mich mit dem Handel, für Geld und gute Worte gebe ich Euch gerne ein Glas.« »Nur her damit,« sagte der Soldat, und als er ein Glas gekostet hatte, rief er »wenn der Wein gut ist, so trink ich lieber ein Glas mehr,« ließ sich nochmals einschenken, und die andern folgten seinem Beispiel. »Heda, Kameraden,« rief einer denen zu, die in dem Stall saßen, »hier ist ein Mütterchen, das hat Wein, der so alt ist wie sie selber, nehmt auch einen Schluck, der wärmt euch den Magen noch besser als unser Feuer.« Die Alte trug ihr Fäßchen in den Stall. Einer hatte sich auf das gesattelte Leibpferd gesetzt, ein anderer hielt den Zaum in der Hand, ein dritter hatte den Schwanz gepackt. Sie schenkte ein, soviel verlangt ward, bis die Quelle versiegte. Nicht lange, so fiel dem einen der Zaum aus der Hand, er sank nieder und fing an zu schnarchen, der andere ließ den Schwanz los, legte sich nieder und schnarchte noch lauter. Der, welcher im Sattel saß, blieb zwar sitzen, bog sich aber mit dem Kopf fast bis auf den Hals des Pferdes, schlief und blies mit dem Mund wie ein Schmiedebalg. Die Soldaten draußen waren schon längst eingeschlafen, lagen auf der Erde und regten sich nicht, als wären sie von Stein.

Als der Meisterdieb sah, daß es ihm geglückt war, gab er dem einen statt des Zaums ein Seil in die Hand und dem andern, der den Schwanz gehalten hatte, einen Strohwisch; aber was sollte er mit dem, der auf dem Rücken des Pferdes saß, anfangen? Herunterwerfen wollte er ihn nicht, er hätte erwachen und ein Geschrei erheben können. Er wußte aber guten Rat, er schnallte die Sattelgurt auf, knüpfte ein paar Seile, die in Ringen an der Wand hingen, an den Sattel fest und zog den schlafenden Reiter mit dem Sattel in die Höhe, dann schlug er die Seile um den Pfosten und machte sie fest. Das Pferd hatte er bald von der Kette losgebunden, aber wenn er über das steinerne Pflaster des Hofs geritten wäre, so hätte man den Lärm im Schloß gehört. Er umwickelte ihm also zuvor die Hufen mit alten Lappen, führte es dann vorsichtig hinaus, schwang sich auf und jagte davon.

Als der Tag angebrochen war, sprengte der Meister auf dem gestohlenen Pferd zu dem Schloß. Der Graf war eben aufgestanden und blickte aus dem Fenster. »Guten Morgen, Herr Graf,« rief er ihm zu, »hier ist das Pferd, das ich glücklich aus dem Stall geholt habe. Schaut nur, wie schön Eure Soldaten daliegen und schlafen, und wenn Ihr in den Stall gehen wollt, so werdet Ihr sehen, wie bequem sichs Eure Wächter gemacht haben.« Der Graf mußte lachen, dann sprach er »einmal ist dirs gelungen, aber das zweitemal wirds nicht so glücklich ablaufen. Und ich warne dich, wenn du mir als Dieb begegnest, so behandle ich dich auch wie einen Dieb.« Als die

Gräfin abends zu Bette gegangen war, schloß sie die Hand mit dem Trauring fest zu, und der Graf sagte »alle Türen sind verschlossen und verriegelt, ich bleibe wach und will den Dieb erwarten; steigt er aber zum Fenster ein, so schieße ich ihn nieder.« Der Meisterdieb aber ging in der Dunkelheit hinaus zu dem Galgen, schnitt einen armen Sünder, der da hing, von dem Strick ab und trug ihn auf dem Rücken nach dem Schloß. Dort stellte er eine Leiter an das Schlafgemach, setzte den Toten auf seine Schultern und fing an hinaufzusteigen. Als er so hoch gekommen war, daß der Kopf des Toten in dem Fenster erschien, drückte der Graf, der in seinem Bett lauerte, eine Pistole auf ihn los: alsbald ließ der Meister den armen Sünder herabfallen, sprang selbst die Leiter herab und versteckte sich in eine Ecke. Die Nacht war von dem Mond so weit erhellt, daß der Meister deutlich sehen konnte, wie der Graf aus dem Fenster auf die Leiter stieg, herabkam und den Toten in den Garten trug. Dort fing er an ein Loch zu graben, in das er ihn legen wollte. »Jetzt,« dachte der Dieb, »ist der günstige Augenblick gekommen,« schlich behende aus seinem Winkel und stieg die Leiter hinauf, geradezu ins Schlafgemach der Gräfin. »Liebe Frau,« fing er mit der Stimme des Grafen an, »der Dieb ist tot, aber er ist doch mein Pate und mehr ein Schelm als ein Bösewicht gewesen: ich will ihn der öffentlichen Schande nicht preisgeben; auch mit den armen Eltern habe ich Mitleid. Ich will ihn, bevor der Tag anbricht, selbst im Garten begraben, damit die Sache nicht ruchbar wird. Gib mir auch das Bettuch, so will ich die Leiche einhüllen und ihn wie einen Hund verscharren.« Die Gräfin gab ihm das Tuch. »Weißt du was,« sagte der Dieb weiter, »ich habe eine Anwandlung von Großmut, gib mir noch den Ring; der Unglückliche hat sein Leben gewagt, so mag er ihn ins Grab mitnehmen.« Sie wollte dem Grafen nicht entgegen sein, und obgleich sie es ungern tat, so zog sie doch den Ring vom Finger und reichte ihn hin. Der Dieb machte sich mit beiden Stücken fort und kam glücklich nach Haus, bevor der Graf im Garten mit seiner Totengräberarbeit fertig war.

Was zog der Graf für ein langes Gesicht, als am andern Morgen der Meister kam und ihm das Bettuch und den Ring brachte. »Kannst du hexen?« sagte er zu ihm, »wer hat dich aus dem Grab geholt, in das ich selbst dich gelegt habe, und hat dich wieder lebendig gemacht?« »Mich habt Ihr nicht begraben,« sagte der Dieb, »sondern den armen Sünder am Galgen,« und erzählte ausführlich, wie es zugegangen war; und der Graf mußte ihm zugestehen, daß er ein gescheiter und listiger Dieb wäre. »Aber noch bist du nicht zu Ende,« setzte er hinzu, »du hast noch die dritte Aufgabe zu lösen, und wenn dir das nicht gelingt, so hilft dir alles nichts.« Der Meister lächelte und gab keine Antwort.

Als die Nacht eingebrochen war, kam er mit einem langen Sack auf dem Rücken, einem Bündel unter dem Arm und einer Laterne in der Hand zu der Dorfkirche gegangen. In dem Sack hatte er Krebse, in dem Bündel aber kurze Wachslichter. Er setzte sich auf den Gottesacker, holte einen Krebs heraus und klebte ihm ein Wachslichtchen auf den Rücken, dann zündete er das Lichtchen an, setzte den Krebs auf den Boden und ließ ihn kriechen. Er holte einen zweiten aus dem Sack, machte es mit diesem ebenso und fuhr fort, bis auch der letzte aus dem Sacke war. Hierauf zog er ein langes schwarzes Gewand an, das wie eine Mönchskutte aussah, und klebte sich einen grauen Bart an das Kinn. Als er endlich ganz unkenntlich war, nahm er den Sack, in dem die Krebse gewesen waren, ging in die Kirche und stieg auf die Kanzel. Die Turmuhr schlug eben zwölf: als der letzte Schlag verklungen war, rief er mit lauter gellender Stimme »hört an, ihr sündigen Menschen, das Ende aller Dinge ist gekommen, der jüngste Tag ist nahe: hört an, hört an. Wer mit mir in den Himmel will, der krieche in den Sack. Ich bin Petrus, der die Himmelstüre öffnet und schließt. Seht ihr, draußen auf dem Gottesacker wandeln die Gestorbenen und sammeln ihre Gebeine zusammen. Kommt, kommt und kriecht in den Sack, die Welt geht unter.« Das Geschrei erschallte durch das ganze Dorf. Der Pfarrer und der Küster, die zunächst an der Kirche wohnten, hatten es zuerst vernommen, und als sie die Lichter erblickten, die auf dem Gottesacker umherwandelten, merkten sie, daß etwas Ungewöhnliches vorging, und traten sie in die Kirche ein. Sie hörten der Predigt eine Weile zu, da stieß der Küster den Pfarrer an und sprach »es wäre nicht übel, wenn wir die Gelegenheit benutzten und zusammen vor dem Einbruch des jüngsten Tags auf eine leichte Art in den Himmel kämen.« »Freilich,« erwiderte der Pfarrer, »das sind auch meine Gedanken gewesen: habt Ihr Lust, so wollen wir uns auf den Weg machen.« »Ja,« antwortete der Küster, »aber Ihr, Herr Pfarrer, habt den Vortritt, ich folge nach.« Der Pfarrer schritt also vor und stieg auf die Kanzel, wo der Meister den Sack öffnete. Der Pfarrer kroch zuerst hinein, dann der Küster. Gleich band der Meister den Sack fest zu, packte ihn am Bausch und schleifte ihn die Kanzeltreppe hinab: sooft die Köpfe der beiden Toren auf die Stufen aufschlugen, rief er »jetzt gehts schon über die Berge.« Dann zog er sie auf gleiche Weise durch das Dorf, und wenn sie durch Pfützen kamen, rief er »jetzt gehts schon durch die nassen Wolken,« und als er sie endlich die Schloßtreppe hinaufzog, so rief er »jetzt sind wir auf der Himmelstreppe und werden bald im Vorhof sein.« Als er oben angelangt war, schob er den Sack in den Taubenschlag, und als die Tauben flatterten, sagte er »hört ihr, wie die Engel sich freuen und mit den Fittichen schlagen?« Dann schob er den Riegel vor und ging fort.

Am andern Morgen begab er sich zu dem Grafen und sagte ihm, daß er auch die dritte Aufgabe gelöst und den Pfarrer und Küster aus der Kirche weggeführt hätte. »Wo hast du sie gelassen?« fragte der Herr. »Sie liegen in einem Sack oben auf dem Taubenschlag und bilden sich ein, sie wären im Himmel.« Der Graf stieg selbst hinauf und überzeugte sich, daß er die Wahrheit gesagt hatte. Als er den Pfarrer und Küster aus dem Gefängnis befreit hatte, sprach er »du bist ein Erzdieb und hast deine Sache gewonnen. Für diesmal kommst du mit heiler Haut davon, aber mache, daß du aus meinem Land fortkommst, denn wenn du dich wieder darin betreten läßt, so kannst du auf deine Erhöhung am Galgen rechnen.« Der Erzdieb nahm Abschied von seinen Eltern, ging wieder in die weite Welt, und niemand hat wieder etwas von ihm gehört.

193. Der Trommler.

Eines Abends ging ein junger Trommler ganz allein auf dem Feld und kam an einen See, da sah er an dem Ufer drei Stückchen weiße Leinewand liegen. »Was für feines Leinen,« sprach er und steckte eins davon in die Tasche. Er ging heim, dachte nicht weiter an seinen Fund und legte sich zu Bett. Als er eben einschlafen wollte, war es ihm, als nennte jemand seinen Namen. Er horchte und vernahm eine leise Stimme, die ihm zurief »Trommeler, Trommeler, wach auf.« Er konnte, da es finstere Nacht war, niemand sehen, aber es kam ihm vor, als schwebte eine Gestalt vor seinem Bett auf und ab. »Was willst du?« fragte er. »Gib mir mein Hemdchen zurück,« antwortete die Stimme, »das du mir gestern abend am See weggenommen hast.« »Du sollst es wiederhaben,« sprach der Trommler, »wenn du mir sagst, wer du bist.« »Ach,« erwiderte die Stimme, »ich bin die Tochter eines mächtigen Königs, aber ich bin in die Gewalt einer Hexe geraten und bin auf den Glasberg gebannt. Jeden Tag muß ich mit meinen zwei Schwestern im See baden, aber ohne mein Hemdchen kann ich nicht wieder fortfliegen. Meine Schwestern haben sich fortgemacht, ich aber habe zurückbleiben müssen. Ich bitte dich, gib mir mein Hemdchen wieder.« »Sei ruhig, armes Kind,« sprach der Trommler, »ich will dirs gerne zurückgeben.« Er holte es aus seiner Tasche und reichte es ihr in der Dunkelheit hin. Sie erfaßte es hastig und wollte damit fort. »Weile einen Augenblick,« sagte er, »vielleicht kann ich dir helfen.« »Helfen kannst du mir nur, wenn du auf den Glasberg steigst und mich aus der Gewalt der Hexe befreist. Aber zu dem Glasberg kommst du nicht, und wenn du auch ganz nahe daran wärst, so kommst du nicht hinauf.« »Was ich will, das kann ich,« sagte der Trommler, »ich habe Mitleid mit dir, und ich fürchte mich vor nichts. Aber ich weiß den Weg nicht, der nach dem Glasberg führt.« »Der Weg geht durch den großen Wald, in dem die Menschenfresser hausen,« antwortete sie, »mehr darf ich dir nicht sagen.« Darauf hörte er, wie sie fortschwirrte.

Bei Anbruch des Tages machte sich der Trommler auf, hing seine Trommel um und ging ohne Furcht geradezu in den Wald hinein. Als er ein Weilchen gegangen war und keinen Riesen erblickte, so dachte er »ich muß die Langschläfer aufwecken,« hing die Trommel vor und schlug einen Wirbel, daß die Vögel aus den Bäumen mit Geschrei aufflogen. Nicht lange, so erhob sich auch ein Riese in die Höhe, der im Gras gelegen und geschlafen hatte, und war so groß wie eine Tanne. »Du Wicht,« rief er ihm zu, »was trommelst du hier und weckst mich aus dem besten Schlaf?« »Ich trommle,« antwortete er, »weil viele Tausende hinter mir herkommen, damit sie den Weg wissen.« »Was wollen die hier in meinem Wald?« fragte der Riese. »Sie wollen dir den Garaus machen und den Wald von einem Ungetüm, wie du bist, säubern.« »Oho,« sagte der Riese, »ich trete euch wie Ameisen tot.« »Meinst du, du könntest gegen sie etwas ausrichten?« sprach der Trommler, »wenn du dich bückst, um einen zu packen, so springt er fort und versteckt sich: wie du dich aber niederlegst und schläfst, so kommen sie aus allen Gebüschen herbei und kriechen an dir hinauf. Jeder hat einen Hammer von Stahl am Gürtel stecken, damit schlagen sie dir den Schädel ein.« Der Riese ward verdrießlich und dachte »wenn ich mich mit dem listigen Volk befasse, so könnte es doch zu meinem Schaden ausschlagen. Wölfen und Bären drücke ich die Gurgel zusammen, aber vor den Erdwürmern kann ich mich nicht schützen.« »Hör, kleiner Kerl,« sprach er, »zieh wieder ab, ich verspreche dir, daß ich dich und deine Gesellen in Zukunft in Ruhe lassen will, und hast du noch einen Wunsch, so sags mir, ich will dir wohl etwas zu Gefallen tun.« »Du hast lange Beine,« sprach der Trommler, »und kannst schneller laufen als ich, trag mich zum Glasberge, so will ich den Meinigen ein Zeichen zum Rückzug geben, und sie sollen dich diesmal in Ruhe lassen.« »Komm her, Wurm,« sprach der Riese, »setz dich auf meine Schulter, ich will dich tragen, wohin du verlangst.« Der Riese hob ihn hinauf, und der Trommler fing oben an nach Herzenslust auf der Trommel zu wirbeln. Der Riese dachte »das wird das Zeichen sein, daß das andere Volk zurückgehen soll.« Nach einer Weile stand ein zweiter Riese am Weg, der nahm den Trommler dem ersten ab und steckte ihn in sein Knopfloch. Der Trommler faßte den Knopf, der wie eine Schüssel groß war, hielt sich daran und schaute ganz lustig umher. Dann kamen sie zu einem dritten, der nahm ihn aus dem Knopfloch und setzte ihn auf den Rand seines Hutes; da ging der Trommler oben auf und ab und sah über die Bäume hinaus, und als er in blauer Ferne einen Berg erblickte, so dachte er »das ist gewiß der Glasberg,« und er war es auch. Der Riese tat noch ein paar Schritte, so waren sie an dem Fuß des Berges angelangt, wo ihn der Riese absetzte. Der Trommler verlangte, er sollte ihn auch auf die Spitze des Glasberges tragen, aber der Riese schüttelte mit dem Kopf, brummte etwas in den Bart und ging in den Wald zurück.

Nun stand der arme Trommler vor dem Berg, der so hoch war, als wenn drei Berge aufeinandergesetzt wären, und dabei so glatt wie ein Spiegel, und wußte keinen Rat, um hinaufzukommen.

Er fing an zu klettern, aber vergeblich, er rutschte immer wieder herab. »Wer jetzt ein Vogel wäre,« dachte er, aber was half das Wünschen, es wuchsen ihm keine Flügel. Indem er so stand und sich nicht zu helfen wußte, erblickte er nicht weit von sich zwei Männer, die heftig miteinander stritten. Er ging auf sie zu und sah, daß sie wegen eines Sattels uneins waren, der vor ihnen auf der Erde lag, und den jeder von ihnen haben wollte. »Was seid ihr für Narren,« sprach er, »zankt euch um einen Sattel und habt kein Pferd dazu.« »Der Sattel ist wert, daß man darum streitet,« antwortete der eine von den Männern, »wer darauf sitzt und wünscht sich irgendwohin, und wärs am Ende der Welt, der ist im Augenblick angelangt, wie er den Wunsch ausgesprochen hat. Der Sattel gehört uns gemeinschaftlich, die Reihe, darauf zu reiten, ist an mir, aber der andere will es nicht zulassen.« »Den Streit will ich bald austragen,« sagte der Trommler, ging eine Strecke weit und steckte einen weißen Stab in die Erde. Dann kam er zurück und sprach »jetzt lauft nach dem Ziel, wer zuerst dort ist, der reitet zuerst.«

Beide setzten sich in Trab, aber kaum waren sie ein paar Schritte weg, so schwang sich der Trommler auf den Sattel, wünschte sich auf den Glasberg, und ehe man die Hand umdrehte, war er dort. Auf dem Berg oben war eine Ebene, da stand ein altes steinernes Haus, und vor dem Haus lag ein großer Fischteich, dahinter aber ein finsterer Wald. Menschen und Tiere sah er nicht, es war alles still, nur der Wind raschelte in den Bäumen, und die Wolken zogen ganz nah über seinem Haupt weg. Er trat an die Türe und klopfte an. Als er zum drittenmal geklopft hatte, öffnete eine Alte mit braunem Gesicht und roten Augen die Türe; sie hatte eine Brille auf ihrer langen Nase und sah ihn scharf an, dann fragte sie, was sein Begehren wäre. »Einlaß, Kost und Nachtlager,« antwortete der Trommler. »Das sollst du haben,« sagte die Alte, »wenn du dafür drei Arbeiten verrichten willst.« »Warum nicht?« antwortete er, »ich scheue keine Arbeit, und wenn sie noch so schwer ist.« Die Alte ließ ihn ein, gab ihm Essen und abends ein gutes Bett. Am Morgen, als er ausgeschlafen hatte, nahm die Alte einen Fingerhut von ihrem dürren Finger, reichte ihn dem Trommler hin und sagte »jetzt geh an die Arbeit und schöpfe den Teich draußen mit diesem Fingerhut aus: aber ehe es Nacht wird, mußt du fertig sein, und alle Fische, die in dem Wasser sind, müssen nach ihrer Art und Größe ausgesucht und nebeneinandergelegt sein.« »Das ist eine seltsame Arbeit,« sagte der Trommler, ging aber zu dem Teich und fing an zu schöpfen. Er schöpfte den ganzen Morgen, aber was kann man mit einem Fingerhut bei einem großen Wasser ausrichten, und wenn man tausend Jahre schöpft? Als es Mittag war, dachte er »es ist alles umsonst, und ist einerlei, ob ich arbeite oder nicht,« hielt ein und setzte sich nieder. Da kam ein Mädchen aus dem Haus gegangen, stellte ihm ein Körbchen mit Essen hin und sprach »du sitzest da so traurig, was fehlt dir?« Er blickte es an und sah, daß es wunderschön war. »Ach,« sagte er, »ich kann die erste Arbeit nicht vollbringen, wie wird es mit den andern werden? Ich bin ausgegangen, eine Königstochter zu suchen, die hier wohnen soll, aber ich habe sie nicht gefunden; ich will weitergehen.« »Bleib hier,« sagte das Mädchen, »ich will dir aus deiner Not helfen. Du bist müde, lege deinen Kopf in meinen Schoß und schlaf. Wenn du wieder aufwachst, so ist die Arbeit getan.« Der Trommler ließ sich das nicht zweimal sagen. Sobald ihm die Augen zufielen, drehte sie einen Wunschring und sprach »Wasser herauf, Fische heraus.« Alsbald stieg das Wasser wie ein weißer Nebel in die Höhe und zog mit den andern Wolken fort, und die Fische schnalzten, sprangen ans Ufer und legten sich nebeneinander, jeder nach seiner Größe und Art. Als der Trommler erwachte, sah er mit Erstaunen, daß alles vollbracht war. Aber das Mädchen sprach »einer von den Fischen liegt nicht bei seinesgleichen, sondern ganz allein. Wenn die Alte heute abend kommt und sieht, daß alles geschehen ist, was sie verlangt hat, so wird sie fragen »was soll dieser Fisch allein?« Dann wirf ihr den Fisch ins Angesicht und sprich »der soll für dich sein, alte Hexe«.« Abends kam die Alte, und als sie die Frage getan hatte, so warf er ihr den Fisch ins Gesicht. Sie stellte sich, als merkte sie es nicht, und schwieg still, aber sie blickte ihn mit boshaften Augen an. Am andern Morgen sprach sie »gestern hast du es zu leicht gehabt, ich muß dir schwerere Arbeit geben. Heute mußt du den ganzen Wald umhauen, das Holz in Scheite spalten und in Klaftern legen, und am Abend muß alles fertig sein.« Sie gab ihm eine Axt, einen Schläger und zwei Keile. Aber die Axt war von Blei, der Schläger und die Keile waren von Blech. Als er anfing zu hauen, so legte sich die Axt um, und Schläger und Keile drückten sich zusammen. Er wußte sich nicht zu helfen, aber mittags kam das Mädchen wieder mit dem Essen und tröstete ihn. »Lege deinen Kopf in meinen Schoß,« sagte sie, »und schlaf, wenn du aufwachst, so ist die Arbeit getan.« Sie drehte ihren Wunschring, in dem Augenblick sank der ganze Wald mit Krachen zusammen, das Holz spaltete sich von selbst und legte sich in Klaftern zusammen; es war als ob unsichtbare Riesen die Arbeit vollbrächten. Als er aufwachte, sagte das Mädchen »siehst du, das Holz ist geklaftert und gelegt; nur ein einziger Ast ist übrig, aber wenn die Alte heute abend kommt und fragt, was der Ast solle, so gib ihr damit einen Schlag und sprich »der soll für dich sein, du Hexe«.« Die Alte kam, »siehst du,« sprach sie, »wie leicht die Arbeit war: aber für wen liegt der Ast noch da?« »Für dich, du Hexe,« antwortete er und gab ihr einen Schlag damit. Aber sie tat, als fühlte sie es nicht, lachte höhnisch und sprach »morgen früh sollst du alles Holz auf einen Haufen legen, es anzünden und verbrennen.« Er stand mit Anbruch des Tages auf und fing an das Holz herbeizuholen, aber wie kann ein einziger Mensch einen ganzen Wald zusammentragen? die Arbeit rückte nicht fort. Doch das Mädchen verließ ihn nicht in der Not: es brachte ihm mittags seine Speise, und als er gegessen hatte, legte er seinen Kopf in den Schoß und schlief ein. Bei seinem Erwachen brannte der ganze Holzstoß in einer ungeheuern Flamme, die ihre Zungen bis in den Himmel ausstreckte. »Hör mich an,« sprach das Mädchen, »wenn die Hexe kommt, wird sie dir allerlei auftragen: tust du ohne Furcht, was sie verlangt, so kann sie dir nichts anhaben: fürchtest du dich aber, so packt dich das Feuer und verzehrt dich. Zuletzt, wenn du alles getan hast, so packe sie mit beiden Händen und wirf sie mitten in die Glut.« Das Mädchen ging fort, und die Alte kam herangeschlichen, »hu! mich friert,« sagte sie »aber das ist ein Feuer, das brennt, das wärmt mir die alten Knochen, da wird mir wohl. Aber dort liegt ein Klotz, der will nicht brennen, den hol mir heraus. Hast du das noch getan, so bist du frei und kannst ziehen, wohin du willst. Nur munter hinein.« Der Trommler besann sich nicht lange, sprang mitten in die Flammen, aber sie taten ihm nichts, nicht einmal die Haare konnten sie ihm versengen. Er trug den Klotz heraus und legte ihn hin. Kaum aber hatte das Holz die Erde berührt, so verwandelte es sich, und das schöne Mädchen stand vor ihm, das ihm in der Not geholfen hatte: und an den seidenen goldglänzenden Kleidern, die es anhatte, merkte er wohl, daß es die Königstochter war. Aber die Alte lachte giftig und sprach »du meinst, du hättest sie, aber du hast sie noch nicht.« Eben wollte sie auf das Mädchen losgehen und es fortziehen, da packte er die Alte mit beiden Händen, hob sie in die Höhe und warf sie den Flammen in den Rachen, die über ihr zusammenschlugen, als freuten sie sich, daß sie eine Hexe verzehren sollten.

Die Königstochter blickte darauf den Trommler an, und als sie sah, daß es ein schöner Jüngling war, und bedachte, daß er sein Leben daran gesetzt hatte, um sie zu erlösen, so reichte sie ihm die Hand und sprach »du hast alles für mich gewagt, aber ich will auch für dich alles tun. Versprichst du mir deine Treue, so sollst du mein Gemahl werden. An Reichtümern fehlt es uns nicht, wir haben genug an dem, was die Hexe hier zusammengetragen hat.« Sie führte ihn in das Haus, da standen Kisten und Kasten, die mit ihren Schätzen angefüllt waren. Sie ließen Gold und Silber liegen und nahmen nur die Edelsteine. Sie wollte nicht länger auf dem Glasberg bleiben, da sprach er zu ihr »setze dich zu mir auf meinen Sattel, so fliegen wir hinab wie Vögel.« »Der alte Sattel gefällt mir nicht,« sagte sie, »ich brauche nur an meinem Wunschring zu drehen, so sind wir zu Haus.« »Wohlan,« antwortete der Trommler, »so wünsch uns vor das Stadttor.« Im Nu waren sie dort, der Trommler aber sprach, »ich will erst zu meinen Eltern gehen und ihnen Nachricht geben, harre mein hier auf dem Feld, ich will bald zurück sein.« »Ach,« sagte die Königstochter, »ich bitte dich, nimm dich in acht, küsse deine Eltern bei deiner Ankunft nicht auf die rechte Wange, denn sonst wirst du alles vergessen, und ich bleibe hier allein und verlassen auf dem Feld zurück.« »Wie kann ich dich vergessen?« sagte er und versprach ihr in die Hand, recht bald wiederzukommen. Als er in sein väterliches Haus trat, wußte niemand, wer er war, so hatte er sich verändert, denn die drei Tage, die er auf dem Glasberg zugebracht hatte, waren drei lange Jahre gewesen. Da gab er sich zu erkennen, und seine Eltern fielen ihm vor Freude um den Hals, und er war so bewegt in seinem Herzen, daß er sie auf beide Wangen küßte und an die Worte des Mädchens nicht dachte. Wie er ihnen aber den Kuß auf die rechte Wange gegeben hatte, verschwand ihm jeder Gedanke an die Königstochter. Er leerte seine Taschen aus und legte Hände voll der größten Edelsteine auf den Tisch. Die Eltern wußten gar nicht, was sie mit dem Reichtum anfangen sollten. Da baute der Vater ein prächtiges Schloß, von Gärten, Wäldern und Wiesen umgeben, als wenn ein Fürst darin wohnen sollte. Und als es fertig war, sagte die Mutter »ich habe ein Mädchen für dich ausgesucht, in drei Tagen soll die Hochzeit sein.« Der Sohn war mit allem zufrieden, was die Eltern wollten.

Die arme Königstochter hatte lange vor der Stadt gestanden und auf die Rückkehr des Jünglings gewartet. Als es Abend ward, sprach sie »gewiß hat er seine Eltern auf die rechte Wange geküßt und hat mich vergessen.« Ihr Herz war voll Trauer, sie wünschte sich in ein einsames Waldhäuschen und wollte nicht wieder an den Hof ihres Vaters zurück. Jeden Abend ging sie in die Stadt und ging an seinem Haus vorüber: er sah sie manchmal, aber er kannte sie nicht mehr. Endlich hörte sie, wie die Leute sagten »morgen wird seine Hochzeit gefeiert.« Da sprach sie »ich will versuchen, ob ich sein Herz wiedergewinne.« Als der erste Hochzeitstag gefeiert ward, da drehte sie ihren Wunschring und sprach »ein Kleid so glänzend wie die Sonne.« Alsbald lag das Kleid vor ihr und war so glänzend, als wenn es aus lauter Sonnenstrahlen gewebt wäre. Als alle Gäste sich versammelt hatten, so trat sie in den Saal. Jedermann wunderte sich über das schöne Kleid, am meisten die Braut, und da schöne Kleider ihre größte Lust waren, so ging sie zu der Fremden und fragte, ob sie es ihr verkaufen wollte. »Für Geld nicht,« antwortete sie, »aber wenn ich die erste Nacht vor der Türe verweilen darf, wo der Bräutigam schläft, so will ich es hingeben.« Die Braut konnte ihr Verlangen nicht bezwingen und willigte ein, aber sie mischte dem Bräutigam einen Schlaftrunk in seinen Nachtwein, wovon er in tiefen Schlaf verfiel. Als nun alles still geworden war, so kauerte sich die Königstochter vor die Türe der Schlafkammer, öffnete sie ein wenig und rief hinein

»Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an,
hast du mich denn ganz vergessen?
hast du auf dem Glasberg nicht bei mir gesessen?
habe ich vor der Hexe nicht bewahrt dein Leben?
hast du mir auf Treue nicht die Hand gegeben?
Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an.«

Aber es war alles vergeblich, der Trommler wachte nicht auf, und als der Morgen anbrach, mußte die Königstochter unverrichteter Dinge wieder fortgehen. Am zweiten Abend drehte sie ihren Wunschring und sprach »ein Kleid so silbern als der Mond.« Als sie mit dem Kleid, das so zart war wie der Mondschein, bei dem Fest erschien, erregte sie wieder das Verlangen der Braut und gab es ihr für die Erlaubnis, auch die zweite Nacht vor der Türe der Schlafkammer zubringen zu dürfen.

Da rief sie in nächtlicher Stille

»Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an,
hast du mich denn ganz vergessen?
hast du auf dem Glasberg nicht bei mir gesessen?
habe ich vor der Hexe nicht bewahrt dein Leben?
hast du mir auf Treue nicht die Hand gegeben?
Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an.«

Aber der Trommler, von dem Schlaftrunk betäubt, war nicht zu erwecken. Traurig ging sie den Morgen wieder zurück in ihr Waldhaus. Aber die Leute im Haus hatten die Klage des fremden Mädchens gehört und erzählten dem Bräutigam davon: sie sagten ihm auch, daß es ihm nicht möglich gewesen wäre, etwas davon zu vernehmen, weil sie ihm einen Schlaftrunk in den Wein geschüttet hätten. Am dritten Abend drehte die Königstochter den Wunschring und sprach »ein Kleid flimmernd wie Sterne.« Als sie sich darin auf dem Fest zeigte, war die Braut über die Pracht des Kleides, das die andern weit übertraf, ganz außer sich und sprach »ich soll und muß es haben.« Das Mädchen gab es, wie die andern, für die Erlaubnis, die Nacht vor der Türe des Bräutigams zuzubringen. Der Bräutigam aber trank den Wein nicht, der ihm vor dem Schlafengehen gereicht wurde, sondern goß ihn hinter das Bett. Und als alles im Haus still geworden war, so hörte er eine sanfte Stimme, die ihn anrief

»Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an,
hast du mich denn ganz vergessen?
hast du auf dem Glasberg nicht bei mir gesessen?
habe ich vor der Hexe nicht bewahrt dein Leben?
hast du mir auf Treue nicht die Hand gegeben?
Trommler, Trommler, hör mich an.«

Plötzlich kam ihm das Gedächtnis wieder. »Ach,« rief er, »wie habe ich so treulos handeln können, aber der Kuß, den ich meinen Eltern in der Freude meines Herzens auf die rechte Wange gegeben habe, der ist schuld daran, der hat mich betäubt.« Er sprang auf, nahm die Königstochter bei der Hand und führte sie zu dem Bett seiner Eltern. »Das ist meine rechte Braut,« sprach er, »wenn ich die andere heirate, so tue ich großes Unrecht.« Die Eltern, als sie hörten, wie alles sich zugetragen hatte, willigten ein. Da wurden die Lichter im Saal wieder angezündet, Pauken und Trompeten herbeigeholt, die Freunde und Verwandten eingeladen wiederzukommen, und die wahre Hochzeit ward mit großer Freude gefeiert. Die erste Braut behielt die schönen Kleider zur Entschädigung und gab sich zufrieden.

194. Die Kornähre.

Vorzeiten, als Gott noch selbst auf Erden wandelte, da war die Fruchtbarkeit des Bodens viel größer als sie jetzt ist: damals trugen die Ähren nicht fünfzig-oder sechzigfältig, sondern vier- bis fünfhundertfältig. Da wuchsen die Körner am Halm von unten bis oben hinauf: so lang er war, so lang war auch die Ähre. Aber wie die Menschen sind, im Überfluß achten sie des Segens nicht mehr, der von Gott kommt, werden gleichgültig und leichtsinnig. Eines Tages ging eine Frau an einem Kornfeld vorbei, und ihr kleines Kind, das neben ihr sprang, fiel in eine Pfütze und beschmutzte sein Kleidchen. Da riß die Mutter eine Handvoll der schönen Ähren ab und reinigte ihm damit das Kleid. Als der Herr, der eben vorüberkam, das sah, zürnte er und sprach »fortan soll der Kornhalm keine Ähre mehr tragen: die Menschen sind der himmlischen Gabe nicht länger wert.« Die Umstehenden, die das hörten, erschraken, fielen auf die Knie und flehten, daß er noch etwas möchte an dem Halm stehen lassen: wenn sie selbst es auch nicht verdienten, doch der unschuldigen Hühner wegen, die sonst verhungern müßten. Der Herr, der ihr Elend voraussah, erbarmte sich und gewährte die Bitte. Also blieb noch oben die Ähre übrig, wie sie jetzt wächst.

195. Der Grabhügel.

Ein reicher Bauer stand eines Tages in seinem Hof und schaute nach seinen Feldern und Gärten: das Korn wuchs kräftig heran und die Obstbäume hingen voll Früchte. Das Getreide des vorigen Jahrs lag noch in so mächtigen Haufen auf dem Boden, daß es kaum die Balken tragen konnten. Dann ging er in den Stall, da standen die gemästeten Ochsen, die fetten Kühe und die spiegelglatten Pferde. Endlich ging er in seine Stube zurück und warf seine Blicke auf die eisernen Kasten, in welchen sein Geld lag. Als er so stand und seinen Reichtum übersah, klopfte es auf einmal heftig bei ihm an. Es klopfte aber nicht an die Türe seiner Stube, sondern an die Türe seines Herzens. Sie tat sich auf und er hörte eine Stimme, die zu ihm sprach »hast du den Deinigen damit wohlgetan? hast du die Not der Armen angesehen? hast du mit den Hungrigen dein Brot geteilt? war dir genug, was du besaßest, oder hast du noch immer mehr verlangt?« Das Herz zögerte nicht mit der Antwort »ich bin hart und unerbittlich gewesen und habe den Meinigen niemals etwas Gutes erzeigt. Ist ein Armer gekommen, so habe ich mein Auge weggewendet. Ich habe mich um Gott nicht bekümmert, sondern nur an die Mehrung meines Reichtums gedacht. Wäre alles mein eigen gewesen, was der Himmel bedeckte, dennoch hätte ich nicht genug gehabt.« Als er diese Antwort vernahm, erschrak er heftig: die Knie fingen an ihm zu zittern und er mußte sich niedersetzen. Da klopfte es abermals an, aber es klopfte an die Türe seiner Stube. Es war sein Nachbar, ein armer Mann, der ein Häufchen Kinder hatte, die er nicht mehr sättigen konnte. »Ich weiß,« dachte der Arme, »mein Nachbar ist reich, aber er ist ebenso hart: ich glaube nicht, daß er mir hilft, aber meine Kinder schreien nach Brot, da will ich es wagen.« Er sprach zu dem Reichen »Ihr gebt nicht leicht etwas von dem Eurigen weg, aber ich stehe da wie einer, dem das Wasser bis an den Kopf geht: meine Kinder hungern, leiht mir vier Malter Korn.« Der Reiche sah ihn lange an, da begann der erste Sonnenstrahl der Milde einen Tropfen von dem Eis der Habsucht abzuschmelzen. »Vier Malter will ich dir nicht leihen,« antwortete er, »sondern achte will ich dir schenken, aber eine Bedingung mußt du erfüllen.« »Was soll ich tun?« sprach der Arme. »Wenn ich tot bin, sollst du drei Nächte an meinem Grabe wachen.« Dem Bauer ward bei dem Antrag unheimlich zumut, doch in der Not, in der er sich befand, hätte er alles bewilligt: er sagte also zu und trug das Korn heim.

Es war, als hätte der Reiche vorausgesehen, was geschehen würde, nach drei Tagen fiel er plötzlich tot zur Erde; man wußte nicht recht, wie es zugegangen war, aber niemand trauerte um ihn. Als er bestattet war, fiel dem Armen sein Versprechen ein: gerne wäre er davon entbunden gewesen, aber er dachte »er hat sich gegen dich doch mildtätig erwiesen, du hast mit seinem Korn deine hungrigen Kinder gesättigt, und wäre das auch nicht, du hast einmal das Versprechen gegeben und mußt du es halten.« Bei einbrechender Nacht ging er auf den Kirchhof und setzte sich auf den Grabhügel. Es war alles still, nur der Mond schien über die Grabhügel, und manchmal flog eine Eule vorbei und ließ ihre kläglichen Töne hören. Als die Sonne aufging, begab sich der Arme ungefährdet heim, und ebenso ging die zweite Nacht ruhig vorüber. Den Abend des dritten Tags empfand er eine besondere Angst, es war ihm, als stände noch etwas bevor. Als er hinauskam, erblickte er an der Mauer des Kirchhofs einen Mann, den er noch nie gesehen hatte. Er war nicht mehr jung, hatte Narben im Gesicht, und seine Augen blickten scharf und feurig umher. Er war ganz von einem alten Mantel bedeckt, und nur große Reiterstiefeln waren sichtbar. »Was sucht Ihr hier?« redete ihn der Bauer an, »gruselt Euch nicht auf dem einsamen Kirchhof?« »Ich suche nichts,« antwortete er, »aber ich fürchte auch nichts. Ich bin wie der Junge, der ausging, das Gruseln zu lernen, und sich vergeblich bemühte, der aber bekam die Königstochter zur Frau und mit ihr große Reichtümer, und ich bin immer arm geblieben. Ich bin nichts als ein abgedankter Soldat und will hier die Nacht zubringen, weil ich sonst kein Obdach habe.« »Wenn Ihr keine Furcht habt,« sprach der Bauer, »so bleibt bei mir und helft mir dort den Grabhügel bewachen.« »Wacht halten ist Sache des Soldaten,« antwortete er, »was uns hier begegnet, Gutes oder Böses, das wollen wir gemeinschaftlich tragen.« Der Bauer schlug ein, und sie setzten sich zusammen auf das Grab.

Alles blieb still bis Mitternacht, da ertönte auf einmal ein schneidendes Pfeifen in der Luft, und die beiden Wächter erblickten den Bösen, der leibhaftig vor ihnen stand. »Fort, ihr Halunken,« rief er ihnen zu, »der in dem Grab liegt, ist mein: ich will ihn holen, und wo ihr nicht weggeht, dreh ich euch die Hälse um.« »Herr mit der roten Feder,« sprach der Soldat, »Ihr seid mein Hauptmann nicht, ich brauch Euch nicht zu gehorchen, und das Fürchten hab ich noch nicht gelernt. Geht Eurer Wege, wir bleiben hier sitzen.« Der Teufel dachte »mit Gold fängst du die zwei Haderlumpen am besten,« zog gelindere Saiten auf und fragte ganz zutraulich, ob sie nicht einen Beutel mit Gold annehmen und damit heimgehen wollten. »Das läßt sich hören,« antwortete der Soldat, »aber mit einem Beutel voll Gold ist uns nicht gedient: wenn Ihr so viel Gold geben wollt, als da in einen von meinen Stiefeln geht, so wollen wir Euch das Feld räumen und abziehen.« »So viel habe ich nicht bei mir,« sagte der Teufel, »aber ich will es holen: in der benachbarten Stadt wohnt ein Wechsler, der mein guter Freund ist, der streckt mir gerne so viel vor.« Als der Teufel verschwunden war, zog der Soldat seinen linken Stiefel aus und sprach »dem Kohlenbrenner wollen wir schon eine Nase drehen: gebt mir nur Euer Messer, Gevatter.« Er schnitt von dem Stiefel die Sohle ab und stellte ihn neben den Hügel in das hohe Gras an den Rand einer halb überwachsenen Grube. »So ist alles gut,« sprach er, »nun kann der Schornsteinfeger kommen.«

Beide setzten sich und warteten, es dauerte nicht lange, so kam der Teufel und hatte ein Säckchen Gold in der Hand. »Schüttet es nur hinein,« sprach der Soldat und hob den Stiefel ein wenig in die Höhe, »das wird aber nicht genug sein.« Der Schwarze leerte das Säckchen, das Gold fiel durch und der Stiefel blieb leer. »Dummer Teufel,« rief der Soldat, »es schickt nicht: habe ich es nicht gleich gesagt? kehrt nur wieder um und holt mehr.« Der Teufel schüttelte den Kopf, ging und kam nach einer Stunde mit einem viel größeren Sack unter dem Arm. »Nur eingefüllt,« rief der Soldat, »aber ich zweifle, daß der Stiefel voll wird.« Das Gold klingelte, als es hinabfiel, und der Stiefel blieb leer. Der Teufel blickte mit seinen glühenden Augen selbst hinein und überzeugte sich von der Wahrheit. »Ihr habt unverschämt starke Waden,« rief er und verzog den Mund. »Meint Ihr,« erwiderte der Soldat, »ich hätte einen Pferdefuß wie Ihr? seit wann seid Ihr so knauserig? macht, daß Ihr mehr Gold herbeischafft, sonst wird aus unserm Handel nichts.« Der Unhold trollte sich abermals fort. Diesmal blieb er länger aus, und als er endlich erschien, keuchte er unter der Last eines Sackes, der auf seiner Schulter lag. Er schüttete ihn in den Stiefel, der sich aber so wenig füllte als vorher. Er ward wütend und wollte dem Soldat den Stiefel aus der Hand reißen, aber in dem Augenblick drang der erste Strahl der aufgehenden Sonne am Himmel herauf, und der böse Geist entfloh mit lautem Geschrei. Die arme Seele war gerettet.

Der Bauer wollte das Gold teilen, aber der Soldat sprach »gib den Armen, was mir zufällt: ich ziehe zu dir in deine Hütte, und wir wollen mit dem übrigen in Ruhe und Frieden zusammen leben, solange es Gott gefällt.«

196. Oll Rinkrank.

Dar war mal ‘n König wän, un de har ‘n Dochter hat: und de har ‘n glasen Barg maken laten, un har segt, de dar över lopen kun, an to vallen, de schull sin Dochter to ‘n Fro hebben. Do is dar ok en, de mag de Königsdochter so gärn liden, de vragt den König, of he sin Dochter nich hebben schal. »Ja,« segt de König, »wenn he dar över den Barg lopen kan, an dat he valt, den schal he är hebben.« Do segt de Königsdochter, den wil se dar mit hüm över lopen und wil hüm hollen, wen he war vallen schul. Do lopt se dar mit »nanner över, un as se dar miden up sünt, do glit de Königsdochter ut un valt, un de Glasbarg, de deit sick apen, un se schütt darin hendal: un de Brögam, de kan nich sen, war se herdör kamen is, den de Barg het sick glick wär to dan. Do jammert un went he so väl, un de König is ok so trorig un let den Barg dar wedder weg bräken un ment, he wil är wedder ut krigen, man se könt de Stä ni finnen, wär se hendal vallen is. Ünnertüsken is de Königsdochter ganz dep in de Grunt in ‘n grote Höl kamen. Do kumt är dar ‘n ollen Kärl mit ‘n ganzen langen grauen Bart to möt, un de segt, wen se sin Magd wäsen wil und all don, wat he bevelt, den schal se läven bliven, anners will he är ümbringen. Do deit se all, war he är segt. ‘s Morgens, den kricht he sin Ledder ut de Task un legt de an den Barg un sticht darmit to ‘n Barg henut: un den lukt he de Ledder na sick ümhoch mit sick henup. Un den mut se sin Äten kaken und sin Bedd maken un all sin Arbeit don, un den, wen he wedder in Hus kumt, den bringt he alltit ‘n Hüpen Golt un Sülver mit. As se al väl Jaren bi em wäsen is un al ganz olt wurden is, da het he är Fro Mansrot, un se möt hüm oll Rinkrank heten. Do is he ok ins enmal ut, do makt se hüm sin Bedd un waskt sin Schöttels, un do makt se de Dören un Vensters all dicht to, un do is dar so ‘n Schuf wäsen, war ‘t Lecht herin schint het, da let se apen. As d’ oll Rinkrank do wedder kumt, so klopt he an sin Dör und röpt »Fro Mansrot, do mi d’ Dör apen.« »Na,« segt se, »ik do di, oll Rinkrank, d’ Dör nich apen.« Do segt he

»hir sta ik arme Rinkrank
up min söventein Benen lank,
up min en vergüllen Vot,
Fro Mansrot, wask mi d’ Schöttels.«

»‘k heb din Schöttels al wusken,« segt se. Do segt he wedder

»‘hir sta ik arme Rinkrank
up min söventein Benen lank,
up min en vergüllen Vot,
Fro Mansrot, mak mi ‘t Bedd.«

»‘k heb din Bedd all makt,« segt se. Do segt he wedder

»hir sta ik arme Rinkrank
up min söventein Benen lank,
up min en vergüllen Vot,
Fro Mansrot, do mi d' Dör apen.«

Do löpt he all runt üm sin Hus to un süt, dat de lütke Luk dar apen is, do denkt he »du schast doch ins tosen, wat se dar wol makt, warüm dat se mi d' Dör wol nich apen don wil.« Do wil he dar dör kiken un kan den Kop dar ni dör krigen van sin langen Bart. Do stekt he sin Bart dar erst dör de Luk, un as he de dar hendör het, do geit Fro Mansrot bi un schuft de Luk grad to mit 'n Bant, de se dar an bunnen het, un de Bart blift darin vast sitten. Do fangt he so jammerlik an to kriten, dat deit üm so sär: un do bidd't he är, se mag üm wedder los laten. Do segt se, er nich as bet he är de Ledder deit, war he mit to'n Barg herut sticht. Do mag he willen oder nich, he mot är seggen, war de Ledder is. Do bint se 'n ganzen langen Bant dar an de Schuf, un do legt se de Ledder an un sticht to 'n Barg herut: un as se baven is, do lukt se de Schuf apen. Do geit se na är Vader hen und vertelt, wo dat är all gan is. Do freut de König sick so, un är Brögam is dar ok noch, un do gat se hen un gravt den Barg up un finnt den ollen Rinkrank mit all sin Golt ün Sülver darin. Do let de König den ollen Rinkrank dot maken, und all sin Sülver un Golt nimt he mit. Do kricht de Königsdochter den ollen Brögam noch ton Mann, un se lävt recht vergnögt un herrlich un in Freuden.

197. Die Kristallkugel.

Es war einmal eine Zauberin, die hatte drei Söhne, die sich brüderlich liebten: aber die Alte traute ihnen nicht und dachte, sie wollten ihr ihre Macht rauben. Da verwandelte sie den ältesten in einen Adler, der mußte auf einem Felsengebirge hausen, und man sah ihn manchmal am Himmel in großen Kreisen auf- und niederschweben. Den zweiten verwandelte sie in einen Walfisch, der lebte im tiefen Meer, und man sah nur, wie er zuweilen einen mächtigen Wasserstrahl in die Höhe warf. Beide hatten nur zwei Stunden jeden Tag ihre menschliche Gestalt. Der dritte Sohn, da er fürchtete, sie möchte ihn auch in ein reißendes Tier verwandeln, in einen Bären oder einen Wolf, so ging er heimlich fort. Er hatte aber gehört, daß auf dem Schloß der goldenen Sonne eine verwünschte Königstochter säße, die auf Erlösung harrte: es müßte aber jeder sein Leben daran wagen, schon dreiundzwanzig Jünglinge wären eines jämmerlichen Todes gestorben und nur noch einer übrig, dann dürfte keiner mehr kommen. Und da sein Herz ohne Furcht war, so faßte er den Entschluß, das Schloß von der goldenen Sonne aufzusuchen. Er war schon lange Zeit herumgezogen und hatte es nicht finden können, da geriet er in einen großen Wald und wußte nicht, wo der Ausgang war. Auf einmal erblickte er in der Ferne zwei Riesen, die winkten ihm mit der Hand, und als er zu ihnen kam, sprachen sie »wir streiten um einen Hut, wem er zugehören soll, und da wir beide gleich stark sind, so kann keiner den andern überwältigen: die kleinen Menschen sind klüger als wir, daher wollen wir dir die Entscheidung überlassen.« »Wie könnt ihr euch um einen alten Hut streiten?« sagte der Jüngling. »Du weißt nicht, was er für Eigenschaften hat, es ist ein Wünschhut, wer den aufsetzt, der kann sich hinwünschen, wohin er will, und im Augenblick ist er dort.« »Gebt mir den Hut,« sagte der Jüngling, »ich will ein Stück Wegs gehen, und wenn ich euch dann rufe, so lauft um die Wette, und wer am ersten bei mir ist, dem soll er gehören.« Er setzte den Hut auf und ging fort, dachte aber an die Königstochter, vergaß die Riesen und ging immer weiter. Einmal seufzte er aus Herzensgrund und rief »ach, wäre ich doch auf dem Schloß der goldenen Sonne!« Und kaum waren die Worte über seine Lippen, so stand er auf einem hohen Berg vor dem Tor des Schlosses.

Er trat hinein und ging durch alle Zimmer, bis er in dem letzten die Königstochter fand. Aber wie erschrak er, als er sie anblickte: sie hatte ein aschgraues Gesicht voll Runzeln, trübe Augen und rote Haare. »Seid Ihr die Königstochter, deren Schönheit alle Welt rühmt?« rief er aus. »Ach,« erwiderte sie, »das ist meine Gestalt nicht, die Augen der Menschen können mich nur in dieser Häßlichkeit erblicken, aber damit du weißt, wie ich aussehe, so schau in den Spiegel, der läßt sich nicht irre machen, der zeigt dir mein Bild, wie es in Wahrheit ist.« Sie gab ihm den Spiegel in die Hand, und er sah darin das Abbild der schönsten Jungfrau, die auf der Welt war, und sah, wie ihr vor Traurigkeit die Tränen über die Wangen rollten. Da sprach er »wie kannst du erlöst werden? ich scheue keine Gefahr.« Sie sprach »wer die kristallne Kugel erlangt und hält sie dem Zauberer vor, der bricht damit seine Macht, und ich kehre in meine wahre Gestalt zurück. Ach,« setzte sie hinzu, »schon so mancher ist darum in seinen Tod gegangen, und du junges Blut, du jammerst mich, wenn du dich in die großen Gefährlichkeiten begibst.« »Mich kann nichts abhalten,« sprach er, »aber sage mir, was ich tun muß.« »Du sollst alles wissen,« sprach die Königstochter, »wenn du den Berg, auf dem das Schloß steht, hinabgehst, so wird unten an einer Quelle ein wilder Auerochs stehen, mit dem mußt du kämpfen. Und wenn es dir glückt, ihn zu töten, so wird sich aus ihm ein feuriger Vogel erheben, der trägt in seinem Leib ein glühendes Ei, und in dem Ei steckt als Dotter die Kristallkugel. Er läßt aber das Ei nicht fallen, bis er dazu gedrängt wird, fällt es aber auf die Erde, so zündet es und verbrennt alles in seiner Nähe, und das Ei selbst zerschmilzt und mit ihm die kristallne Kugel, und all deine Mühe ist vergeblich gewesen.«

Der Jüngling stieg hinab zu der Quelle, wo der Auerochse schnaubte und ihn anbrüllte. Nach langem Kampf stieß er ihm sein Schwert in den Leib, und er sank nieder. Augenblicklich erhob sich aus ihm der Feuervogel und wollte fortfliegen, aber der Adler, der Bruder des Jünglings, der zwischen den Wolken daherzog, stürzte auf ihn herab, jagte ihn nach dem Meer hin und stieß ihn mit seinem Schnabel an, so daß er in der Bedrängnis das Ei fallen ließ. Es fiel aber nicht in das Meer, sondern auf eine Fischerhütte, die am Ufer stand, und die fing gleich an zu rauchen und wollte in Flammen aufgehen. Da erhoben sich im Meer haushohe Wellen, strömten über die Hütte und bezwangen das Feuer. Der andere Bruder, der Walfisch, war herangeschwommen und hatte das Wasser in die Höhe getrieben. Als der Brand gelöscht war, suchte der Jüngling nach dem Ei und fand es glücklicherweise: es war noch nicht geschmolzen, aber die Schale war von der plötzlichen Abkühlung durch das kalte Wasser zerbröckelt, und er konnte die Kristallkugel unversehrt herausnehmen.

Als der Jüngling zu dem Zauberer ging und sie ihm vorhielt, so sagte dieser »meine Macht ist zerstört, und du bist von nun an der König vom Schloß der goldenen Sonne. Auch deinen Brüdern kannst du die menschliche Gestalt damit zurückgeben.« Da eilte der Jüngling zu der Königstochter, und als er in ihr Zimmer trat, so stand sie da in vollem Glanz ihrer Schönheit, und beide wechselten voll Freude ihre Ringe miteinander.

198. Jungfrau Maleen.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte einen Sohn, der warb um die Tochter eines mächtigen Königs, die hieß Jungfrau Maleen und war wunderschön. Weil ihr Vater sie einem andern geben wollte, so ward sie ihm versagt. Da sich aber beide von Herzen liebten, so wollten sie nicht voneinander lassen, und die Jungfrau Maleen sprach zu ihrem Vater »ich kann und will keinen andern zu meinem Gemahl nehmen.« Da geriet der Vater in Zorn und ließ einen finstern Turn bauen, in den kein Strahl von Sonne oder Mond fiel. Als er fertig war, sprach er »darin sollst du sieben Jahre lang sitzen, dann will ich kommen und sehen, ob dein trotziger Sinn gebrochen ist.« Für die sieben Jahre ward Speise und Trank in den Turn getragen, dann ward sie und ihre Kammerjungfer hineingeführt und eingemauert, und also von Himmel und Erde geschieden. Da saßen sie in der Finsternis, wußten nicht, wann Tag oder Nacht anbrach. Der Königssohn ging oft um den Turn herum und rief ihren Namen, aber kein Laut drang von außen durch die dicken Mauern. Was konnten sie anders tun als jammern und klagen? Indessen ging die Zeit dahin, und an der Abnahme von Speise und Trank merkten sie, daß die sieben Jahre ihrem Ende sich näherten. Sie dachten, der Augen blick ihrer Erlösung wäre gekommen, aber kein Hammerschlag ließ sich hören und kein Stein wollte aus der Mauer fallen: es schien, als ob ihr Vater sie vergessen hätte. Als sie nur noch für kurze Zeit Nahrung hatten und einen jämmerlichen Tod voraussahen, da sprach die Jungfrau Maleen »wir müssen das letzte versuchen und sehen, ob wir die Mauer durchbrechen.« Sie nahm das Brotmesser, grub und bohrte an dem Mörtel eines Steins, und wenn sie müd war, so löste sie die Kammerjungfer ab. Nach langer Arbeit gelang es ihnen, einen Stein herauszunehmen, dann einen zweiten und dritten, und nach drei Tagen fiel der erste Lichtstrahl in ihre Dunkelheit, und endlich war die Öffnung so groß, daß sie hinausschauen konnten. Der Himmel war blau, und eine frische Luft wehte ihnen entgegen, aber wie traurig sah ringsumher alles aus: das Schloß ihres Vaters lag in Trümmern, die Stadt und die Dörfer waren, soweit man sehen konnte, verbrannt, die Felder weit und breit verheert: keine Menschenseele ließ sich erblicken. Als die Öffnung in der Mauer so groß war, daß sie hindurchschlüpfen konnten, so sprang zuerst die Kammerjungfer herab, und dann folgte die Jungfrau Maleen. Aber wo sollten sie sich hinwenden? Die Feinde hatten das ganze Reich verwüstet, den König verjagt und alle Einwohner erschlagen. Sie wanderten fort, um ein anderes Land zu suchen, aber sie fanden nirgend ein Obdach oder einen Menschen, der ihnen einen Bissen Brot gab, und ihre Not war so groß, daß sie ihren Hunger an einem Brennesselstrauch stillen mußten. Als sie nach langer Wanderung in ein anderes Land kamen, boten sie überall ihre Dienste an, aber wo sie anklopften, wurden sie abgewiesen, und niemand wollte sich ihrer erbarmen. Endlich gelangten sie in eine große Stadt und gingen nach dem königlichen Hof. Aber auch da hieß man sie weitergehen, bis endlich der Koch sagte, sie könnten in der Küche bleiben und als Aschenputtel dienen.

Der Sohn des Königs, in dessen Reich sie sich befanden, war aber gerade der Verlobte der Jungfrau Maleen gewesen. Der Vater hatte ihm eine andere Braut bestimmt, die ebenso häßlich von Angesicht als bös von Herzen war. Die Hochzeit war festgesetzt und die Braut schon angelangt, bei ihrer großen Häßlichkeit aber ließ sie sich vor niemand sehen und schloß sich in ihre Kammer ein, und die Jungfrau Maleen mußte ihr das Essen aus der Küche bringen. Als der Tag herankam, wo die Braut mit dem Bräutigam in die Kirche gehen sollte, so schämte sie sich ihrer Häßlichkeit und fürchtete, wenn sie sich auf der Straße zeigte, würde sie von den Leuten verspottet und ausgelacht. Da sprach sie zur Jungfrau Maleen »dir steht ein großes Glück bevor, ich habe mir den Fuß vertreten und kann nicht gut über die Straße gehen: du sollst meine Brautkleider anziehen und meine Stelle einnehmen: eine größere Ehre kann dir nicht zuteil werden.« Die Jungfrau Maleen aber schlug es aus und sagte »ich verlange keine Ehre, die mir nicht gebührt.« Es war auch vergeblich, daß sie ihr Gold anbot. Endlich sprach sie zornig »wenn du mir nicht gehorchst, so kostet es dir dein Leben: ich brauche nur ein Wort zu sagen, so wird dir der Kopf vor die Füße gelegt.« Da mußte sie gehorchen und die prächtigen Kleider der Braut samt ihrem Schmuck anlegen. Als sie in den königlichen Saal eintrat, erstaunten alle über ihre große Schönheit, und der König sagte zu seinem Sohn »das ist die Braut, die ich dir ausgewählt habe, und die du zur Kirche führen sollst.« Der Bräutigam erstaunte und dachte »sie gleicht meiner Jungfrau Maleen, und ich würde glauben, sie wäre es selbst, aber die sitzt schon lange im Turn gefangen oder ist tot.« Er nahm sie an der Hand und führte sie zur Kirche. An dem Wege stand ein Brennesselbusch, da sprach sie

»Brennettelbusch,
Brennettelbusch so klene,
wat steist du hier allene?
ik hef de Tyt geweten,
da hef ik dy ungesaden
ungebraden eten.«

»Was sprichst du da?« fragte der Königssohn. »Nichts,« antwortete sie, »ich dachte nur an die Jungfrau Maleen.« Er verwunderte sich, daß sie von ihr wußte, schwieg aber still. Als sie an den Steg vor dem Kirchhof kamen, sprach sie

»Karkstegels, brik nich,
bün de rechte Brut nich.«

»Was sprichst du da?« fragte der Königssohn. »Nichts,« antwortete sie, »ich dachte nur an die Jungfrau Maleen.« »Kennst du die Jungfrau Maleen?« »Nein,« antwortete sie, »wie sollte ich sie kennen, ich habe nur von ihr gehört.« Als sie an die Kirchtüre kamen, sprach sie abermals

»Karkendär, brik nich,
bün de rechte Brut nich.«

»Was sprichst du da?« fragte er. »Ach,« antwortete sie, »ich habe nur an die Jungfrau Maleen gedacht.« Da zog er ein kostbares Geschmeide hervor, legte es ihr an den Hals und hakte die Kettenringe ineinander. Darauf traten sie in die Kirche, und der Priester legte vor dem Altar ihre Hände ineinander und vermählte sie. Er führte sie zurück, aber sie sprach auf dem ganzen Weg kein Wort. Als sie wieder in dem königlichen Schloß angelangt waren, eilte sie in die Kammer der Braut, legte die prächtigen Kleider und den Schmuck ab, zog ihren grauen Kittel an und behielt nur das Geschmeide um den Hals, das sie von dem Bräutigam empfangen hatte.

Als die Nacht herankam und die Braut in das Zimmer des Königssohns sollte geführt werden, so ließ sie den Schleier über ihr Gesicht fallen, damit er den Betrug nicht merken sollte. Sobald alle Leute fortgegangen waren, sprach er zu ihr »was hast du doch zu dem Brennesselbusch gesagt, der an dem Wege stand?« »Zu welchem Brennesselbusch?« fragte sie, »ich spreche mit keinem Brennesselbusch.« »Wenn du es nicht getan hast, so bist du die rechte Braut nicht,« sagte er. Da half sie sich und sprach

»mut heruet na myne Maegt,
de my myn Gedanken draegt.«

Sie ging hinaus und fuhr die Jungfrau Maleen an »Dirne, was hast du zu dem Brennesselbusch gesagt?« »Ich sagte nichts als

Brennettelbusch,
Brennettelbusch so klene,
wat steist du hier allene?
ik hef de Tyt geweten,
da hef ik dy ungesaden
ungebraden eten.«

Die Braut lief in die Kammer zurück und sagte »jetzt weiß ich, was ich zu dem Brennesselbusch gesprochen habe,« und wiederholte die Worte, die sie eben gehört hatte. »Aber was sagtest du zu dem Kirchensteg, als wir darübergingen?« fragte der Königssohn. »Zu dem Kirchensteg?« antwortete sie, »ich spreche mit keinem Kirchensteg.« »Dann bist du auch die rechte Braut nicht.« Sie sagte wiederum

»mut heruet na myne Maegt,
de my myn Gedanken draegt.«

Lief hinaus und fuhr die Jungfrau Maleen an »Dirne, was hast du zu dem Kirchsteg gesagt?« »Ich sagte nichts als

Karkstegels, brik nich,
bün de rechte Brut nich.«

»Das kostet dich dein Leben,« rief die Braut, eilte aber in die Kammer und sagte »jetzt weiß ich, was ich zu dem Kirchensteg gesprochen,« und wiederholte die Worte. »Aber was sagtest du zur Kirchentür?« »Zur Kirchentür?« antwortete sie, »ich spreche mit keiner Kirchentür.« »Dann bist du auch die rechte Braut nicht.« Sie ging hinaus, fuhr die Jungfrau Maleen an »Dirne, was hast du zu der Kirchentür gesagt?« »Ich sagte nichts als

Karkendär, brik nich,
bün de rechte Brut nich.«

»Das bricht dir den Hals,« rief die Braut und geriet in den größten Zorn, eilte aber zurück in die Kammer und sagte »jetzt weiß ich, was ich zu der Kirchentür gesprochen habe,« und wiederholte die Worte. »Aber wo hast du das Geschmeide, das ich dir an der Kirchentür gab?« »Was für ein Geschmeide?« antwortete sie, »du hast mir kein Geschmeide gegeben.« »Ich habe es dir selbst um den Hals gelegt und selbst eingehakt: wenn du das nicht weißt, so bist du die rechte Braut nicht.« Er zog ihr den Schleier vom Gesicht, und als er ihre grundlose Häßlichkeit erblickte, sprang er erschrocken zurück und sprach »wie kommst du hierher? wer bist du?« »Ich bin deine verlobte Braut, aber weil ich fürchtete, die Leute würden mich verspotten, wenn sie mich draußen erblickten, so habe ich dem Aschenputtel befohlen, meine Kleider anzuziehen und statt meiner zur Kirche zu gehen.« »Wo ist das Mädchen?« sagte er, »ich will es sehen, geh und hol es hierher.« Sie ging hinaus und sagte den Dienern, das Aschenputtel sei eine Betrügerin, sie sollten es in den Hof hinabführen und ihm den Kopf abschlagen. Die Diener packten es und wollten es fortschleppen, aber er schrie so laut um Hilfe, daß der Königssohn seine Stimme vernahm, aus seinem Zimmer herbeieilte und den Befehl gab, das Mädchen augenblicklich loszulassen. Es wurden Lichter herbeigeholt, und da bemerkte er an ihrem Hals den Goldschmuck, den er ihm vor der Kirchentür gegeben hatte. »Du bist die rechte Braut,« sagte er, »die mit mir zur Kirche gegangen ist: komm mit mir in meine Kammer.« Als sie beide allein waren, sprach er »du hast auf dem Kirchgang die Jungfrau Maleen genannt, die meine verlobte Braut war: wenn ich dächte, es wäre möglich, so müßte ich glauben, sie stände vor mir: du gleichst ihr in allem.« Sie antwortete »ich bin die Jungfrau Maleen, die um dich sieben Jahre in der Finsternis gefangen gesessen, Hunger und Durst gelitten und so lange in Not und Armut gelebt hat: aber heute bescheint mich die Sonne wieder. Ich bin dir in der Kirche angetraut und bin deine rechtmäßige Gemahlin.« Da küßten sie einander und waren glücklich für ihr Lebtag. Der falschen Braut ward zur Vergeltung der Kopf abgeschlagen.

Der Turn, in welchem die Jungfrau Maleen gesessen hatte, stand noch lange Zeit, und wenn die Kinder vorübergingen, so sangen sie

»kling klang kloria,
wer sitt in dissen Toria?
Dar sitt en Königsdochter in,
die kann ik nich to seen krygn.
De Muer, de will nich bräken,
de Steen, de will nich stechen.
Hänschen mit de bunte Jak,
kumm unn folg my achterna.«

199. Die Stiefel von Büffelleder.

Ein Soldat, der sich vor nichts fürchtet, kümmert sich auch um nichts. So einer hatte seinen Abschied erhalten, und da er nichts gelernt hatte und nichts verdienen konnte, so zog er umher und bat gute Leute um ein Almosen. Auf seinen Schultern hing ein alter Wettermantel, und ein Paar Reiterstiefeln von Büffelleder waren ihm auch noch geblieben. Eines Tages ging er, ohne auf Weg und Steg zu achten, immer ins Feld hinein und gelangte endlich in einen Wald. Er wußte nicht, wo er war, sah aber auf einem abgehauenen Baumstamm einen Mann sitzen, der gut gekleidet war und einen grünen Jägerrock trug. Der Soldat reichte ihm die Hand, ließ sich neben ihm auf das Gras nieder und streckte seine Beine aus. »Ich sehe, du hast feine Stiefel an, die glänzend gewichst sind,« sagte er zu dem Jäger, »wenn du aber herumziehen müßtest wie ich, so würden sie nicht lange halten. Schau die meinigen an, die sind von Büffelleder und haben schon lange gedient, gehen aber durch dick und dünn.« Nach einer Weile stand der Soldat auf und sprach »ich kann nicht länger bleiben, der Hunger treibt mich fort. Aber, Bruder Wichsstiefel, wo hinaus geht der Weg?« »Ich weiß es selber nicht,« antwortete der Jäger, »ich habe mich in dem Wald verirrt.« »So geht dirs ja wie mir,« sprach der Soldat, »gleich und gleich gesellt sich gern, wir wollen beieinander bleiben und den Weg suchen.« Der Jäger lächelte ein wenig, und sie gingen zusammen fort, immer weiter, bis die Nacht einbrach. »Wir kommen aus dem Wald nicht heraus,« sprach der Soldat, »aber ich sehe dort in der Ferne ein Licht schimmern, da wirds etwas zu essen geben.« Sie fanden ein Steinhaus, klopften an die Türe, und ein altes Weib öffnete. »Wir suchen ein Nachtquartier«, sprach der Soldat, »und etwas Unterfutter für den Magen, denn der meinige ist so leer wie ein alter Tornister.« »Hier könnt ihr nicht bleiben,« antwortete die Alte, »das ist ein Räuberhaus, und ihr tut am klügsten, daß ihr euch fortmacht, bevor sie heim kommen, denn finden sie euch, so seid ihr verloren.« »Es wird so schlimm nicht sein,« antwortete der Soldat, »ich habe seit zwei Tagen keinen Bissen genossen, und es ist mir einerlei, ob ich hier umkomme oder im Wald vor Hunger sterbe. Ich gehe herein.« Der Jäger wollte nicht folgen, aber der Soldat zog ihn am Ärmel mit sich »komm, Bruderherz, es wird nicht gleich an den Kragen gehen.« Die Alte hatte Mitleiden und sagte »kriecht hinter den Ofen, wenn sie etwas übrig lassen und eingeschlafen sind, so will ichs euch zustecken.« Kaum saßen sie in der Ecke, so kamen zwölf Räuber hereingestürmt, setzten sich an den Tisch, der schon gedeckt war, und forderten mit Ungestüm das Essen. Die Alte trug einen großen Braten herein, und die Räuber ließen sichs wohl schmecken. Als der Geruch von der Speise dem Soldaten in die Nase stieg, sagte er zum Jäger »ich halts nicht länger aus, ich setze mich an den Tisch und esse mit.« »Du bringst uns ums Leben,« sprach der Jäger und hielt ihn am Arm. Aber der Soldat fing an laut zu husten. Als die Räuber das hörten, warfen sie Messer und Gabel hin, sprangen auf und entdeckten die beiden hinter dem Ofen. »Aha, ihr Herren,«

riefen sie, »sitzt ihr in der Ecke? was wollt ihr hier? seid ihr als Kundschafter ausgeschickt? wartet, ihr sollt an einem dürren Ast das Fliegen lernen.« »Nur manierlich,« sprach der Soldat, »mich hungert, gebt mir zu essen, hernach könnt ihr mit mir machen, was ihr wollt.« Die Räuber stutzten, und der Anführer sprach »ich sehe, du fürchtest dich nicht, gut, Essen sollst du haben, aber hernach mußt du sterben.« »Das wird sich finden,« sagte der Soldat, setzte sich an den Tisch und fing an tapfer in den Braten einzuhauen. »Bruder Wichsstiefel, komm und iß,« rief er dem Jäger zu, »du wirst hungrig sein so gut als ich, und einen bessern Braten kannst du zu Haus nicht haben;« aber der Jäger wollte nicht essen. Die Räuber sahen dem Soldaten mit Erstaunen zu und sagten »der Kerl macht keine Umstände.« Hernach sprach er »das Essen wäre schon gut, nun schafft auch einen guten Trunk herbei.« Der Anführer war in der Laune, sich das auch noch gefallen zu lassen, und rief der Alten zu »hol eine Flasche aus dem Keller, und zwar von dem besten.« Der Soldat zog den Pfropfen heraus, daß es knallte, ging mit der Flasche zu dem Jäger und sprach »gib acht, Bruder, du sollst dein blaues Wunder sehen: jetzt will ich eine Gesundheit auf die ganze Sippschaft ausbringen.« Dann schwenkte er die Flasche über den Köpfen der Räuber, rief »ihr sollt alle leben, aber das Maul auf und die rechte Hand in der Höhe,« und tat einen herzhaften Zug. Kaum waren die Worte heraus, so saßen sie alle bewegungslos, als wären sie von Stein, hatten das Maul offen und streckten den rechten Arm in die Höhe. Der Jäger sprach zu dem Soldaten »ich sehe, du kannst noch andere Kunststücke, aber nun komm und laß uns heim gehen.« »Oho, Bruderherz, das wäre zu früh abmarschiert, wir haben den Feind geschlagen und wollen erst Beute machen. Die sitzen da fest und sperren das Maul vor Verwunderung auf: sie dürfen sich aber nicht rühren, bis ich es erlaube. Komm, iß und trink.« Die Alte mußte noch eine Flasche von dem besten holen, und der Soldat stand nicht eher auf, als bis er wieder für drei Tage gegessen hatte. Endlich, als der Tag kam, sagte er »nun ist es Zeit, daß wir das Zelt abbrechen, und damit wir einen kurzen Marsch haben, so soll die Alte uns den nächsten Weg nach der Stadt zeigen.« Als sie dort angelangt waren, ging er zu seinen alten Kameraden und sprach »ich habe draußen im Wald ein Nest voll Galgenvögel aufgefunden, kommt mit, wir wollen es ausheben.« Der Soldat führte sie an und sprach zu dem Jäger »du mußt wieder mit zurück und zusehen, wie sie flattern, wenn wir sie an den Füßen packen.« Er stellte die Mannschaft rings um die Räuber herum, dann nahm er die Flasche, trank einen Schluck, schwenkte sie über ihnen her und rief »ihr sollt alle leben!« Augenblicklich hatten sie ihre Bewegung wieder, wurden aber niedergeworfen und an Händen und Füßen mit Stricken gebunden. Dann hieß sie der Soldat wie Säcke auf einen Wagen werfen und sagte »fahrt sie nur gleich vor das Gefängnis.« Der Jäger aber nahm einen von der Mannschaft beiseite und gab ihm noch eine Bestellung mit.

»Bruder Wichsstiefel,« sprach der Soldat, »wir haben den Feind glücklich überrumpelt und uns wohl genährt, jetzt wollen wir als Nachzügler in aller Ruhe hinterher marschieren.« Als sie sich der Stadt näherten, so sah der

Soldat, wie sich eine Menge Menschen aus dem Stadttor drängten, lautes Freudengeschrei erhuben und grüne Zweige in der Luft schwangen. Dann sah er, daß die ganze Leibwache herangezogen kam.

»Was soll das heißen?« sprach er ganz verwundert zu dem Jäger. »Weißt du nicht,« antwortete er, »daß der König lange Zeit aus seinem Reich entfernt war, heute kehrt er zurück, und da gehen ihm alle entgegen.« »Aber wo ist der König?« sprach der Soldat, »ich sehe ihn nicht.« »Hier ist er,« antwortete der Jäger, »ich bin der König und habe meine Ankunft melden lassen.« Dann öffnete er seinen Jägerrock, daß man die königlichen Kleider sehen konnte. Der Soldat erschrak, fiel auf die Knie und bat ihn um Vergebung, daß er ihn in der Unwissenheit wie seinesgleichen behandelt und ihn mit solchem Namen angeredet habe. Der König aber reichte ihm die Hand und sprach »du bist ein braver Soldat und hast mir das Leben gerettet. Du sollst keine Not mehr leiden, ich will schon für dich sorgen. Und wenn du einmal ein Stück guten Braten essen willst, so gut als in dem Räuberhaus, so komm nur in die königliche Küche. Willst du aber eine Gesundheit ausbringen, so sollst du erst bei mir Erlaubnis dazu holen.«

200. Der goldene Schlüssel.

Zur Winterszeit, als einmal ein tiefer Schnee lag, mußte ein armer Junge hinausgehen und Holz auf einem Schlitten holen. Wie er es nun zusammengesucht und aufgeladen hatte, wollte er, weil er so erfroren war, noch nicht nach Haus gehen, sondern erst Feuer anmachen und sich ein bißchen wärmen. Da scharrte er den Schnee weg, und wie er so den Erdboden aufräumte, fand er einen kleinen goldenen Schlüssel. Nun glaubte er, wo der Schlüssel wäre, müßte auch das Schloß dazu sein, grub in der Erde und fand ein eisernes Kästchen. »Wenn der Schlüssel nur paßt!« dachte er, »es sind gewiß kostbare Sachen in dem Kästchen.« Er suchte, aber es war kein Schlüsselloch da, endlich entdeckte er eins, aber so klein, daß man es kaum sehen konnte. Er probierte und der Schlüssel paßte glücklich. Da drehte er einmal herum, und nun müssen wir warten, bis er vollends aufgeschlossen und den Deckel aufgemacht hat, dann werden wir erfahren, was für wunderbare Sachen in dem Kästchen lagen.

Kinderlegenden.

1. Der heilige Joseph im Walde.

Es war einmal eine Mutter, die hatte drei Töchter, davon war die älteste unartig und bös, die zweite schon viel besser, obgleich sie auch ihre Fehler hatte, die jüngste aber war ein frommes gutes Kind. Die Mutter war aber so wunderlich, daß sie gerade die älteste Tochter am liebsten hatte und die jüngste nicht leiden konnte. Daher schickte sie das arme Mädchen oft hinaus in einen großen Wald, um es sich vom Hals zu schaffen, denn sie dachte, es würde sich verirren und nimmermehr wiederkommen. Aber der Schutzengel, den jedes fromme Kind hat, verließ es nicht, sondern brachte es immer wieder auf den rechten Weg. Einmal indessen tat das Schutzenglein, als wenn es nicht bei der Hand wäre, und das Kind konnte sich nicht wieder aus dem Walde herausfinden. Es ging immer fort, bis es Abend wurde, da sah es in der Ferne ein Lichtlein brennen, lief darauf zu und kam vor eine kleine Hütte. Es klopfte an, die Türe ging auf, und es gelangte zu einer zweiten Türe, wo es wieder anklopfte. Ein alter Mann, der einen schneeweißen Bart hatte und ehrwürdig aussah, machte ihm auf, und das war niemand anders als der heilige Joseph. Er sprach ganz freundlich »komm, liebes Kind, setze dich ans Feuer auf mein Stühlchen und wärme dich, ich will dir klar Wässerchen holen, wenn du Durst hast; zu essen aber hab ich hier im Walde nichts für dich als ein paar Würzelcher, die mußt du dir erst schaben und kochen.« Da reichte ihm der heilige Joseph die Wurzeln: das Mädchen schrappte sie säuberlich ab, dann holte es ein Stückchen Pfannkuchen und das Brot, das ihm seine Mutter mitgegeben hatte, und tat alles zusammen in einem Kesselchen beis Feuer und kochte sich ein Mus. Als das fertig war, sprach der heilige Joseph »ich bin so hungrig, gib mir etwas von deinem Essen.« Da war das Kind bereitwillig und gab ihm mehr, als es für sich behielt, doch war Gottes Segen dabei, daß es satt ward. Als sie nun gegessen hatten, sprach der heilige Joseph »nun wollen wir zu Bett gehen: ich habe aber nur ein Bett, lege du dich hinein, ich will mich ins Stroh auf die Erde legen.« »Nein,« antwortete es, »bleib du nur in deinem Bett, für mich ist das Stroh weich genug.« Der heilige Joseph aber nahm das Kind auf den Arm und trug es ins Bettchen, da tat es sein Gebet und schlief ein. Am andern Morgen, als es aufwachte, wollte es dem heiligen Joseph guten Morgen sagen, aber es sah ihn nicht. Da stand es auf und suchte ihn, konnte ihn aber in keiner Ecke finden: endlich gewahrte es hinter der Tür einen Sack mit Geld, so schwer, als es ihn nur tragen konnte, darauf stand geschrieben, das wäre für das Kind, das heute nacht hier geschlafen hätte. Da nahm es den Sack und sprang damit fort und kam auch glücklich zu seiner Mutter, und weil es ihr alle das Geld schenkte, so konnte sie nicht anders, sie mußte mit ihm zufrieden sein.

Am folgenden Tag bekam das zweite Kind auch Lust, in den Wald zu gehen. Die Mutter gab ihm ein viel größeres Stück Pfannkuchen und Brot mit. Es erging ihm nun gerade wie dem ersten Kinde. Abends kam es in das Hüttchen des heiligen Joseph, der ihm Wurzeln zu einem Mus reichte. Als das fertig war, sprach er gleichfalls zu ihm »ich bin so hungrig, gib mir etwas von deinem Essen.« Da antwortete das Kind »iß als mit.« Als ihm danach der heilige Joseph sein Bett anbot und sich aufs Stroh legen wollte, antwortete es »nein, leg dich als mit ins Bett, wir haben ja beide wohl Platz darin.« Der heilige Joseph nahm es auf den Arm, legte es ins Bettchen und legte sich ins Stroh. Morgens, als das Kind aufwachte und den heiligen Joseph suchte, war er verschwunden, aber hinter der Türe fand es ein Säckchen mit Geld, das war händelang, und darauf stand geschrieben, es wäre für das Kind, das heute nacht hier geschlafen hätte. Da nahm es das Säckchen und lief damit heim, und brachte es seiner Mutter, doch behielt es heimlich ein paar Stücke für sich.

Nun war die älteste Tochter neugierig geworden und wollte den folgenden Morgen auch hinaus in den Wald. Die Mutter gab ihr Pfannkuchen mit, so viel sie wollte, Brot und auch Käse dazu. Abends fand sie den heiligen Joseph in seinem Hüttchen gerade so, wie ihn die zwei andern gefunden hatten. Als das Mus fertig war und der heilige Joseph sprach »ich bin so hungrig, gib mir etwas von deinem Essen,« antwortete das Mädchen »warte, bis ich satt bin, was ich dann überig lasse, das sollst du haben.« Es aß aber beinah alles auf, und der heilige Joseph mußte das Schüsselchen ausschrappen. Der gute Alte bot ihm hernach sein Bett an und wollte auf dem Stroh liegen, das nahm es ohne Widerrede an, legte sich in das Bettchen und ließ dem Greis das harte Stroh. Am andern Morgen, wie es aufwachte, war der heilige Joseph nicht zu finden, doch darüber machte es sich keine Sorgen: es suchte hinter der Türe nach einem Geldsack. Es kam ihm vor, als läge etwas auf der Erde, doch weil es nicht recht unterscheiden konnte, was es war, bückte es sich und stieß mit seiner Nase daran. Aber es blieb an der Nase hangen, und wie es sich aufrichtete, sah es zu seinem Schrecken, daß es noch eine zweite Nase war, die an der seinen festhing. Da hub es an zu schreien und zu heulen, aber das half nichts, es mußte immer auf seine Nase sehen, wie die so weit hinausstand. Da lief es in einem Geschrei fort, bis es dem heiligen Joseph begegnete, dem fiel es zu Füßen und bat so lange, bis er aus Mitleid ihm die Nase wieder abnahm und noch zwei Pfennige schenkte. Als es daheim ankam, stand vor der Türe seine Mutter und fragte »was hast du geschenkt kriegt?« Da log es und antwortete »einen großen Sack voll Gelds, aber ich habe ihn unterwegs verloren.« »Verloren!« rief die Mutter, »o den wollen wir schon wiederfinden,« nahm es bei der Hand und wollte mit ihm suchen. Zuerst fing es an zu weinen und wollte nicht mitgehen, endlich aber ging es mit, doch auf dem Wege kamen so viele Eidechsen und Schlangen auf sie beide los, daß sie sich nicht zu retten wußten, sie stachen auch endlich das böse Kind tot, und die Mutter stachen sie in den Fuß, weil sie es nicht besser erzogen hatte.

2. Die zwölf Apostel.

Es war dreihundert Jahre vor des Herrn Christi Geburt, da lebte eine Mutter, die hatte zwölf Söhne, war aber so arm und dürftig, daß sie nicht wußte, womit sie ihnen länger das Leben erhalten sollte. Sie betete täglich zu Gott, er möchte doch geben, daß alle ihre Söhne mit dem verheißenen Heiland auf Erden zusammen wären. Als nun ihre Not immer größer ward, schickte sie einen nach dem andern in die Welt, um sich ihr Brot zu suchen. Der älteste hieß Petrus, der ging aus, und war schon weit gegangen, eine ganze Tagreise, da geriet er in einen großen Wald. Er suchte einen Ausweg, konnte aber keinen finden und verirrte sich immer tiefer; dabei empfand er so großen Hunger, daß er sich kaum aufrecht erhalten konnte. Endlich war er so schwach, daß er liegen bleiben mußte und glaubte, dem Tode nahe zu sein. Da stand auf einmal neben ihm ein kleiner Knabe, der glänzte und war so schön und freundlich wie ein Engel. Das Kind schlug seine Händchen zusammen, daß er aufschauen und es anblicken mußte. Da sprach es »warum sitzest du da so betrübt?« »Ach,« antwortete Petrus, »ich gehe umher in der Welt und suche mein Brot, damit ich noch den verheißenen lieben Heiland sehe; das ist mein größter Wunsch.« Das Kind sprach »komm mit, so soll dein Wunsch erfüllt werden.« Es nahm den armen Petrus an der Hand und führte ihn zwischen Felsen zu einer großen Höhle. Wie sie hineinkamen, so blitzte alles von Gold, Silber und Kristall, und in der Mitte standen zwölf Wiegen nebeneinander. Da sprach das Englein »lege dich in die erste und schlaf ein wenig, ich will dich wiegen.« Das tat Petrus, und das Englein sang ihm und wiegte ihn so lange, bis er eingeschlafen war. Und wie er schlief, kam der zweite Bruder, den auch sein Schutzenglein hereinführte, und ward wie der erste in den Schlaf gewiegt, und so kamen die andern nach der Reihe, bis alle zwölfe dalagen in den goldenen Wiegen und schliefen. Sie schliefen aber dreihundert Jahre, bis in der Nacht, worin der Weltheiland geboren ward. Da erwachten sie und waren mit ihm auf Erden und wurden die zwölf Apostel genannt.

3. Die Rose.

Et was mal eine arme Frugge, de hadde twei Kinner; dat jungeste moste olle Dage in en Wald gohn un langen (holen) Holt. Asset nu mal ganz wiet söken geit, kam so en klein Kind, dat was awerst ganz wacker to em un holp (half) flietig Holt lesen un drog et auck bis für dat Hus; dann was et awerst, eh en Augenschlägsken (Augenblick) vergienk, verswunnen. Dat Kind vertelde et siner Moder, de wul et awerst nig glöven. Up et lest brochte et en Rause (Rose) mit un vertelde, dat schöne Kind hädde em deise Rause gieven und hädde em sägt, wenn de Rause upblöhet war, dann wull et wier kommen. De Moder stellde dei Rause in’t Water. Einen Morgen kam dat Kind gar nig ut dem Bedde, de Moder gink to dem Bedde hen un fund dat Kind daude (tot); et lag awerst ganz anmotik. Un de Rause was den sulftigen Morgen upblöhet.

4. Armut und Demut führen zum Himmel.

Es war einmal ein Königssohn, der ging hinaus in das Feld und war nachdenklich und traurig. Er sah den Himmel an, der war so schön rein und blau, da seufzte er und sprach »wie wohl muß einem erst da oben im Himmel sein!« Da erblickte er einen armen greisen Mann, der des Weges daherkam, redete ihn an und fragte »wie kann ich wohl in den Himmel kommen?« Der Mann antwortete »durch Armut und Demut. Leg an meine zerrissenen Kleider, wandere sieben Jahre in der Welt und lerne ihr Elend kennen: nimm kein Geld, sondern wenn du hungerst, bitt mitleidige Herzen um ein Stückchen Brot, so wirst du dich dem Himmel nähern.« Da zog der Königssohn seinen prächtigen Rock aus und hing dafür das Bettlergewand um, ging hinaus in die weite Welt und duldete groß Elend. Er nahm nichts als ein wenig Essen, sprach nichts, sondern betete zu dem Herrn, daß er ihn einmal in seinen Himmel aufnehmen wollte. Als die sieben Jahre herum waren, da kam er wieder an seines Vaters Schloß, aber niemand erkannte ihn. Er sprach zu den Dienern »geht und sagt meinen Eltern, daß ich wiedergekommen bin.« Aber die Diener glaubten es nicht, lachten und ließen ihn stehen. Da sprach er »geht und sagts meinen Brüdern, daß sie herabkommen, ich möchte sie so gerne wiedersehen.« Sie wollten auch nicht, bis endlich einer von ihnen hinging und es den Königskindern sagte, aber diese glaubten es nicht und bekümmerten sich nicht darum. Da schrieb er einen Brief an seine Mutter und beschrieb ihr darin all sein Elend, aber er sagte nicht, daß er ihr Sohn wäre. Da ließ ihm die Königin aus Mitleid einen Platz unter der Treppe anweisen und ihm täglich durch zwei Diener Essen bringen. Aber der eine war bös und sprach »was soll dem Bettler das gute Essen!« behielts für sich oder gabs den Hunden und brachte dem Schwachen, Abgezehrten nur Wasser; doch der andere war ehrlich und brachte ihm, was er für ihn bekam. Es war wenig, doch konnte er davon eine Zeitlang leben; dabei war er ganz geduldig, bis er immer schwächer ward. Als aber seine Krankheit zunahm, da begehrte er das heilige Abendmahl zu empfangen. Wie es nun unter der halben Messe ist, fangen von selbst alle Glocken in der Stadt und in der Gegend an zu läuten. Der Geistliche geht nach der Messe zu dem armen Mann unter der Treppe, so liegt er da tot, in der einen Hand eine Rose, in der andern eine Lilie, und neben ihm ein Papier, darauf steht seine Geschichte aufgeschrieben. Als er begraben war, wuchs auf der einen Seite des Grabes eine Rose, auf der andern eine Lilie heraus.

5. Gottes Speise.

Es waren einmal zwei Schwestern, die eine hatte keine Kinder und war reich, die andere hatte fünf Kinder und war eine Witwe und war so arm, daß sie nicht mehr Brot genug hatte, sich und ihre Kinder zu sättigen. Da ging sie in der Not zu ihrer Schwester und sprach »meine Kinder leiden mit mir den größten Hunger, du bist reich, gib mir einen Bissen Brot.« Die steinreiche Frau war auch steinhart, sprach »ich habe selbst nichts in meinem Hause,« und wies die Arme mit bösen Worten fort. Nach einiger Zeit kam der Mann der reichen Schwester heim und wollte sich ein Stück Brot schneiden, wie er aber den ersten Schnitt in den Laib tat, floß das rote Blut heraus. Als die Frau das sah, erschrak sie und erzählte ihm, was geschehen war. Er eilte hin und wollte helfen, wie er aber in die Stube der armen Witwe trat, so fand er sie betend; die beiden jüngsten Kinder hatte sie auf den Armen, die drei ältesten lagen da und waren gestorben. Er bot ihr Speise an, aber sie antwortete »nach irdischer Speise verlangen wir nicht mehr; drei hat Gott schon gesättigt, unser Flehen wird er auch erhören.« Kaum hatte sie diese Worte ausgesprochen, so taten die beiden Kleinen ihren letzten Atemzug, und darauf brach ihr auch das Herz, und sie sank tot nieder.

6. Die drei grünen Zweige.

Es war einmal ein Einsiedler, der lebte in einem Walde an dem Fuße eines Berges und brachte seine Zeit in Gebet und guten Werken zu, und jeden Abend trug er noch zur Ehre Gottes ein paar Eimer Wasser den Berg hinauf. Manches Tier wurde damit getränkt und manche Pflanze damit erquickt, denn auf den Anhöhen weht beständig ein harter Wind, der die Luft und die Erde austrocknet, und die wilden Vögel, die vor den Menschen scheuen, kreisen dann hoch und suchen mit ihren scharfen Augen nach einem Trunk. Und weil der Einsiedler so fromm war, so ging ein Engel Gottes, seinen Augen sichtbar, mit ihm hinauf, zählte seine Schritte und brachte ihm, wenn die Arbeit vollendet war, sein Essen, so wie jener Prophet auf Gottes Geheiß von den Raben gespeiset ward. Als der Einsiedler in seiner Frömmigkeit schon zu einem hohen Alter gekommen war, da trug es sich zu, daß er einmal von weitem sah, wie man einen armen Sünder zum Galgen führte. Er sprach so vor sich hin »jetzt widerfährt diesem sein Recht.« Abends, als er das Wasser den Berg hinauftrug, erschien der Engel nicht, der ihn sonst begleitete, und brachte ihm auch nicht seine Speise. Da erschrak er, prüfte sein Herz und bedachte, womit er wohl könnte gesündigt haben, weil Gott also zürne, aber er wußte es nicht. Da aß und trank er nicht, warf sich nieder auf die Erde und betete Tag und Nacht. Und als er einmal in dem Walde so recht bitterlich weinte, hörte er ein Vöglein, das sang so schön und herrlich; da ward er noch betrübter und sprach »wie singst du so fröhlich! dir zürnt der Herr nicht: ach, wenn du mir sagen könntest, womit ich ihn beleidigt habe, damit ich Buße täte und mein Herz auch wieder fröhlich würde!« Da fing das Vöglein an zu sprechen und sagte »du hast unrecht getan, weil du einen armen Sünder verdammt hast, der zum Galgen geführt wurde, darum zürnt dir der Herr; er allein hält Gericht. Doch wenn du Buße tun und deine Sünde bereuen willst, so wird er dir verzeihen.« Da stand der Engel neben ihm und hatte einen trockenen Ast in der Hand und sprach »diesen trockenen Ast sollst du so lange tragen, bis drei grüne Zweige aus ihm hervorsprießen, aber nachts, wenn du schlafen willst, sollst du ihn unter dein Haupt legen. Dein Brot sollst du dir an den Türen erbitten und in demselben Hause nicht länger als eine Nacht verweilen. Das ist die Buße, die dir der Herr auflegt.«

Da nahm der Einsiedler das Stück Holz und ging in die Welt zurück, die er so lange nicht gesehen hatte. Er aß und trank nichts, als was man ihm an den Türen reichte; manche Bitte aber ward nicht gehört, und manche Türe blieb ihm verschlossen, also daß er oft ganze Tage lang keinen Krumen Brot bekam. Einmal war er vom Morgen bis Abend von Türe zu Türe gegangen, niemand hatte ihm etwas gegeben, niemand wollte ihn die Nacht beherbergen, da ging er hinaus in einen Wald und fand endlich eine angebaute Höhle, und eine alte Frau saß darin. Da sprach er »gute Frau, behaltet mich diese Nacht in Euerm Hause.« Aber sie antwortete »nein, ich darf nicht, wenn ich auch wollte. Ich habe drei Söhne, die sind bös und wild, wenn sie von ihrem Raubzug heim kommen und finden Euch, so würden sie uns beide umbringen.« Da sprach der Einsiedler »laßt mich nur bleiben, sie werden Euch und mir nichts tun,« und die Frau war mitleidig und ließ sich bewegen. Da legte sich der Mann unter die Treppe und das Stück Holz unter seinen Kopf. Wie die Alte das sah, fragte sie nach der Ursache, da erzählte er ihr, daß er es zur Buße mit sich herumtrage und nachts zu einem Kissen brauche. Er habe den Herrn beleidigt, denn als er einen armen Sünder auf dem Gang nach dem Gericht gesehen, habe er gesagt, diesem widerfahre sein Recht. Da fing die Frau an zu weinen und rief »ach, wenn der Herr ein einziges Wort also bestraft, wie wird es meinen Söhnen ergehen, wenn sie vor ihm im Gericht erscheinen.«

Um Mitternacht kamen die Räuber heim, lärmten und tobten. Sie zündeten ein Feuer an, und als das die Höhle erleuchtete und sie einen Mann unter der Treppe liegen sahen, gerieten sie in Zorn und schrien ihre Mutter an »wer ist der Mann? haben wirs nicht verboten, irgend jemand aufzunehmen?« Da sprach die Mutter »laßt ihn, es ist ein armer Sünder, der seine Schuld büßt.« Die Räuber fragten »was hat er getan? Alter,« riefen sie, »erzähl uns deine Sünden.« Der Alte erhob sich und sagte ihnen, wie er mit einem einzigen Wort schon so gesündigt habe, daß Gott ihm zürne, und er für diese Schuld jetzt büße. Den Räubern ward von seiner Erzählung das Herz so gewaltig gerührt, daß sie über ihr bisheriges Leben erschraken, in sich gingen und mit herzlicher Reue ihre Buße begannen. Der Einsiedler, nachdem er die drei Sünder bekehrt hatte, legte sich wieder zum Schlafe unter die Treppe. Am Morgen aber fand man ihn tot, und aus dem trocknen Holz, auf welchem sein Haupt lag, waren drei grüne Zweige hoch emporgewachsen. Also hatte ihn der Herr wieder in Gnaden zu sich aufgenommen.

7. Muttergottesgläschen.

Es hatte einmal ein Fuhrmann seinen Karren, der mit Wein schwer beladen war, festgefahren, so daß er ihn trotz aller Mühe nicht wieder losbringen konnte. Nun kam gerade die Mutter Gottes des Weges daher, und als sie die Not des armen Mannes sah, sprach sie zu ihm »ich bin müd und durstig, gib mir ein Glas Wein, und ich will dir deinen Wagen frei machen.« »Gerne,« antwortete der Fuhrmann, »aber ich habe kein Glas, worin ich dir den Wein geben könnte.« Da brach die Mutter Gottes ein weißes Blümchen mit roten Streifen ab, das Feldwinde heißt und einem Glase sehr ähnlich sieht, und reichte es dem Fuhrmann. Er füllte es mit Wein, und die Mutter Gottes trank ihn, und in dem Augenblick ward der Wagen frei und der Fuhrmann konnte weiterfahren. Das Blümchen heißt noch immer Muttergottesgläschen.

8. Das alte Mütterchen.

Es war in einer großen Stadt ein altes Mütterchen, das saß abends allein in seiner Kammer: es dachte so darüber nach, wie es erst den Mann, dann die beiden Kinder, nach und nach alle Verwandte, endlich auch heute noch den letzten Freund verloren hätte und nun ganz allein und verlassen wäre. Da ward es in tiefstem Herzen traurig, und vor allem schwer war ihm der Verlust der beiden Söhne, daß es in seinem Schmerz Gott darüber anklagte. So saß es still und in sich versunken, als es auf einmal zur Frühkirche läuten hörte. Es wunderte sich, daß es die ganze Nacht also in Leid durchwacht hätte, zündete seine Leuchte an und ging zur Kirche. Bei seiner Ankunft war sie schon erhellt, aber nicht, wie gewöhnlich, von Kerzen, sondern von einem dämmernden Licht. Sie war auch schon angefüllt mit Menschen, und alle Plätze waren besetzt, und als das Mütterchen zu seinem gewöhnlichen Sitz kam, war er auch nicht mehr ledig, sondern die ganze Bank gedrängt voll. Und wie es die Leute ansah, so waren es lauter verstorbene Verwandten, die saßen da in ihren altmodischen Kleidern, aber mit blassem Angesicht. Sie sprachen auch nicht und sangen nicht, es ging aber ein leises Summen und Wehen durch die Kirche. Da stand eine Muhme auf, trat vor und sprach zu dem Mütterlein »dort sieh nach dem Altar, da wirst du deine Söhne sehen.« Die Alte blickte hin und sah ihre beiden Kinder, der eine hing am Galgen, der andere war auf das Rad geflochten. Da sprach die Muhme »siehst du, so wäre es ihnen ergangen, wären sie im Leben geblieben und hätte sie Gott nicht als unschuldige Kinder zu sich genommen.« Die Alte ging zitternd nach Haus und dankte Gott auf den Knien, daß er es besser mit ihr gemacht hätte, als sie hätte begreifen können; und am dritten Tag legte sie sich und starb.

9. Die himmlische Hochzeit.

Es hörte einmal ein armer Bauernjunge in der Kirche, wie der Pfarrer sprach »wer da will ins Himmelreich kommen, muß immer geradaus gehen.« Da machte er sich auf, und ging immerzu, immer gerade, ohne abzuweichen, über Berg und Tal. Endlich führte ihn sein Weg in eine große Stadt, und mitten in die Kirche, wo eben Gottesdienst gehalten wurde. Wie er nun all die Herrlichkeit sah, meinte er, nun wäre er im Himmel angelangt, setzte sich hin und war von Herzen froh. Als der Gottesdienst vorbei war und der Küster ihn hinausgehen hieß, antwortete er »nein, ich gehe nicht wieder hinaus, ich bin froh, daß ich endlich im Himmel bin.« Da ging der Küster zum Pfarrer und sagte ihm, es wäre ein Kind in der Kirche, das wollte nicht wieder heraus, weil es glaubte, es wäre im Himmelreich. Der Pfarrer sprach »wenn es das glaubt, so wollen wir es darin lassen.« Darauf ging er hin und fragte, ob es auch Lust hätte zu arbeiten. »Ja,« antwortete der Kleine, ans Arbeiten wäre er gewöhnt, aber aus dem Himmel ginge er nicht wieder heraus. Nun blieb er in der Kirche, und als er sah, wie die Leute zu dem Muttergottesbild mit dem Jesuskind, das aus Holz geschnitten war, kamen, knieten und beteten, dachte er »das ist der liebe Gott,« und sprach »hör einmal, lieber Gott, was bist du mager! gewiß lassen dich die Leute hungern: ich will dir aber jeden Tag mein halbes Essen bringen.« Von nun an brachte er dem Bilde jeden Tag die Hälfte von seinem Essen, und das Bild fing auch an, die Speise zu genießen. Wie ein paar Wochen herum waren, merkten die Leute, daß das Bild zunahm, dick und stark ward, und wunderten sich sehr. Der Pfarrer konnt es auch nicht begreifen, blieb in der Kirche und ging dem Kleinen nach, da sah er, wie der Knabe sein Brot mit der Mutter Gottes teilte und diese es auch annahm.

Nach einiger Zeit wurde der Knabe krank und kam acht Tage lang nicht aus dem Bett; wie er aber wieder aufstehen konnte, war sein erstes, daß er seine Speise der Mutter Gottes brachte. Der Pfarrer ging ihm nach und hörte, wie er sprach »lieber Gott, nimms nicht übel, daß ich dir so lange nichts gebracht habe: ich war aber krank und konnte nicht aufstehen.« Da antwortete ihm das Bild und sprach »ich habe deinen guten Willen gesehen, das ist mir genug; nächsten Sonntag sollst du mit mir auf die Hochzeit kommen.« Der Knabe freute sich darüber und sagte es dem Pfarrer, der bat ihn hinzugehen und das Bild zu fragen, ob er auch dürfte mitkommen. »Nein,« antwortete das Bild, »du allein.« Der Pfarrer wollte ihn erst vorbereiten und ihm das Abendmahl geben, das war der Knabe zufrieden; und nächsten Sonntag, wie das Abendmahl an ihn kam, fiel er um und war tot und war zur ewigen Hochzeit.

10. Die Haselrute.

Eines Nachmittags hatte sich das Christkind in sein Wiegenbett gelegt und war eingeschlafen, da trat seine Mutter heran, sah es voll Freude an und sprach »hast du dich schlafen gelegt, mein Kind? schlaf sanft, ich will derweil in den Wald gehen und eine Handvoll Erdbeeren für dich holen; ich weiß wohl, du freust dich darüber, wenn du aufgewacht bist.« Draußen im Wald fand sie einen Platz mit den schönsten Erdbeeren, als sie sich aber herabbückt, um eine zu brechen, so springt aus dem Gras eine Natter in die Höhe. Sie erschrickt, läßt die Beere stehen und eilt hinweg. Die Natter schießt ihr nach, aber die Mutter Gottes, das könnt ihr denken, weiß guten Rat, sie versteckt sich hinter eine Haselstaude und bleibt da stehen, bis die Natter sich wieder verkrochen hat. Sie sammelt dann die Beeren, und als sie sich auf den Heimweg macht, spricht sie »wie die Haselstaude diesmal mein Schutz gewesen ist, so soll sie es auch in Zukunft andern Menschen sein.« Darum ist seit den ältesten Zeiten ein grüner Haselzweig gegen Nattern, Schlangen, und was sonst auf der Erde kriecht, der sicherste Schutz.

LIST OF FAIRY TALES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Translated by Margaret Hunt

A Riddling Tale
Allerleirauh
Bearskin
Briar-Rose
Brides On Their Trial
Brother Lustig
Cat and Mouse in Partnership
Cinderella
Clever Elsie
Clever Grethel
Clever Hans
Death’s Messengers
Doctor Knowall
Domestic Servants
Donkey Cabbages
Eve’s Various Children
Fair Katrinelje and Pif-Paf-Poltrie
Faithful John
Ferdinand the Faithful
Fitcher’s Bird
Frau Trude
Frederick and Catherine
Fundevogel (Bird-foundling)
Gambling Hansel
Godfather Death
Going A-Travelling
Hans in Luck
Hans Married
Hans the Hedgehog
Hansel and Grethel
Herr Korbes
How Six Men Got on in the World
Iron John
Jorinda and Joringel
King Thrushbeard
Knoist and his Three Sons
Lazy Harry
Lean Lisa

Legend 1 St. Joseph in the Forest
Legend 10 The Hazel-Branch
Legend 2 The Twelve Apostles
Legend 3 The Rose
Legend 4 Poverty and Humility Lead to Heaven
Legend 5 God’s Food
Legend 6 The Three Green Twigs
Legend 7 Our Lady’s Little Glass
Legend 8 The Aged Mother
Legend 9 The Heavenly Wedding
Little Brother and Little Sister
Little Red-Cap
Little Snow-white
Maid Maleen
Master Pfriem (Master Cobbler’s Awl)
Mother Holle
Odds And Ends
Old Hildebrand
Old Rinkrank
Old Sultan
One-eye, Two-eyes, and Three-eyes
Our Lady’s Child
Rapunzel
Rumpelstiltskin
Sharing Joy and Sorrow
Simeli Mountain
Snow-White and Rose-Red
Stories about Snakes
Strong Hans
Sweet Porridge
Sweetheart Roland
The Beam
The Bittern and the Hoopoe
The Blue Light
The Boots of Buffalo-Leather
The Bremen Town-Musicians
The Bright Sun Brings It to Light
The Crumbs on the Table
The Crystal Ball
The Cunning Little Tailor
The Death of the Little Hen
The Devil and his Grandmother
The Devil With the Three Golden Hairs
The Devil’s Sooty Brother
The Ditmarsch Tale of Wonders
The Dog and the Sparrow

The Donkey
The Drummer
The Duration of Life
The Ear of Corn
The Elves
The Fisherman and His Wife
The Flail From Heaven
The Four Skilful Brothers
The Fox and His Cousin
The Fox and the Cat
The Fox and the Geese
The Fox and the Horse
The Frog-King, or Iron Henry
The Giant and the Tailor
The Girl Without Hands
The Glass Coffin
The Gnome
The Godfather
The Gold-Children
The Golden Bird
The Golden Goose
The Golden Key
The Good Bargain
The Goose-Girl
The Goose-Girl at the Well
The Grave-Mound
The Griffin
The Hare and the Hedgehog
The Hare's Bride
The Hut in the Forest
The Iron Stove
The Jew Among Thorns
The Juniper-Tree
The King of the Golden Mountain
The King's Son Who Feared Nothing
The Knapsack, the Hat, and the Horn
The Lambkin and the Little Fish
The Lazy Spinner
The Little Folks' Presents
The Little Peasant
The Lord's Animals and the Devil's
The Louse and the Flea
The Maid of Brakel
The Master-Thief
The Moon
The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage

The Nail
The Nix of the Mill-Pond
The Old Beggar-Woman
The Old Man and His Grandson
The Old Man Made Young Again
The Old Woman in the Wood
The Owl
The Pack of Ragamuffins
The Peasant and the Devil
The Peasant in Heaven
The Peasant’s Wise Daughter
The Pink
The Poor Boy in the Grave
The Poor Man and the Rich Man
The Poor Miller’s Boy and the Cat
The Queen Bee
The Raven
The Riddle
The Robber Bridegroom
The Sea-Hare
The Seven Ravens
The Seven Swabians
The Shepherd Boy
The Shoes That Were Danced to Pieces
The Shroud
The Singing Bone
The Singing, Springing Lark
The Six Servants
The Six Swans
The Skilful Huntsman
The Sole
The Sparrow And His Four Children
The Spindle, The Shuttle, and the Needle
The Spirit in the Bottle
The Star-Money
The Stolen Farthings
The Story of Schlauraffen Land
The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was
The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean
The Tailor in Heaven
The Thief and his Master
The Three Apprentices
The Three Army-Surgeons
The Three Black Princesses
The Three Brothers
The Three Feathers

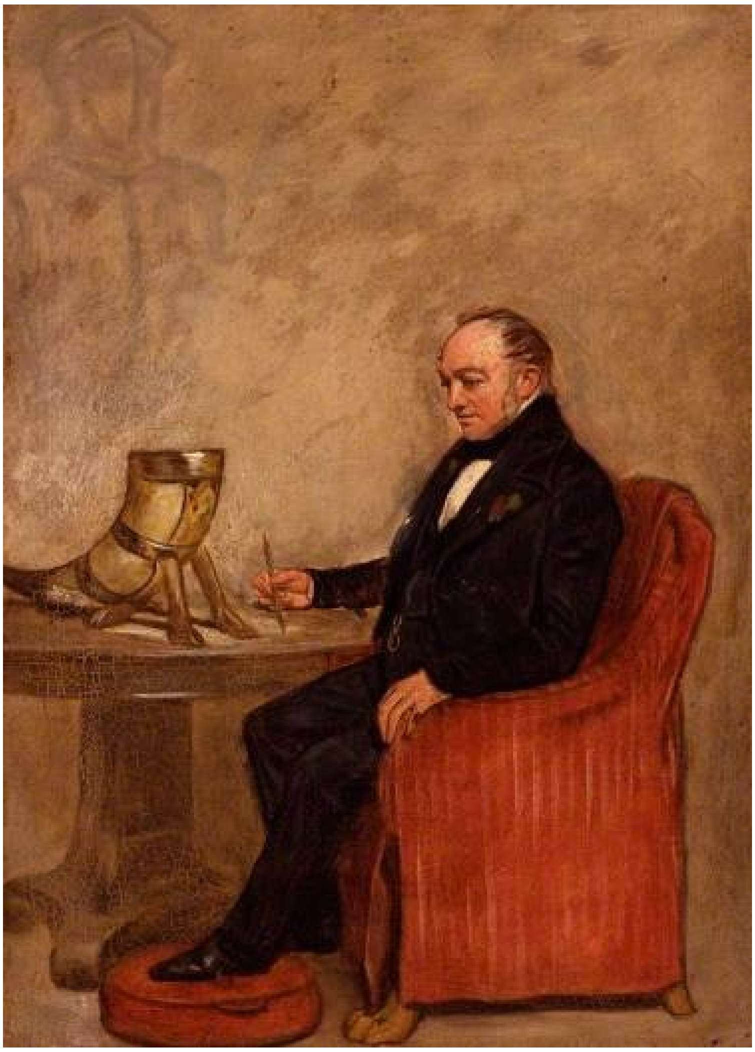
The Three Languages
The Three Little Birds
The Three Little Men in the Wood
The Three Sluggards
The Three Snake-Leaves
The Three Sons of Fortune
The Three Spinners
The True Sweethearts
The Turnip
The Twelve Brothers
The Twelve Huntsmen
The Two Brothers
The Two Kings' Children
The Two Travellers
The Ungrateful Son
The Valiant Little Tailor
The Water of Life
The Water-Nix
The Wedding of Mrs. Fox
The White Bride and the Black One
The White Snake
The Wilful Child
The Willow-Wren
The Willow-Wren and the Bear
The Wise Servant
The Wishing-Table, the Gold-Ass, and the Cudgel in the Sack
The Wolf and the Fox
The Wolf and the Man
The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids
The Wonderful Musician
The Young Giant
Thumbling
Thumbling as Journeyman
Wise Folks

The Translation

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm lived in this house in Steinau from 1791 to 1796.

FAIRY LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF THE SOUTH OF IRELAND by Thomas Crofton Croker

Thomas Crofton Croker (1798-1854) was an Irish antiquary, who was born in Cork and held a position in the Admiralty, where his distant relative, John Wilson Croker, was his superior. Croker devoted himself largely to the following collection of ancient Irish poetry and Irish folklore. He assisted in founding the Percy Society and the Camden Society. He and his wife's testimonies about funereal customs, particularly the tradition of keening the deceased, are among the earliest and most significant contributions to the understanding of the Irish language lament and the accompanying traditions. *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* went on to enjoy six editions and was translated into German by the Brothers Grimm in 1826 under the title *Irische Elfenmärchen*.



Thomas Crofton Croker, c. 1849

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THE LEGEND OF KNOCKGRAFTON.
THE PRIEST'S SUPPER.
THE BREWERY OF EGG-SHELLS.
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THE CONFESSIONS OF TOM BOURKE.
FAIRIES OR NO FAIRIES.

LEGENDS OF THE CLURICAUNE.

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LEGENDS OF THE BANSHEE.

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THE SPIRIT HORSE.
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ROCKS AND STONES.
THE LEGEND OF CAIRN THIERNA.
THE ROCK OF THE CANDLE.
CLOUGH NA CUDDY.
THE GIANT'S STAIRS.

APPENDIX.

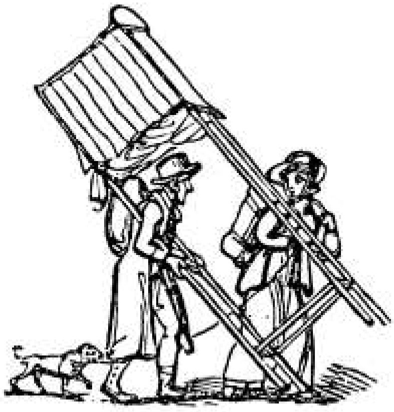
“Come l’araba Fenice
Che ci sia, ognun lo dice;
Dove sia, nessun lo sa.” — Metastasio.

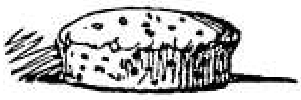
PREFACE.

The erudite Lessing styles a preface "the history of a book." Now, though there can be no necessity for a preface in that sense of the word to the reprint of a work of mere whim, which has been nearly ten years before the public, yet a few words are requisite to prevent the present condensed and revised edition from being considered an abridgment.

However compact may be the mode of printing adopted, the act of compressing into one volume the three in which the "Fairy Legends" originally appeared, involved to a certain extent the necessity of selection, perhaps the most difficult of all tasks judiciously to perform; but the following statement will show the system proceeded on.

Forty tales descriptive of Irish superstitions now appear instead of fifty. All superfluous annotations have been struck out, and a brief summary at the end of each section substituted, explanatory of the classification adopted, and in which a few additional notes have been introduced, as well as upon the text. It is therefore hoped that this curtailment will be regarded as an essential improvement; some useless repetition in the tales being thereby avoided, and much irrelevant matter in the notes dispensed with, although nothing which illustrates in the slightest degree the popular Fairy Creed of Ireland has been sacrificed. At the same time, the omission of a portion of the ten immaterial tales will sufficiently answer doubts idly raised as to the question of authorship.



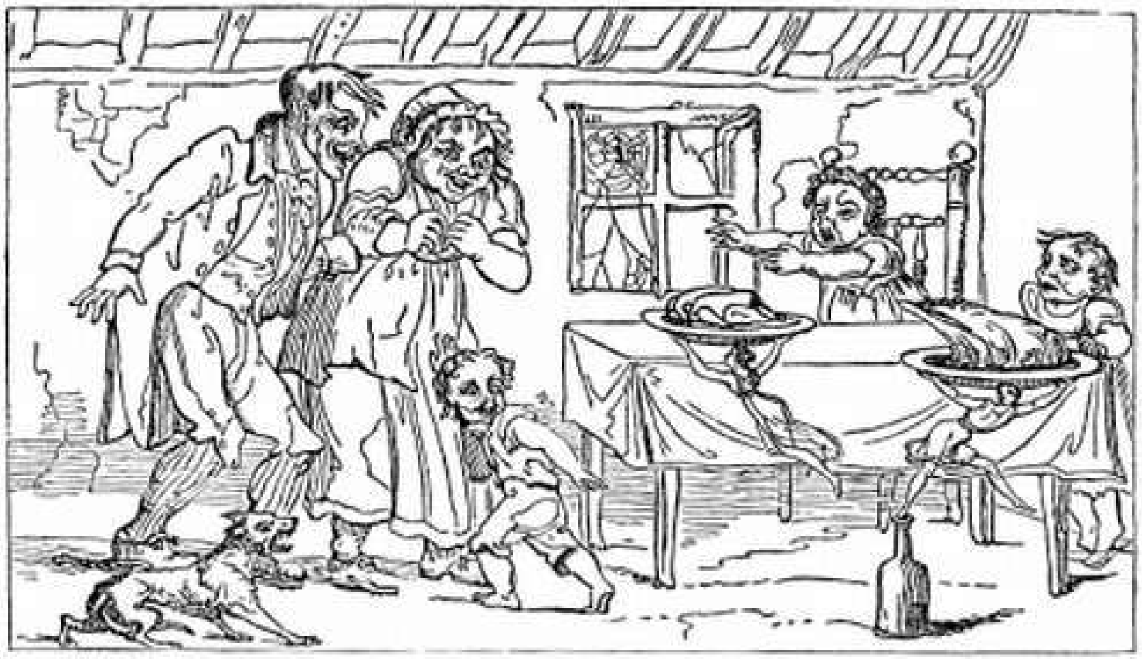


TO THE DOWAGER LADY CHATTERTON.

CASTLE MAHON.

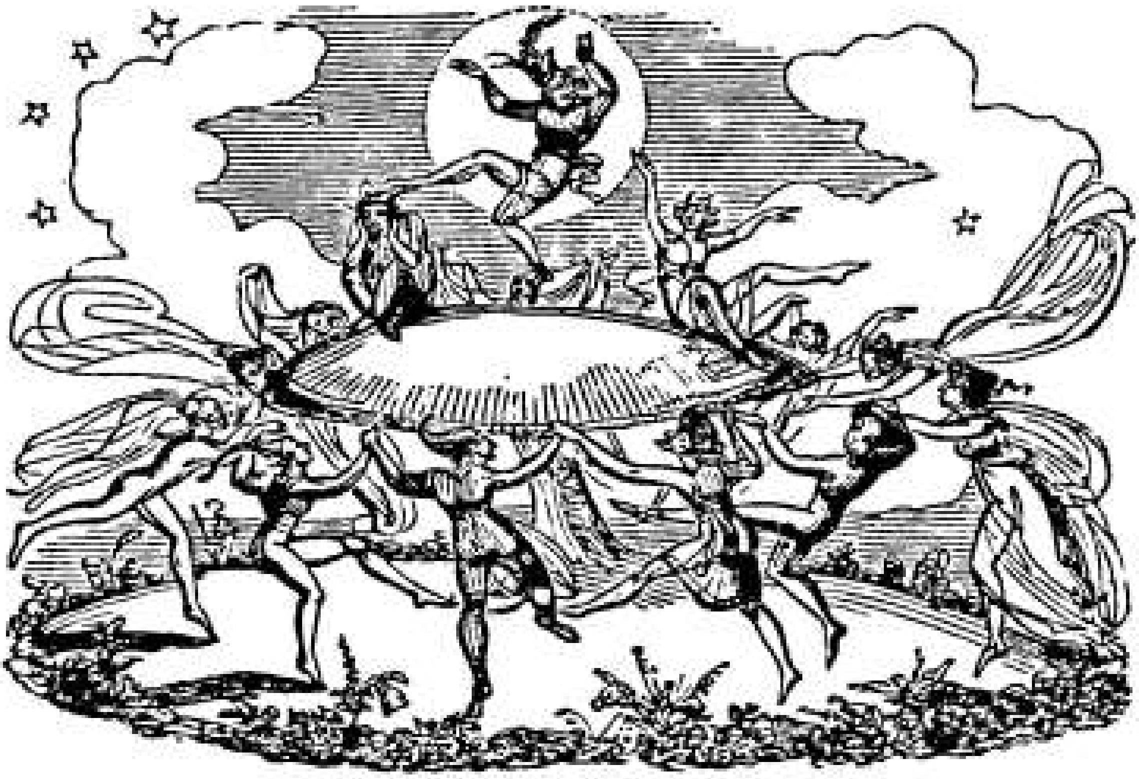
Thee, Lady, would I lead through Fairy-land
(Whence cold and doubting reasoners are exiled,)
A land of dreams, with air-built castles piled;
The moonlight Shefros there, in merry band
With artful Cluricaune, should ready stand
To welcome thee — Imagination's child!
Till on thy ear would burst so sadly wild
The Banshee's shriek, who points with wither'd hand.
In the dim twilight should the Phooka come,
Whose dusky form fades in the sunny light,
That opens clear calm Lakes upon thy sight,
Where blessed spirits dwell in endless bloom.
I know thee, Lady — thou wilt not deride
Such Fairy Scenes. — Then onward with thy Guide.

The Wood Engravings after Designs by Mr. Brooke, R. H. A., Mr. McClise, and the Author.



“Look there! look there, mammy!”

THE SHEFRO.



—— —— —— — — “Fairy Elves
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over-head the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course.” —

Milton.

THE LEGEND OF KNOCKSHEOGOWNA.

I.

In Tipperary is one of the most singularly shaped hills in the world. It has got a peak at the top like a conical nightcap thrown carelessly over your head as you awake in the morning. On the very point is built a sort of lodge, where in the summer the lady who built it and her friends used to go on parties of pleasure; but that was long after the days of the fairies, and it is, I believe, now deserted.

But before lodge was built, or acre sown, there was close to the head of this hill a large pasturage, where a herdsman spent his days and nights among the herd. The spot had been an old fairy ground, and the good people were angry that the scene of their light and airy gambols should be trampled by the rude hoofs of bulls and cows. The lowing of the cattle sounded sad in their ears, and the chief of the fairies of the hill determined in person to drive away the new comers; and the way she thought of was this. When the harvest nights came on, and the moon shone bright and brilliant over the hill, and the cattle were lying down hushed and quiet, and the herdsman, wrapt in his mantle, was musing with his heart gladdened by the glorious company of the stars twinkling above him, she would come and dance before him, — now in one shape — now in another, — but all ugly and frightful to behold. One time she would be a great horse, with the wings of an eagle, and a tail like a dragon, hissing loud and spitting fire. Then in a moment she would change into a little man lame of a leg, with a bull's head, and a lambent flame playing round it. Then into a great ape, with duck's feet, and a turkey cock's tail. But I should be all day about it were I to tell you all the shapes she took. And then she would roar, or neigh, or hiss, or bellow, or howl, or hoot, as never yet was roaring, neighing, hissing, bellowing, howling, or hooting, heard in this world before or since. The poor herdsman would cover his face, and call on all the saints for help, but it was no use. With one puff of her breath she would blow away the fold of his great coat, let him hold it never so tightly over his eyes, and not a saint in heaven paid him the slightest attention. And to make matters worse, he never could stir; no, nor even shut his eyes, but there was obliged to stay, held by what power he knew not, gazing at these terrible sights until the hair of his head would lift his hat half a foot over his crown, and his teeth would be ready to fall out from chattering. But the cattle would scamper about mad, as if they were bitten by the fly; and this would last until the sun rose over the hill.

The poor cattle from want of rest were pining away, and food did them no good; besides, they met with accidents without end. Never a night passed that some of them did not fall into a pit, and get maimed, or, may be, killed. Some would tumble into a river and be drowned; in a word, there seemed never to be an end of the accidents. But what made the matter worse, there could not be a herdsman got to tend the cattle by night. One visit from the fairy drove the stoutest hearted almost mad. The owner of the ground did not know what to do. He offered double, treble, quadruple wages, but not a man could be found for the sake of money to go through the horror of facing the fairy. She rejoiced at the successful issue of her project, and continued her pranks. The herd gradually thinning, and no man daring to remain on the ground, the fairies came back in numbers, and gambolled as merrily as before, quaffing dew-drops from acorns, and spreading their feast on the heads of capacious mushrooms.

What was to be done? the puzzled farmer thought in vain. He found that his substance was daily diminishing, his people terrified, and his rent-day coming round. It is no wonder that he looked gloomy, and walked mournfully down the road. Now in that part of the world dwelt a man of the name of Larry Hoolahan, who played on the pipes better than any other player within fifteen parishes. A roving, dashing blade was Larry, and feared nothing. Give him plenty of liquor, and he would defy the devil. He would face a mad bull, or fight single-handed against a fair. In one of his gloomy walks the farmer met him, and on Larry's asking the cause of his down looks, he told him all his misfortunes. "If that is all ails you," said Larry, "make your mind easy. Were there as many fairies on Knocksheogowna as there are potato blossoms in Eliogurty, I would face them. It would be a queer thing, indeed, if I, who never was afraid of a proper man, should turn my back upon a brat of a fairy not the bigness of one's thumb." "Larry," said the farmer, "do not talk so bold, for you know not who is hearing you; but if you make your words good, and watch my herds for a week on the top of the mountain, your hand shall be free of my dish till the sun has burnt itself down to the bigness of a farthing rushlight."

The bargain was struck, and Larry went to the hill-top, when the moon began to peep over the brow. He had been regaled at the farmer's house, and was bold with the extract of barley-corn. So he took his seat on a big stone under a hollow of the hill, with his back to the wind, and pulled out his pipes. He had not played long when the voice of the fairies was heard upon the blast, like a slow stream of music. Presently they burst out into a loud laugh, and Larry could plainly hear one say, "What! another man upon the fairies' ring? Go to him, queen, and make him repent his rashness;" and they flew away. Larry felt them pass by his face as they flew, like a swarm of midges; and, looking up hastily, he saw between the moon and him a great black cat, standing on the very tip of its claws, with its back up, and mewing with the voice of a water-mill. Presently it swelled up towards the sky, and turning round on its left hind-leg, whirled till it fell to the ground, from which it started up in the shape of a salmon, with a cravat round its neck, and a pair of new topboots. "Go on, jewel," said Larry; "if you dance, I'll pipe;" and he struck up. So she turned into this, and that, and the other, but still Larry played on, as he well knew how. At last she lost patience, as ladies will do when you do not mind their scolding, and changed herself into a calf, milk-white as the cream of Cork, and with eyes as mild as those of the girl I love. She came up gentle and fawning, in hopes to throw him off his guard by quietness, and then to work him some wrong. But Larry was not so deceived; for when she came up, he, dropping his pipes, leaped upon her back.

Now from the top of Knocksheogowna, as you look westward to the broad Atlantic, you will see the Shannon, queen of rivers; "spreading like a sea," and running on in gentle course to mingle with the ocean through the fair city of Limerick. It on this night shone under the moon, and looked beautiful from the distant hill. Fifty boats were gliding up and down on the sweet current, and the song of the fishermen rose gaily from the shore. Larry, as I said before, leaped upon the back of the fairy, and she, rejoiced at the opportunity, sprung from the hill-top, and bounded clear, at one jump, over the Shannon, flowing as it was just ten miles from the mountain's base. It was done in a second, and when she alighted on the distant bank, kicking up her heels, she flung Larry on the soft turf. No sooner was he thus planted, than he looked her straight in the face, and scratching his head, cried out, "By my word, well done! that was not a bad leap *for a calf*!"

She looked at him for a moment, and then assumed her own shape. "Laurence," said she, "you are a bold fellow; will you come back the way you went?" "And that's what I will," said he, "if you let me." So changing to a calf again, again Larry got on her back, and at another bound they were again upon the top of Knocksheogowna. The fairy, once more resuming her figure, addressed him: "You have shown so much courage, Laurence," said she, "that while you keep herds on this hill you never shall be molested by me or mine. The day dawns, go down to the farmer, and tell him this; and if any thing I can do may be of service to you, ask, and you shall have it." She vanished accordingly; and kept her word in never visiting the hill during Larry's life: but he never troubled her with requests. He piped and drank at the farmer's expense, and roosted in his chimney corner, occasionally casting an eye to the flock. He died at last, and is buried in a green valley of pleasant Tipperary: but whether the fairies returned to the hill of Knocksheogowna after his death, is more than I can say.

* * *

THE LEGEND OF KNOCKFIERNA.

II.

It is a very good thing not to be any way in dread of the fairies, for without doubt they have then less power over a person; but to make too free with them, or to disbelieve in them altogether, is as foolish a thing as man, woman, or child can do.

It has been truly said, that "good manners are no burden," and that "civility costs nothing;" but there are some people fool-hardy enough to disregard doing a civil thing, which, whatever they may think, can never harm themselves or any one else, and who at the same time will go out of their way for a bit of mischief, which never can serve them; but sooner or later they will come to know better, as you shall hear of Carroll O'Daly, a strapping young fellow up out of Connaught, whom they used to call, in his own country, "Devil Daly."

Carroll O'Daly used to go roving about from one place to another, and the fear of nothing stopped him; he would as soon pass an old churchyard or a regular fairy ground, at any hour of the night as go from one room into another, without ever making the sign of the cross, or saying, "Good luck attend you, gentlemen."

It so happened that he was once journeying, in the county of Limerick, towards "the Balbec of Ireland," the venerable town of Kilmallock; and just at the foot of Knockfierna he overtook a respectable-looking man jogging along upon a white pony. The night was coming on, and they rode side by side for some time, without much conversation passing between them, further than saluting each other very kindly; at last, Carroll O'Daly asked his companion how far he was going?

"Not far your way," said the farmer, for such his appearance bespoke him; "I'm only going to the top of this hill here."

"And what might take you there," said O'Daly, "at this time of the night?"

"Why then," replied the farmer, "if you want to know; 'tis the *good people*."

"The fairies you mean," said O'Daly.

"Whist! whist!" said his fellow-traveller, "or you may be sorry for it;" and he turned his pony off the road they were going, towards a little path which led up the side of the mountain, wishing Carroll O'Daly good night and a safe journey.

"That fellow," thought Carroll, "is about no good this blessed night, and I would have no fear of swearing wrong if I took my Bible oath that it is something else beside the fairies, or the good people, as he calls them, that is taking him up the mountain at this hour. The fairies!" he repeated, "is it for a well-shaped man like him to be going after little chaps like the fairies! To be sure some say there are such things, and more say not; but I know this, that never afraid would I be of a dozen of them, ay, of two dozen, for that matter, if they are no bigger than what I hear tell of."

Carroll O'Daly, whilst these thoughts were passing in his mind, had fixed his eyes steadfastly on the mountain, behind which the full moon was rising majestically. Upon an elevated point that appeared darkly against the moon's disk, he beheld the figure of a man leading a pony, and he had no doubt it was that of the farmer with whom he had just parted company.

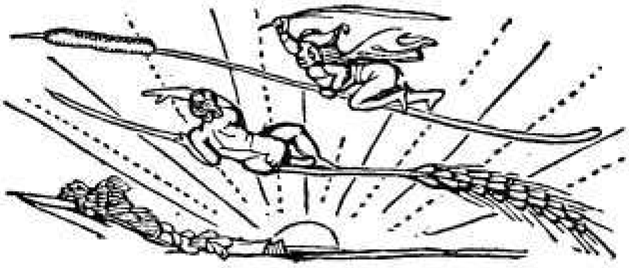
A sudden resolve to follow flashed across the mind of O'Daly with the speed of lightning: both his courage and curiosity had been worked up by his cogitations to a pitch of chivalry; and, muttering, "Here's after you, old boy!" he dismounted from his horse, bound him to an old thorntree, and then commenced vigorously ascending the mountain.

Following as well as he could the direction taken by the figures of the man and pony, he pursued his way, occasionally guided by their partial appearance: and after toiling nearly three hours over a rugged and sometimes swampy path, came to a green spot on the top of the mountain, where he saw the white pony at full liberty grazing as quietly as may be. O'Daly looked around for the rider, but he was nowhere to be seen; he, however, soon discovered, close to where the pony stood, an opening in the mountain like the mouth of a pit, and he remembered having heard, when a child, many a tale about the "Poul-duve," or Black Hole of Knockfierna; how it was the entrance to the fairy castle which was within the mountain; and how a man whose name was Ahern, a land surveyor in that part of the country, had once attempted to fathom it with a line, and had been drawn down into it, and was never again heard of; with many other tales of the like nature.

"But," thought O'Daly, "these are old woman's stories: and since I've come up so far, I'll just knock at the castle door and see if the fairies are at home."

No sooner said than done; for, seizing a large stone, as big, ay, bigger than his two hands, he flung it with all his strength down into the Poul-duve of Knockfierna. He heard it bounding and tumbling about from one rock to another with a terrible noise, and he leaned his head over to try and hear when it would reach the bottom, — and what should the very stone he had thrown in do but come up again with as much force as it had gone down, and gave him such a blow full in the face, that it sent him rolling down the side of Knockfierna, head over heels, tumbling from one crag to another, much faster than he came up. And in the morning Carroll O'Daly was found lying beside his horse; the bridge of his nose broken, which disfigured him for life; his head all cut and bruised, and both his eyes closed up, and as black as if Sir Daniel Donnelly had painted them for him.

Carroll O'Daly was never bold again in riding along near the haunts of the fairies after dusk; but small blame to him for that; and if ever he happened to be benighted in a lonesome place, he would make the best of his way to his journey's end, without asking questions, or turning to the right or to the left, to seek after the good people, or any who kept company with them.



THE LEGEND OF KNOCKGRAFTON.

III.

There was once a poor man who lived in the fertile glen of Aherlow, at the foot of the gloomy Galtee mountains, and he had a great hump on his back: he looked just as if his body had been rolled up and placed upon his shoulders; and his head was pressed down with the weight so much, that his chin, when he was sitting, used to rest upon his knees for support. The country people were rather shy of meeting him in any lonesome place, for though, poor creature, he was as harmless and as inoffensive as a new-born infant, yet his deformity was so great, that he scarcely appeared to be a human being. And some ill-minded persons had set strange stories about him afloat. He was said to have a great knowledge of herbs and charms; but certain it was that he had a mighty skilful hand in platting straw and rushes into hats and baskets, which was the way he made his livelihood.

Lusmore, for that was the nickname put upon him by reason of his always wearing a sprig of the fairy cap, or lusmore, in his little straw hat, would ever get a higher penny for his plaited work than any one else, and perhaps that was the reason why some one, out of envy, had circulated the strange stories about him. Be that as it may, it happened that he was returning one evening from the pretty town of Cahir towards Cappagh, and as little Lusmore walked very slowly, on account of the great hump upon his back, it was quite dark when he came to the old moat of Knockgrafton, which stood on the right hand side of his road. Tired and weary was he, and noways comfortable in his own mind at thinking how much farther he had to travel, and that he should be walking all the night; so he sat down under the moat to rest himself, and began looking mournfully enough upon the moon, which,

“Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent Queen, unveil’d her peerless light,
And o’er the dark her silver mantle threw.”

Presently there rose a wild strain of unearthly melody upon the ear of little Lusmore; he listened, and he thought that he had never heard such ravishing music before. It was like the sound of many voices, each mingling and blending with the other so strangely, that they seemed to be one, though all singing different strains, and the words of the song were these: —

Da Luan, *Da Mort*, *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, when there would be a moment’s pause, and then the round of melody went on again.

Lusmore listened attentively, scarcely drawing his breath, lest he might lose the slightest note. He now plainly perceived that the singing was within the moat, and, though at first it had charmed him so much, he began to get tired of hearing the same round sung over and over so often without any change; so, availing himself of the pause when the *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, had been sung three times, he took up the tune and raised it with the words *augus Da Cadine*, and then went on singing with the voices inside of the moat, *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, finishing the melody when the pause again came, with *augus Da Cadine*.

The fairies within Knockgrafton, for the song was a fairy melody, when they heard this addition to their tune, were so much delighted, that with instant resolve it was determined to bring the mortal among them, whose musical skill so far exceeded theirs, and little Lusmore was conveyed into their company with the eddying speed of a whirlwind.

Glorious to behold was the sight that burst upon him as he came down through the moat, twirling round and round with the lightness of a straw, to the sweetest music that kept time to his motion. The greatest honour was then paid him, for he was put up above all the musicians, and he had servants tending upon him, and every thing to his heart's content, and a hearty welcome to all; and, in short, he was made as much of as if he had been the first man in the land.

Presently Lusmore saw a great consultation going forward among the fairies, and, notwithstanding all their civility, he felt very much frightened, until one, stepping out from the rest, came up to him, and said, —

"Lusmore! Lusmore!
Doubt not, nor deplore,
For the hump which you bore
On your back is no more! —
Look down on the floor,
And view it, Lusmore!"

When these words were said, poor little Lusmore felt himself so light, and so happy, that he thought he could have bounded at one jump over the moon, like the cow in the history of the cat and the fiddle; and he saw, with inexpressible pleasure, his hump tumble down upon the ground from his shoulders. He then tried to lift up his head, and he did so with becoming caution, fearing that he might knock it against the ceiling of the grand hall, where he was; he looked round and round again with the greatest wonder and delight upon every thing, which appeared more and more beautiful; and, overpowered at beholding such a resplendent scene, his head grew dizzy, and his eyesight became dim. At last he fell into a sound sleep, and when he awoke, he found that it was broad daylight, the sun shining brightly, the birds singing sweet; and that he was lying just at the foot of the moat of Knockgrafton, with the cows and sheep grazing peaceably round about him. The first thing Lusmore did, after saying his prayers, was to put his hand behind to feel for his hump, but no sign of one was there on his back, and he looked at himself with great pride, for he had now become a well-shaped dapper little fellow; and more than that, he found himself in a full suit of new clothes, which he concluded the fairies had made for him.

Towards Cappagh he went, stepping out as lightly, and springing up at every step, as if he had been all his life a dancing-master. Not a creature who met Lusmore knew him without his hump, and he had great work to persuade every one that he was the same man — in truth he was not, so far as outward appearance went.

Of course it was not long before the story of Lusmore's hump got about, and a great wonder was made of it. Through the country, for miles round, it was the talk of every one, high and low.

One morning as Lusmore was sitting contented enough at his cabin-door, up came an old woman to him, and asked if he could direct her to Cappagh.

"I need give you no directions, my good woman," said Lusmore, "for this is Cappagh; and who do you want here?"

"I have come," said the woman, "out of Decie's country, in the county of Waterford, looking after one Lusmore, who, I have heard tell, had his hump taken off by the fairies: for there is a son of a gossip of mine has got a hump on him that will be his death; and may be, if he could use the same charm as Lusmore, the hump may be taken off him. And now I have told you the reason of my coming so far: 'tis to find out about this charm, if I can."

Lusmore, who was ever a good-natured little fellow, told the woman all the particulars; how he had raised the tune for the fairies at Knockgrafton, how his hump had been removed from his shoulders, and how he had got a new suit of clothes into the bargain.

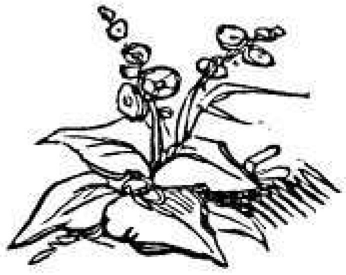
The woman thanked him very much, and then went away quite happy and easy in her own mind. When she came back to her gossip's house, in the county Waterford, she told her every thing that Lusmore had said, and they put the little hump-backed man, who was a peevish and cunning creature from his birth, upon a car, and took him all the way across the country. It was a long journey, but they did not care for that, so the hump was taken from off him; and they brought him, just at nightfall, and left him under the old moat of Knockgrafton.

Jack Madden for that was the humpy man's name, had not been sitting there long when he heard the tune going on within the moat much sweeter than before; for the fairies were singing it the way Lusmore had settled their music for them, and the song was going on: *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, *Da Luan*, *Da Mort*, *augus Da Cadine*, without ever stopping. Jack Madden, who was in a great hurry to get quit of his hump, never thought of waiting until the fairies had done, or watching for a fit opportunity to raise the tune higher again than Lusmore had: so having heard them sing it over seven times without stopping, out he bawls, never minding the time, or the humour of the tune, or how he could bring his words in properly, *augus da Cadine augus Da Hena*, thinking that if one day was good, two were better; and that, if Lusmore had one new suit of clothes given to him, he should have two.

No sooner had the words passed his lips than he was taken up and whisked into the moat with prodigious force; and the fairies came crowding round about him with great anger, screeching and screaming, and roaring out, "Who spoiled our tune? who spoiled our tune?" and one stepped up to him above all the rest and said —

“Jack Madden! Jack Madden!
Your words came so bad in
The tune we feel glad in; —
This castle you’re had in,
That your life we may sadden; —
Here’s two humps for Jack Madden!”

And twenty of the strongest fairies brought Lusmore’s hump, and put it down upon poor Jack’s back, over his own, where it became fixed as firmly, as if it was nailed on with twelvepenny nails, by the best carpenter that ever drove one. Out of their castle they then kicked him; and in the morning, when Jack Madden’s mother and her gossip came to look after their little man, they found him half dead, lying at the foot of the moat, with the other hump upon his back. Well, to be sure how they did look at each other! but they were afraid to say any thing, lest a hump might be put upon their own shoulders: home they brought the unlucky Jack Madden with them, as downcast in their hearts and their looks as ever two gossips were; and what through the weight of his other hump and the long journey, he died soon after, leaving, they say, his heavy curse to any one who would go to listen to fairy tunes again.



THE PRIEST’S SUPPER.

IV.

It is said by those who ought to understand such things, that the good people, or the fairies, are some of the angels who were turned out of heaven, and who landed on their feet in this world, while the rest of their companions, who had more sin to sink them, went down further to a worse place. Be this as it may, there was a merry troop of the fairies, dancing and playing all manner of wild pranks on a bright moonlight evening towards the end of September. The scene of their merriment was not far distant from Inchegeela, in the west of the county Cork — a poor village, although it had a barrack for soldiers; but great mountains and barren rocks, like those round about it, are enough to strike poverty into any place: however, as the fairies can have every thing they want for wishing, poverty does not trouble them much, and all their care is to seek out unfrequented nooks and places where it is not likely any one will come to spoil their sport.

On a nice green sod by the river’s side were the little fellows dancing in a ring as gaily as may be, with their red caps wagging about at every bound in the moonshine; and so light were these bounds, that the lobes of dew, although they trembled under their feet, were not disturbed by their capering. Thus did they carry on their gambols, spinning round and round, and twirling and bobbing, and diving and going through all manner of figures, until one of them chirped out —

“Cease, cease with your drumming,
Here’s an end to our mumming;
By my smell
I can tell
A priest this way is coming!”

And away every one of the fairies scampered off as hard as they could, concealing themselves under the green leaves of the lusmore, where, if their little red caps should happen to peep out, they would only look like its crimson bells; and more hid themselves in the hollow of stones; or at the shady side of brambles, and others under the bank of the river, and in holes and crannies of one kind or another.

The fairy speaker was not mistaken; for along the road, which was within view of the river, came Father Horrigan on his pony, thinking to himself that as it was so late he would make an end of his journey at the first cabin he came to. According to this determination, he stopped at the dwelling of Dermod Leary, lifted the latch, and entered with “My blessing on all here.”

I need not say that Father Horrigan was a welcome guest wherever he went, for no man was more pious or better beloved in the country. Now it was a great trouble to Dermod that he had nothing to offer his reverence for supper as a relish to the potatoes which “the old woman,” for so Dermod called his wife, though she was not much past twenty, had down boiling in the pot over the fire: he thought of the net which he had set in the river, but as it had been there only a short time, the chances were against his finding a fish in it. “No matter,” thought Dermod, “there can be no harm in stepping down to try, and may be as I want the fish for the priest’s supper, that one will be there before me.”

Down to the river-side went Dermod, and he found in the net as fine a salmon as ever jumped in the bright waters of “the spreading Lee;” but as he was going to take it out, the net was pulled from him, he could not tell how or by whom, and away got the salmon, and went swimming along with the current as gaily as if nothing had happened.

Dermod looked sorrowfully at the wake which the fish had left upon the water, shining like a line of silver in the moonlight, and then, with an angry motion of his right hand, and a stamp of his foot, gave vent to his feelings by muttering, “May bitter bad luck attend you night and day for a blackguard schemer of a salmon, wherever you go! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, if there’s any shame in you to give me the slip after this fashion! And I’m clear in my own mind you’ll come to no good, for some kind of evil thing or other helped you — did I not feel it pull the net against me as strong as the devil himself?”

“That’s not true for you,” said one of the little fairies, who had scampered off at the approach of the priest, coming up to Dermod Leary, with a whole throng of companions at his heels; “there was only a dozen and a half of us pulling against you.”

Dermod gazed on the tiny speaker with wonder, who continued: “Make yourself noways uneasy about the priest’s supper; for if you will go back and ask him one question from us, there will be as fine a supper as ever was put on a table spread out before him in less than no time.”

“I’ll have nothing at all to do with you,” replied Dermod, in a tone of determination; and after a pause he added, “I’m much obliged to you for your offer, sir, but I know better than to sell myself to you or the like of you for a supper; and more than that, I know Father Horrigan has more regard for my soul than to wish me to pledge it for ever, out of regard to any thing you could put before him — so there’s an end of the matter.”

The little speaker, with a pertinacity not to be repulsed by Dermod’s manner, continued, “Will you ask the priest one civil question for us?”

Dermod considered for some time, and he was right in doing so, but he thought that no one could come to harm out of asking a civil question. “I see no objection to do that same, gentlemen,” said Dermod; “But I will have nothing in life to do with your supper, — mind that.”

“Then,” said the little speaking fairy, whilst the rest came crowding after him from all parts, “go and ask Father Horrigan to tell us whether our souls will be saved at the last day, like the souls of good Christians; and if you wish us well, bring back word what he says without delay.”

Away went Dermod to his cabin, where he found the potatoes thrown out on the table, and his good wife handing the biggest of them all, a beautiful laughing red apple, smoking like a hard-ridden horse on a frosty night, over to Father Horrigan.

“Please your reverence,” said Dermod, after some hesitation, “may I make bold to ask your honour one question?”

“What may that be?” said Father Horrigan.

“Why, then, begging your reverence’s pardon for my freedom, it is, if the souls of the good people are to be saved at the last day?”

“Who bid you ask me that question, Leary?” said the priest, fixing his eyes upon him very sternly, which Dermod could not stand before at all.

“I’ll tell no lies about the matter, and nothing in life but the truth,” said Dermod. “It was the good people themselves who sent me to ask the question, and there they are in thousands down on the bank of the river waiting for me to go back with the answer.”

“Go back by all means,” said the priest, “and tell them, if they want to know, to come here to me themselves, and I’ll answer that or any other question they are pleased to ask, with the greatest pleasure in life.”

Dermod accordingly returned to the fairies, who came swarming round about him to hear what the priest had said in reply; and Dermod spoke out among them like a bold man as he was: but when they heard that they must go to the priest, away they fled, some here and more there; and some this way and more that, whisking by poor Dermod so fast and in such numbers, that he was quite bewildered.

When he came to himself, which was not for a long time, back he went to his cabin and ate his dry potatoes along with Father Horrigan, who made quite light of the thing; but Dermod could not help thinking it a mighty hard case that his reverence, whose words had the power to banish the fairies at such a rate, should have no sort of relish to his supper, and that the fine salmon he had in the net should have been got away from him in such a manner.

THE BREWERY OF EGG-SHELLS.

V.

It may be considered impertinent, were I to explain what is meant by a changeling; both Shakspeare and Spenser have already done so, and who is there unacquainted with the Mid-summer Night's Dream and the Fairy Queen?

Now Mrs. Sullivan fancied that her youngest child had been changed by "fairies' theft," to use Spenser's words, and certainly appearances warranted such a conclusion; for in one night her healthy, blue-eyed boy had become shrivelled up into almost nothing, and never ceased squalling and crying. This naturally made poor Mrs. Sullivan very unhappy; and all the neighbours, by way of comforting her, said, that her own child was, beyond any kind of doubt, with the good people, and that one of themselves had been put in his place.

Mrs. Sullivan, of course, could not disbelieve what every one told her, but she did not wish to hurt the thing; for although its face was so withered, and its body wasted away to a mere skeleton, it had still a strong resemblance to her own boy; she, therefore, could not find it in her heart to roast it alive on the griddle, or to burn its nose off with the red-hot tongs, or to throw it out in the snow on the road-side, notwithstanding these, and several like proceedings, were strongly recommended to her for the recovery of her child.

One day who should Mrs. Sullivan meet but a cunning woman, well known about the country by the name of Ellen Leah (or Gray Ellen). She had the gift, however she got it, of telling where the dead were, and what was good for the rest of their souls; and could charm away warts and wens, and do a great many wonderful things of the same nature.

"You're in grief this morning, Mrs. Sullivan," were the first words of Ellen Leah to her.

"You may say that, Ellen," said Mrs. Sullivan, "and good cause I have to be in grief, for there was my own fine child whipped off from me out of his cradle, without as much as by your leave, or ask your pardon, and an ugly dony bit of a shrivelled-up fairy put in his place: no wonder then that you see me in grief, Ellen."

"Small blame to you, Mrs. Sullivan," said Ellen Leah; "but are you sure 'tis a fairy?"

"Sure!" echoed Mrs. Sullivan, "sure enough am I to my sorrow, and can I doubt my own two eyes? Every mother's soul must feel for me!"

"Will you take an old woman's advice?" said Ellen Leah, fixing her wild and mysterious gaze upon the unhappy mother; and, after a pause, she added, "but may be you'll call it foolish?"

"Can you get me back my child, — my own child, Ellen?" said Mrs. Sullivan with great energy.

"If you do as I bid you," returned Ellen Leah, "you'll know." Mrs. Sullivan was silent in expectation, and Ellen continued. "Put down the big pot, full of water, on the fire, and make it boil like mad; then get a dozen new-laid eggs, break them, and keep the shells, but throw away the rest; when that is done, put the shells in the pot of boiling water, and you will soon know whether it is your own boy or a fairy. If you find that it is a fairy in the cradle, take the red-hot poker and cram it down his ugly throat, and you will not have much trouble with him after that, I promise you."

Home went Mrs. Sullivan, and did as Ellen Leah desired. She put the pot in the fire, and plenty of turf under it, and set the water boiling at such a rate that if ever water was red hot — it surely was.

The child was lying for a wonder quite easy and quiet in the cradle, every now and then cocking his eye, that would twinkle as keen as a star in a frosty night, over at the great fire, and the big pot upon it; and he looked on with great attention at Mrs. Sullivan breaking the eggs, and putting down the egg-shells to boil. At last he asked, with the voice of a very old man, "What are you doing, mammy?"

Mrs. Sullivan's heart, as she said herself, was up in her mouth ready to choke her, at hearing the child speak. But she contrived to put the poker in the fire, and to answer, without making any wonder at the words, "I'm brewing, *a vick*" (my son).

"And what are you brewing, mammy?" said the little imp, whose supernatural gift of speech now proved beyond question that he was a fairy substitute.

"I wish the poker was red," thought Mrs. Sullivan; but it was a large one, and took a long time heating: so she determined to keep him in talk until the poker was in a proper state to thrust down his throat, and therefore repeated the question.

"Is it what I'm brewing, *a vick*," said she, "you want to know?"

"Yes, mammy: what are you brewing?" returned the fairy.

"Egg-shells, *a vick*," said Mrs. Sullivan.

"Oh!" shrieked the imp, starting up in the cradle, and clapping his hands together, "I'm fifteen hundred years in the world, and I never saw a brewery of egg-shells before!" The poker was by this time quite red, and Mrs. Sullivan seizing it, ran furiously towards the cradle; but somehow or other her foot slipped, and she fell flat on the floor, and the poker flew out of her hand to the other end of the house. However, she got up, without much loss of time, and went to the cradle intending to pitch the wicked thing that was in it into the pot of boiling water, when there she saw her own child in a sweet sleep, one of his soft round arms rested upon the pillow — his features were as placid as if their repose had never been disturbed, save the rosy mouth which moved with a gentle and regular breathing.

Who can tell the feelings of a mother when she looks upon her sleeping child? Why should I, therefore, endeavour to describe those of Mrs. Sullivan at again beholding her long-lost boy? The fountain of her heart overflowed with the excess of joy — and she wept! — tears trickled silently down her cheeks, nor did she strive to check them — they were tears not of sorrow, but of happiness.

LEGEND OF BOTTLE HILL.

VI.

“Come listen to a tale of times of old,
Come listen to me—”

It was in the good days, when the little people, most impudently called fairies, were more frequently seen than they are in these unbelieving times, that a farmer, named Mick Purcell, rented a few acres of barren ground in the neighbourhood of the once celebrated preceptory of Mourne, situated about three miles from Mallow, and thirteen from “the beautiful city called Cork.” Mick had a wife and family: they all did what they could, and that was but little, for the poor man had no child grown up big enough to help him in his work: and all the poor woman could do was to mind the children, and to milk the one cow, and to boil the potatoes, and to carry the eggs to market to Mallow; but with all they could do, ’twas hard enough on them to pay the rent. Well, they did manage it for a good while; but at last came a bad year, and the little grain of oats was all spoiled, and the chickens died of the pip, and the pig got the measles, — *she* was sold in Mallow, and brought almost nothing; and poor Mick found that he hadn’t enough to half pay his rent, and two gales were due.

“Why then, Molly,” says he, “what’ll we do?”

“Wisha, then, mavournene, what would you do but take the cow to the fair of Cork and sell her?” says she; “and Monday is fair day, and so you must go to-morrow, that the poor beast may be rested *again* the fair.”

“And what’ll we do when she’s gone?” says Mick, sorrowfully.

“Never a know I know, Mick; but sure God won’t leave us without Him, Mick; and you know how good He was to us when poor little Billy was sick, and we had nothing at all for him to take, that good doctor gentleman at Ballydahin come riding and asking for a drink of milk; and how he gave us two shillings; and how he sent the things and bottles for the child, and gave me my breakfast when I went over to ask a question, so he did: and how he came to see Billy, and never left off his goodness till he was quite well?”

“Oh! you are always that way, Molly, and I believe you are right after all, so I won’t be sorry for selling the cow; but I’ll go to-morrow, and you must put a needle and thread through my coat, for you know ’tis ripped under the arm.”

Molly told him he should have every thing right; and about twelve o’clock next day he left her, getting a charge not to sell his cow except for the highest penny. Mick promised to mind it, and went his way along the road. He drove his cow slowly through the little stream which crosses it and runs by the old walls of Mourne. As he passed he glanced his eye upon the towers and one of the old elder trees which were only then little bits of switches.

“Oh, then, if I only had half the money that’s buried in you, ’tisn’t driving this poor cow I’d be now! Why, then, isn’t it too bad that it should be there covered over with earth, and many a one besides me wanting? Well, if it is God’s will, I’ll have some money myself coming back.”

So saying, he moved on after his beast; ’twas a fine day, and the sun shone brightly on the walls of the old abbey as he passed under them; he then crossed an extensive mountain tract, and after six long miles he came to the top of that hill — Bottle Hill ’tis called now, but that was not the name of it then, and just there a man overtook him.

“Good morrow,” says he. “Good morrow,” kindly, says Mick, looking at the stranger, who was a little man, you’d almost call him a dwarf, only he wasn’t quite so little neither: he had a bit of an old, wrinkled, yellow face, for all the world like a dried cauliflower, only he had a sharp little nose, and red eyes, and white hair, and his lips were not red, but all his face was one colour, and his eyes never were quiet, but looking at every thing, and although they were red, they made Mick feel quite cold when he looked at them. In truth he did not much like the little man’s company; and he couldn’t see one bit of his legs, nor his body; for, though the day was warm, he was all wrapped up in a big great-coat. Mick drove his cow something faster, but the little man kept up with him. Mick didn’t know how he walked, for he was almost afraid to look at him, and to cross himself, for fear the old man would be angry. Yet he thought his fellow-traveller did not seem to walk like other men, nor to put one foot before the other, but to glide over the rough road, and rough enough it was, like a shadow, without noise and without effort. Mick’s heart trembled within him, and he said a prayer to himself, wishing he hadn’t come out that day, or that he was on fair hill, or that he hadn’t the cow to mind, that he might run away from the bad thing — when, in the midst of his fears, he was again addressed by his companion.

“Where are you going with the cow, honest man?”

“To the fair of Cork then,” says Mick, trembling at the shrill and piercing tones of the voice.

“Are you going to sell her?” said the stranger.

“Why, then, what else am I going for but to sell her?”

“Will you sell her to me?”

Mick started — he was afraid to have any thing to do with the little man, and he was more afraid to say no.

“What’ll you give for her?” at last says he.

“I’ll tell you what, I’ll give you this bottle,” said the little one, pulling a bottle from under his coat.

Mick looked at him and the bottle, and, in spite of his terror, he could not help bursting into a loud fit of laughter.

“Laugh if you will,” said the little man, “but I tell you this bottle is better for you than all the money you will get for the cow in Cork — ay, than ten thousand times as much.”

Mick laughed again. “Why then,” says he, “do you think I am such a fool as to give my good cow for a bottle — and an empty one, too? indeed, then, I won't."

"You had better give me the cow, and take the bottle — you'll not be sorry for it."

"Why, then, and what would Molly say? I'd never hear the end of it; and how would I pay the rent? and what would we all do without a penny of money?

"I tell you this bottle is better to you than money; take it, and give me the cow. I ask you for the last time, Mick Purcell."

Mick started.

"How does he know my name?" thought he.

The stranger proceeded: "Mick Purcell, I know you, and I have regard for you; therefore do as I warn you, or you may be sorry for it. How do you know but your cow will die before you get to Cork?"

Mick was going to say "God forbid!" but the little man went on (and he was too attentive to say any thing to stop him; for Mick was a very civil man, and he knew better than to interrupt a gentleman, and that's what many people, that hold their heads higher, don't mind now).

"And how do you know but there will be much cattle at the fair, and you will get a bad price, or may be you might be robbed when you are coming home? but what need I talk more to you when you are determined to throw away your luck, Mick Purcell?

"Oh! no, I would not throw away my luck, sir," said Mick; "and if I was sure the bottle was as good as you say, though I never liked an empty bottle, although I had drank what was in it, I'd give you the cow in the name — —"

"Never mind names," said the stranger, "but give me the cow; I would not tell you a lie. Here, take the bottle, and when you go home do what I direct exactly."

Mick hesitated.

"Well then, good by, I can stay no longer: once more, take it, and be rich; refuse it, and beg for your life, and see your children in poverty, and your wife dying for want: that will happen to you, Mick Purcell!" said the little man with a malicious grin, which made him look ten times more ugly than ever.

"May be 'tis true," said Mick, still hesitating: he did not know what to do — he could hardly help believing the old man, and at length in a fit of desperation he seized the bottle— "Take the cow," said he, "and if you are telling a lie, the curse of the poor will be on you."

"I care neither for your curses nor your blessings, but I have spoken truth, Mick Purcell, and that you will find to-night, if you do what I tell you."

"And what's that?" says Mick.

"When you go home, never mind if your wife is angry, but be quiet yourself, and make her sweep the room clean, set the table out right, and spread a clean cloth over it; then put the bottle on the ground, saying these words: 'Bottle, do your duty,' and you will see the end of it."

"And is this all?" says Mick.

"No more," said the stranger. "Good by, Mick Purcell — you are a rich man."

"God grant it!" said Mick, as the old man moved after the cow, and Mick retraced the road towards his cabin; but he could not help turning back his head, to look after the purchaser of his cow, who was nowhere to be seen.

"Lord between us and harm!" said Mick: "*He* can't belong to this earth; but where is the cow?" She too was gone, and Mick went homeward muttering prayers, and holding fast the bottle.

"And what would I do if it broke?" thought he. "Oh! but I'll take care of that;" so he put it into his bosom, and went on anxious to prove his bottle, and doubting of the reception he should meet from his wife; balancing his anxieties with his expectations, his fears with his hopes, he reached home in the evening, and surprised his wife, sitting over the turf fire in the big chimney.

"Oh! Mick, are you come back! Sure you wer'n't at Cork all the way! What has happened to you? Where is the cow? Did you sell her? How much money did you get for her? What news have you? Tell us every thing about it."

"Why then, Molly, if you'll give me time, I'll tell you all about it. If you want to know where the cow is, 'tisn't Mick can tell you, for the never a know does he know where she is now."

"Oh! then, you sold her; and where's the money?"

"Arrah! stop awhile, Molly, and I'll tell you all about it."

"But what is that bottle under your waistcoat?" said Molly, spying its neck sticking out.

"Why, then, be easy now, can't you," says Mick, "till I tell it to you?" and putting the bottle on the table, "That's all I got for the cow."

His poor wife was thunderstruck. "All you got! and what good is that, Mick? Oh! I never thought you were such a fool; and what'll we do for the rent, and what — —"

"Now, Molly," says Mick, "can't you hearken to reason? Didn't I tell you how the old man, or whatsomever he was, met me, — no, he did not meet me neither, but he was there with me — on the big hill, and how he made me sell him the cow, and told me the bottle was the only thing for me?"

"Yes, indeed, the only thing for you, you fool!" said Molly, seizing the bottle to hurl it at her poor husband's head; but Mick caught it, and quietly (for he minded the old man's advice) loosened his wife's grasp, and placed the bottle again in his bosom. Poor Molly sat down crying, while Mick told his story, with many a crossing and blessing between him and harm. His wife could not help believing him, particularly as she had as much faith in fairies as she had in the priest, who indeed never discouraged her belief in the fairies; may be, he didn't know she believed in them, and may be, he believed in them himself. She got up, however, without saying one word, and began to sweep the earthen floor with a bunch of heath; then she tidied up every thing, and put out the long table, and spread the clean cloth, for she had only one, upon it, and Mick, placing the bottle on the ground, looked at it and said, “Bottle, do your duty.”

“Look there! look there, mammy!” said his chubby eldest son, a boy about five years old— “look there! look there!” and he sprang to his mother’s side, as two tiny little fellows rose like light from the bottle, and in an instant covered the table with dishes and plates of gold and silver, full of the finest victuals that ever were seen, and when all was done went into the bottle again. Mick and his wife looked at every thing with astonishment; they had never seen such plates and dishes before, and didn’t think they could ever admire them enough; the very sight almost took away their appetites; but at length Molly said, “Come and sit down, Mick, and try and eat a bit: sure you ought to be hungry after such a good day’s work.”

“Why, then, the man told no lie about the bottle.”

Mick sat down, after putting the children to the table; and they made a hearty meal, though they couldn’t taste half the dishes.

“Now,” says Molly, “I wonder will those two good little gentlemen carry away these fine things again?” They waited, but no one came; so Molly put up the dishes and plates very carefully, saying, “Why, then, Mick, that was no lie sure enough; but you’ll be a rich man yet, Mick Purcell.”

Mick and his wife and children went to their bed, not to sleep, but to settle about selling the fine things they did not want, and to take more land. Mick went to Cork and sold his plate, and bought a horse and cart, and began to show that he was making money; and they did all they could to keep the bottle a secret; but for all that, their landlord found it out, for he came to Mick one day and asked him where he got all his money — sure it was not by the farm; and he bothered him so much, that at last Mick told him of the bottle. His landlord offered him a deal of money for it; but Mick would not give it, till at last he offered to give him all his farm for ever: so Mick, who was very rich, thought he’d never want any more money, and gave him the bottle: but Mick was mistaken — he and his family spent money as if there was no end of it; and, to make the story short, they became poorer and poorer, till at last they had nothing left but one cow; and Mick once more drove his cow before him to sell her at Cork fair, hoping to meet the old man and get another bottle. It was hardly day-break when he left home, and he walked on at a good pace till he reached the big hill: the mists were sleeping in the valleys and curling like smoke-wreaths upon the brown heath around him. The sun rose on his left, and just at his feet a lark sprang from its grassy couch and poured forth its joyous matin song, ascending into the clear blue sky,

“Till its form like a speck in the airiness blending
And thrilling with music, was melting in light.”

Mick crossed himself, listening as he advanced to the sweet song of the lark, but thinking, notwithstanding, all the time of the little old man; when, just as he reached the summit of the hill, and cast his eyes over the extensive prospect before and around him, he was startled and rejoiced by the same well-known voice:— “Well, Mick Purcell, I told you, you would be a rich man.”

“Indeed, then, sure enough I was, that’s no lie for you, sir. Good morning to you, but it is not rich I am now — but have you another bottle, for I want it now as much as I did long ago; so if you have it, sir, here is the cow for it.”

“And here is the bottle,” said the old man, smiling; “you know what to do with it.”

“Oh! then, sure I do, as good right I have.”

“Well, farewell for ever, Mick Purcell: I told you, you would be a rich man.”

“And good bye to you, sir,” said Mick, as he turned back; “and good luck to you, and good luck to the big hill — it wants a name — Bottle Hill. — Good bye, sir, good bye;” so Mick walked back as fast as he could, never looking after the white-faced little gentleman and the cow, so anxious was he to bring home the bottle. Well, he arrived with it safely enough, and called out, as soon as he saw Molly,— “Oh! sure, I’ve another bottle!”

“Arrah! then have you? why, then, you’re a lucky man, Mick Purcell, that’s what you are.”

In an instant she put every thing right; and Mick, looking at his bottle, exultingly cried out, “Bottle, do your duty.” In a twinkling, two great stout men with big cudgels issued from the bottle (I do not know how they got room in it), and belaboured poor Mick and his wife and all his family, till they lay on the floor, when in they went again. Mick, as soon as he recovered, got up and looked about him; he thought and thought, and at last he took up his wife and his children; and, leaving them to recover as well as they could, he took the bottle under his coat, and went to his landlord, who had a great company: he got a servant to tell him he wanted to speak to him, and at last he came out to Mick.

“Well, what do you want now?”

“Nothing, sir, only I have another bottle.”

“Oh! ho! is it as good as the first?”

“Yes, sir, and better; if you like, I will show it to you before all the ladies and gentlemen.”

“Come along, then.” So saying, Mick was brought into the great hall, where he saw his old bottle standing high up on a shelf: “Ah! ha!” says he to himself, “may be I won’t have you by and by.”

“Now,” says his landlord, “show us your bottle.” Mick set it on the floor, and uttered the words; in a moment the landlord was tumbled on the floor; ladies and gentlemen, servants and all, were running and roaring, and sprawling, and kicking and shrieking. Wine cups and salvers were knocked about in every direction, until the landlord called out, “Stop those two devils, Mick Purcell, or I’ll have you hanged!”

“They never shall stop,” said Mick, “till I get my own bottle that I see up there at top of that shelf.”

“Give it down to him, give it down to him, before we are all killed!” says the landlord.

Mick put the bottle in his bosom; in jumped the two men into the new bottle, and he carried the bottles home. I need not lengthen my story by telling how he got richer than ever, how his son married his landlord’s only daughter, how he and his wife died when they were very old, and how some of the servants, fighting at their wake, broke the bottles; but still the hill has the name upon it; ay, and so ‘twill be always Bottle Hill to the end of the world, and so it ought, for it is a strange story.

THE CONFESSIONS OF TOM BOURKE.

VII.

Tom Bourke lives in a low long farm-house, resembling in outward appearance a large barn, placed at the bottom of the hill, just where the new road strikes off from the old one, leading from the town of Kilworth to that of Lismore. He is of a class of persons who are a sort of black swans in Ireland; he is a wealthy farmer. Tom's father had, in the good old times, when a hundred pounds were no inconsiderable treasure, either to lend or spend, accommodated his landlord with that sum at interest; and obtained, as a return for the civility, a long lease, about half-a-dozen times more valuable than the loan which procured it. The old man died worth several hundred pounds, the greater part of which, with his farm, he bequeathed to his son Tom. But, besides all this, Tom received from his father, upon his death-bed, another gift, far more valuable than worldly riches, greatly as he prized, and is still known to prize them. He was invested with the privilege, enjoyed by few of the sons of men, of communicating with those mysterious beings called "the good people."

Tom Bourke is a little, stout, healthy, active man, about fifty-five years of age. His hair is perfectly white, short and bushy behind, but rising in front erect and thick above his forehead, like a new clothes-brush. His eyes are of that kind which I have often observed with persons of a quick but limited intellect — they are small, gray, and lively. The large and projecting eyebrows under, or rather within, which they twinkle, give them an expression of shrewdness and intelligence, if not of cunning. And this is very much the character of the man. If you want to make a bargain with Tom Bourke, you must act as if you were a general besieging a town, and make your advances a long time before you can hope to obtain possession; if you march up boldly, and tell him at once your object, you are for the most part sure to have the gates closed in your teeth. Tom does not wish to part with what you wish to obtain, or another person has been speaking to him for the whole of the last week. Or, it may be, your proposal seems to meet the most favourable reception. "Very well, sir;" "That's true, sir;" "I'm very thankful to your honour," and other expressions of kindness and confidence, greet you in reply to every sentence; and you part from him wondering how he can have obtained the character which he universally bears, of being a man whom no one can make any thing of in a bargain. But when you next meet him, the flattering illusion is dissolved: you find you are a great deal farther from your object than you were when you thought you had almost succeeded: his eye and his tongue express a total forgetfulness of what the mind within never lost sight of for an instant; and you have to begin operations afresh, with the disadvantage of having put your adversary completely upon his guard.

Yet, although Tom Bourke is, whether from supernatural revealings, or (as many will think more probable) from the tell-truth, experience, so distrustful of mankind, and so close in his dealings with them, he is no misanthrope. No man loves better the pleasures of the genial board. The love of money, indeed, which is with him (and who will blame him?) a very ruling propensity, and the gratification which it has received from habits of industry, sustained throughout a pretty long and successful life, have taught him the value of sobriety, during those seasons, at least, when a man's business requires him to keep possession of his senses. He has therefore a general rule, never to get drunk but on Sundays. But, in order that it should be a general one to all intents and purposes, he takes a method which, according to better logicians than he is, always proves the rule. He has many exceptions: among these, of course, are the evenings of all the fair and market days that happen in his neighbourhood; so also all the days on which funerals, marriages, and christenings, take place among his friends within many miles of him. As to this last class of exceptions, it may appear at first very singular, that he is much more punctual in his attendance at the funerals than at the baptisms or weddings of his friends. This may be construed as an instance of disinterested affection for departed worth, very uncommon in this selfish world. But I am afraid that the motives which lead Tom Bourke to pay more court to the dead than the living are precisely those which lead to the opposite conduct in the generality of mankind — a hope of future benefit and a fear of future evil. For the good people, who are a race as powerful as they are capricious, have their favourites among those who inhabit the world; often show their affection, by easing the objects of it from the load of this burdensome life; and frequently reward or punish the living, according to the degree of reverence paid to the obsequies and the memory of the elected dead.

It is not easy to prevail on Tom to speak of those good people, with whom he is said to hold frequent and intimate communications. To the faithful, who believe in their power, and their occasional delegation of it to him, he seldom refuses, if properly asked, to exercise his high prerogative, when any unfortunate being is *struck* in his neighbourhood. Still, he will not be won unsued: he is at first difficult of persuasion, and must be overcome by a little gentle violence. On these occasions he is unusually solemn and mysterious, and if one word of reward be mentioned, he at once abandons the unhappy patient, such a proposition being a direct insult to his supernatural superiors. It is true, that as the labourer is worthy of his hire, most persons, gifted as he is, do not scruple to receive a token of gratitude from the patients or their friends, *after* their recovery.

To do Tom Bourke justice, he is on these occasions, as I have heard from many competent authorities, perfectly disinterested. Not many months since, he recovered a young woman (the sister of a tradesman living near him,) who had been struck speechless after returning from a funeral, and had continued so for several days. He steadfastly refused receiving any compensation; saying, that even if he had not as much as would buy him his supper, he could take nothing in this case, because the girl had offended at the funeral one of the *good people* belonging to his own family, and though he would do her a kindness, he could take none from her.

About the time this last remarkable affair took place, my friend Mr. Martin, who is a neighbour of Tom's, had some business to transact with him, which it was exceedingly difficult to bring to a conclusion. At last Mr. Martin, having tried all quiet means, had recourse to a legal process, which brought Tom to reason, and the matter was arranged to their mutual satisfaction, and with perfect good-humour between the parties. The accommodation took place after dinner at Mr. Martin's house, and he invited Tom to walk into the parlour and take a glass of punch, made of some excellent *potteen*, which was on the table: he had long wished to draw out his highly endowed neighbour on the subject of his supernatural powers, and as Mrs. Martin, who was in the room, was rather a favourite of Tom's, this seemed a good opportunity.

"Well, Tom," said Mr. Martin, "that was a curious business of Molly Dwyer's, who recovered her speech so suddenly the other day."

"You may say that, sir," replied Tom Bourke; "but I had to travel far for it: no matter for that, now. Your health, ma'am," said he, turning to Mrs. Martin.

"Thank you, Tom. But I am told you had some trouble once in that way in your own family," said Mrs. Martin.

"So I had, ma'am; trouble enough; but you were only a child at that time."

"Come, Tom," said the hospitable Mr. Martin, interrupting him, "take another tumbler;" and he then added, "I wish you would tell us something of the manner in which so many of your children died. I am told they dropped off, one after another, by the same disorder, and that your eldest son was cured in a most extraordinary way, when the physicians had given over."

"'Tis true for you, sir," returned Tom; "your father, the doctor (God be good to him, I won't belie him in his grave) told me, when my fourth little boy was a week sick, that himself and Doctor Barry did all that man could do for him; but they could not keep him from going after the rest. No more they could, if the people that took away the rest wished to take him too. But they left him; and sorry to the heart I am I did not know before why they were taking my boys from me; if I did, I would not be left trusting to two of 'em now."

"And how did you find it out, Tom?" inquired Mr. Martin.

"Why, then, I'll tell you, sir," said Bourke: "When your father said what I told you, I did not know very well what to do. I walked down the little *bohereen*, you know, sir, that goes to the river-side near Dick Heafy's ground; for 'twas a lonesome place, and I wanted to think of myself. I was heavy, sir, and my heart got weak in me, when I thought I was to lose my little boy; and I did not know well how to face his mother with the news, for she doted down upon him. Beside, she never got the better of all she cried at her brother's berrin (burying) the week before. As I was going down the bohereen, I met an old bocough, that used to come about the place once or twice a year, and used always to sleep in our barn while he staid in the neighbourhood. So he asked me how I was. 'Bad enough, Shamous (James),' says I. 'I'm sorry for your trouble,' says he; 'but you're a foolish man, Mr. Bourke. Your son would be well enough if you would only do what you ought with him.' 'What more can I do with him, Shamous?' says I: 'the doctors give him over.' 'The doctors know no more what ails him than they do what ails a cow when she stops her milk,' says Shamous: 'but go to such a one,' says he, telling me his name, 'and try what he'll say to you.'"

"And who was that, Tom?" asked Mr. Martin.

"I could not tell you that, sir," said Bourke, with a mysterious look: "howsoever, you often saw him, and he does not live far from this. But I had a trial of him before; and if I went to him at first, may be I'd have now some of them that's gone, and so Shamous often told me. Well, sir, I went to this man, and he came with me to the house. By course, I did every thing as he bid me. According to his order, I took the little boy out of the dwelling-house immediately, sick as he was, and made a bed for him and myself in the cow-house. Well, sir, I lay down by his side, in the bed, between two of the cows, and he fell asleep. He got into a perspiration, saving your presence, as if he was drawn through the river, and breathed hard, with a great *impression* (oppression) on his chest, and was very bad — very bad entirely through the night. I thought about twelve o'clock he was going at last, and I was just getting up to go call the man I told you of; but there was no occasion. My friends were getting the better of them that wanted to take him away from me. There was nobody in the cow-house but the child and myself. There was only one half-penny candle lighting, and that was stuck in the wall at the far end of the house. I had just enough of light where we were laying to see a person walking or standing near us: and there was no more noise than if it was a churchyard, except the cows chewing the fodder in the stalls. Just as I was thinking of getting up, as I told you — I wont belie my father, sir — he was a good father to me — I saw him standing at the bed-side, holding out his right hand to me, and leaning his other hand on the stick he used to carry when he was alive, and looking pleasant and smiling at me, all as if he was telling me not to be afeard, for I would not lose the child. 'Is that you, father?' says I. He said nothing. 'If that's you,' says I again, 'for the love of them that's gone, let me catch your hand.' And so he did, sir; and his hand was as soft as a child's. He stayed about as long as you'd be going from this to the gate below at the end of the avenue, and then went away. In less than a week the child was as well as if nothing ever ailed him; and there isn't to-night a healthier boy of nineteen, from this blessed house to the town of Ballyporeen, across the Kilworth mountains."

"But I think, Tom," said Mr. Martin, "it appears as if you are more indebted to your father than to the man recommended to you by Shamous; or do you suppose it was he who made favour with your enemies among the good people, and that then your father — —"

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Bourke, interrupting him; “but don’t call them my enemies. ’Twould not be wishing to me for a good deal to sit by when they are called so. No offence to you, sir. — Here’s wishing you a good health and long life.”

“I assure you,” returned Mr. Martin, “I meant no offence, Tom; but was it not as I say?”

“I can’t tell you that, sir,” said Bourke; “I’m bound down, sir. Howsoever, you may be sure the man I spoke of, and my father, and those they know, settled it between them.”

There was a pause, of which Mrs. Martin took advantage to inquire of Tom, whether something remarkable had not happened about a goat and a pair of pigeons, at the time of his son’s illness — circumstances often mysteriously hinted at by Tom.

“See that now,” said he, returning to Mr. Martin, “how well she remembers it! True for you, ma’am. The goat I gave the mistress your mother, when the doctors ordered her goats’ whey.”

Mrs. Martin nodded assent, and Tom Bourke continued— “Why, then, I’ll tell you how that was. The goat was as well as e’er a goat ever was, for a month after she was sent to Killaan to your father’s. The morning after the night I just told you of, before the child woke, his mother was standing at the gap leading out of the barn-yard into the road, and she saw two pigeons flying from the town of Kilworth, off the church, down towards her. Well, they never stopped, you see, till they came to the house on the hill at the other side of the river, facing our farm. They pitched upon the chimney of that house, and after looking about them for a minute or two, they flew straight across the river, and stopped on the ridge of the cow-house where the child and I were lying. Do you think they came there for nothing, sir?”

“Certainly not, Tom,” returned Mr. Martin.

“Well, the woman came in to me, frightened, and told me. She began to cry.— ‘Whisht, you fool!’ says I: ‘’tis all for the better.’ ’Twas true for me. What do you think, ma’am; the goat that I gave your mother, that was seen feeding at sunrise that morning by Jack Cronin, as merry as a bee, dropped down dead, without any body knowing why, before Jack’s face; and at that very moment he saw two pigeons fly from the top of the house out of the town, towards the Lismore road. ’Twas at the same time my woman saw them, as I just told you.”

“’Twas very strange, indeed, Tom,” said Mr. Martin; “I wish you could give us some explanation of it.”

“I wish I could, sir,” was Tom Bourke’s answer; “but I’m bound down. I can’t tell but what I’m allowed to tell, any more than a sentry is let walk more than his rounds.”

“I think you said something of having had some former knowledge of the man that assisted in the cure of your son,” said Mr. Martin.

“So I had, sir,” returned Bourke. “I had a trial of that man. But that’s neither here nor there. I can’t tell you any thing about that, sir. But would you like to know how he got his skill?”

"Oh! very much indeed," said Mr. Martin.

"But you can tell us his Christian name, that we may know him the better through the story," added Mrs. Martin. Tom Bourke paused for a minute to consider this proposition.

"Well, I believe I may tell you that, any how; his name is Patrick. He was always a smart, active, 'cute boy, and would be a great clerk if he stuck to it. The first time I knew him, sir, was at my mother's wake. I was in great trouble, for I did not know where to bury her. Her people and my father's people — I mean their friends, sir, among the *good people*, had the greatest battle that was known for many a year, at Dunmanwaycross, to see to whose churchyard she'd be taken. They fought for three nights, one after another, without being able to settle it. The neighbours wondered how long I was before I buried my mother; but I had my reasons, though I could not tell them at that time. Well, sir, to make my story short, Patrick came on the fourth morning and told me he settled the business, and that day we buried her in Kilcrumper churchyard with my father's people."

"He was a valuable friend, Tom," said Mrs. Martin, with difficulty suppressing a smile. "But you were about to tell how he became so skilful."

"So I will, and welcome," replied Bourke. "Your health, ma'am. I am drinking too much of this punch, sir; but to tell the truth, I never tasted the like of it: it goes down one's throat like sweet oil. But what was I going to say? — Yes — well — Patrick, many a long year ago, was coming home from a *berrin* late in the evening, and walking by the side of the river opposite the big inch, near Ballyhefaan ford. He had taken a drop, to be sure; but he was only a little merry, as you may say, and knew very well what he was doing. The moon was shining, for it was in the month of August, and the river was as smooth and as bright as a looking-glass. He heard nothing for a long time but the fall of the water at the mill wier about a mile down the river, and now and then the crying of the lambs on the other side of the river. All at once, there was a noise of a great number of people, laughing as if they'd break their hearts, and of a piper playing among them. It came from the inch at the other side of the ford, and he saw, through the mist that hung over the river, a whole crowd of people dancing on the inch. Patrick was as fond of a dance as he was of a glass, and that's saying enough for him; so he whipped off his shoes and stockings, and away with him across the ford. After putting on his shoes and stockings at the other side of the river, he walked over to the crowd, and mixed with them for some time without being minded. He thought, sir, that he'd show them better dancing than any of themselves, for he was proud of his feet, sir, and good right he had, for there was not a boy in the same parish could foot a double or treble with him. But pwah! — his dancing was no more to theirs than mine would be to the mistress there. They did not seem as if they had a bone in their bodies, and they kept it up as if nothing could tire them. Patrick was 'shamed within himself, for he thought he had not his fellow in all the country round; and was going away when a little old man, that was looking at the company for some time bitterly as if he did not like what was going on, came up to him.

‘Patrick,’ says he. Patrick started, for he did not think any body there knew him. ‘Patrick,’ says he, ‘you’re discouraged, and no wonder for you. But you have a friend near you. I’m your friend, and your father’s friend, and I think worse (more) of your little finger than I do of all that are here, though they think no one is as good as themselves. Go into the ring and call for a lilt. Don’t be afeard. I tell you the best of them did not do as well as you shall, if you will do as I bid you.’ Patrick felt something within him as if he ought not to gainsay the old man. He went into the ring, and called the piper to play up the best double he had. And, sure enough, all that the others were able for was nothing to him! He bounded like an eel, now here and now there, as light as a feather, although the people could hear the music answered by his steps, that beat time to every turn of it, like the left foot of the piper. He first danced a hornpipe on the ground. Then they got a table, and he danced a treble on it that drew down shouts from the whole company. At last he called for a trencher; and when they saw him, all as if he was spinning on it like a top, they did not know what to make of him. Some praised him for the best dancer that ever entered a ring; others hated him because he was better than themselves; although they had good right to think themselves better than him or any other man that never went the long journey.”

“And what was the cause of his great success?” inquired Mr. Martin.

“He could not help it, sir,” replied Tom Bourke. “They that could make him do more than that made him do it. Howsomever, when he had done, they wanted him to dance again, but he was tired, and they could not persuade him. At last he got angry, and swore a big oath, saving your presence, that he would not dance a step more; and the word was hardly out of his mouth, when he found himself all alone, with nothing but a white cow grazing by his side.”

“Did he ever discover why he was gifted with these extraordinary powers in the dance, Tom?” said Mr. Martin.

“I’ll tell you that too, sir,” answered Bourke, “when I come to it. When he went home, sir, he was taken with a shivering, and went to bed; and the next day they found he got the fever, or something like it, for he raved like as if he was mad. But they couldn’t make out what it was he was saying, though he talked constant. The doctors gave him over. But it’s little they know what ailed him. When he was, as you may say, about ten days sick, and every body thought he was going, one of the neighbours came in to him with a man, a friend of his, from Ballinlacken, that was keeping with him some time before. I can’t tell you his name either, only it was Darby. The minute Darby saw Patrick, he took a little bottle, with the juice of herbs in it, out of his pocket, and gave Patrick a drink of it. He did the same every day for three weeks, and then Patrick was able to walk about, as stout and as hearty as ever he was in his life. But he was a long time before he came to himself; and he used to walk the whole day sometimes by the ditch side, talking to himself, like as if there was some one along with him. And so there was surely, or he wouldn’t be the man he is to-day.

"I suppose it was from some such companion he learned his skill," said Mr. Martin.

"You have it all now, sir," replied Bourke. "Darby told him his friends were satisfied with what he did the night of the dance; and though they couldn't hinder the fever, they'd bring him over it, and teach him more than many knew beside him. And so they did. For you see all the people he met on the inch that night were friends of a different faction; only the old man that spoke to him; he was a friend of Patrick's family, and it went again' his heart, you see, that the others were so light, and active, and he was bitter in himself to hear 'em boasting how they'd dance with any set in the whole country round. So he gave Patrick the gift that night, and afterwards gave him the skill that makes him the wonder of all that know him. And to be sure it was only learning he was that time when he was wandering in his mind after the fever."

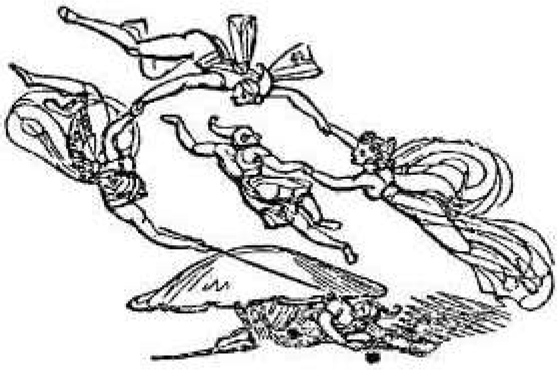
"I have heard many strange stories about that inch near Ballyhefaan ford," said Mr. Martin. "'Tis a great place for the good people, isn't it, Tom?"

"You may say that, sir," returned Bourke. "I could tell you a great deal about it. Many a time I sat for as good as two hours by moonlight, at th' other side of the river, looking at 'em playing goal as if they'd break their hearts over it; with their coats and waistcoats off, and white handkerchiefs on the heads of one party, and red ones on th' other, just as you'd see on a Sunday in Mr. Simming's big field. I saw 'em one night play till the moon set, without one party being able to take the ball from th' other. I'm sure they were going to fight, only, 'twas near morning. I'm told your grandfather, ma'am, used to see 'em, there, too," said Bourke, turning to Mrs. Martin.

"So I have been told, Tom," replied Mrs. Martin. "But don't they say that the churchyard of Kilcrumper is just as favourite a place with the good people as Ballyhefaan inch."

"Why, then, may be, you never heard, ma'am, what happened to Davy Roche in that same churchyard," said Bourke; and turning to Mr. Martin, added, "'twas a long time before he went into your service, sir. He was walking home of an evening, from the fair of Kilcummer, a little merry, to be sure, after the day, and he came up with a berrin. So he walked along with it, and thought it very queer, that he did not know a mother's soul in the crowd, but one man, and he was sure that man was dead many years afore. Howsomever, he went on with the berrin, till they came to Kilcrumper churchyard; and then he went in and staid with the rest, to see the corpse buried. As soon as the grave was covered, what should they do but gather about a piper, that come along with 'em, and fall to dancing as if it was a wedding. Davy longed to be among 'em (for he hadn't a bad foot of his own, that time, whatever he may now;) but he was loath to begin, because they all seemed strange to him, only the man I told you that he thought was dead. Well, at last this man saw what Davy wanted, and came up to him. 'Davy,' says he, 'take out a partner, and show what you can do, but take care and don't offer to kiss her.' 'That I won't,' says Davy, 'although her lips were made of honey.' And with that he made his bow to the *purtiest* girl in the ring, and he and she began to dance. 'Twas a jig they danced, and they did it to th' admiration, do you see, of all that were there. 'Twas all very well till the jig was over; but just as they had done, Davy, for he had a drop in, and was warm with the dancing, forgot himself, and kissed his partner, according to custom. The smack was no sooner off his lips, you see, than he was left alone in the churchyard, without a creature near him, and all he could see was the tall tombstones. Davy said they seemed as if they were dancing too, but I suppose that was only the wonder that happened him, and he being a little in drink. Howsomever, he found it was a great many hours later than he thought it; 'twas near morning when he came home; but they couldn't get a word out of him till the next day, when he woke out of a dead sleep about twelve o'clock."

When Tom had finished the account of Davy Roche and the berrin, it became quite evident that spirits of some sort were working too strong within him to admit of his telling many more tales of the good people. Tom seemed conscious of this. — He muttered for a few minutes broken sentences concerning church-yards, river-sides, peprechans, and *dina magh*, which were quite unintelligible, perhaps to himself, certainly to Mr. Martin and his lady. At length he made a slight motion of the head upwards, as if he would say, "I can talk no more;" stretched his arm on the table, upon which he placed the empty tumbler slowly, and with the most knowing and cautious air; and rising from his chair, walked, or rather rolled, to the parlour door. Here he turned round to face his host and hostess; but after various ineffectual attempts to bid them good night, the words, as they rose, being always choked by a violent hiccup, while the door, which he held by the handle, swung to and fro, carrying his unyielding body along with it, he was obliged to depart in silence. The cow-boy, sent by Tom's wife, who knew well what sort of allurement detained him, when he remained out after a certain hour, was in attendance to conduct his master home. I have no doubt that he returned without meeting any material injury, as I know that within the last month, he was, to use his own words, "As stout and hearty a man as any of his age in the county Cork."



FAIRIES OR NO FAIRIES.

VIII.

John Mulligan was as fine an old fellow as ever threw a Carlow spur into the sides of a horse. He was, besides, as jolly a boon companion over a jug of punch as you would meet from Carnsore Point to Bloody Farland. And a good horse he used to ride; and a stiffer jug of punch than his was not in nineteen baronies. May be he stuck more to it than he ought to have done — but that is nothing whatever to the story I am going to tell.

John believed devoutly in fairies; and an angry man was he if you doubted them. He had more fairy stories than would make, if properly printed in a rivulet of print running down a meadow of margin, two thick quartos for Mr. Murray, of Albemarle street; all of which he used to tell on all occasions that he could find listeners. Many believed his stories — many more did not believe them — but nobody, in process of time, used to contradict the old gentleman, for it was a pity to vex him. But he had a couple of young neighbours who were just come down from their first vacation in Trinity College to spend the summer months with an uncle of theirs, Mr. Whaley, an old Cromwellian, who lived at Ballybegmullinahone, and they were too full of logic to let the old man have his own way undisputed.

Every story he told they laughed at, and said that it was impossible — that it was merely old woman's gabble, and other such things. When he would insist that all his stories were derived from the most credible sources — nay, that some of them had been told him by his own grandmother, a very respectable old lady, but slightly affected in her faculties, as things that came under her own knowledge — they cut the matter short by declaring that she was in her dotage, and at the best of times had a strong propensity to pulling a long bow.

"But," said they, "Jack Mulligan did you ever see a fairy yourself?"

"Never," was the reply.— "Never, as I am a man of honour and credit."

"Well, then," they answered, "until you do, do not be bothering us with any more tales of my grandmother."

Jack was particularly nettled at this, and took up the cudgels for his grandmother; but the younkers were too sharp for him, and finally he got into a passion, as people generally do who have the worst of an argument. This evening it was at their uncle's, an old crony of his, with whom he had dined — he had taken a large portion of his usual beverage, and was quite riotous. He at last got up in a passion, ordered his horse, and, in spite of his host's entreaties, galloped off, although he had intended to have slept there; declaring that he would not have any thing more to do with a pair of jackanapes puppies, who, because they had learned how to read good-for-nothing books in cramp writing, and were taught by a parcel of wiggy, red-snouted, prating prigs, ("not," added he, "however, that I say a man may not be a good man and have a red nose,") they imagined they knew more than a man who had held buckle and tongue together facing the wind of the world for five dozen years.

He rode off in a fret, and galloped as hard as his horse Shaunbuie could powder away over the limestone. "Yes, indeed!" muttered he, "the brats had me in one thing — I never did see a fairy; and I would give up five as good acres as ever grew apple-potatoes to get a glimpse of one — and by the powers! what is that?"

He looked, and saw a gallant spectacle. His road lay by a noble demesne, gracefully sprinkled with trees, not thickly planted as in a dark forest, but disposed, now in clumps of five or six, now standing singly, towering over the plain of verdure around them as a beautiful promontory arising out of the sea. He had come right opposite the glory of the wood. It was an oak, which in the oldest title-deeds of the county, and they were at least five hundred years old, was called the old oak of Ballinghassig. Age had hollowed its centre, but its massy boughs still waved with their dark serrated foliage. The moon was shining on it bright. If I were a poet, like Mr. Wordsworth, I should tell you how the beautiful light was broken into a thousand different fragments — and how it filled the entire tree with a glorious flood, bathing every particular leaf, and showing forth every particular bough; but, as I am not a poet, I shall go on with my story. By this light Jack saw a brilliant company of lovely little forms dancing under the oak with an unsteady and rolling motion. The company was large. Some spread out far beyond the farthest boundary of the shadow of the oak's branches — some were seen glancing through the flashes of light shining through its leaves — some were barely visible, nestling under the trunk — some, no doubt, were entirely concealed from his eyes. Never did man see any thing more beautiful. They were not three inches in height, but they were white as the driven snow, and beyond number numberless. Jack threw the bridle over his horse's neck, and drew up to the low wall which bounded the demesne, and leaning over it, surveyed with infinite delight, their diversified gambols. By looking long at them, he soon saw objects which had not struck him at first; in particular that in the middle was a chief of superior stature, round whom the group appeared to move. He gazed so long that he was quite overcome with joy, and could not help shouting out: "Bravo! little fellow," said he, "well kicked and strong." But the instant he uttered the words the night was darkened, and the fairies vanished with the speed of lightning.

"I wish," said Jack, "I had held my tongue; but no matter now. I shall just turn bridle about and go back to Ballybegmullinahone Castle, and beat the young Master Whaleys, fine reasoners as they think themselves, out of the field clean."

No sooner said than done: and Jack was back again as if upon the wings of the wind. He rapped fiercely at the door, and called aloud for the two collegians.

"Halloo!" said he, "young Flatcaps, come down, if you dare. Come down, if you dare, and I shall give you *oc-oc*-ocular demonstration of the truth of what I was saying.”

Old Whaley put his head out of the window, and said, “Jack Mulligan, what brings you back so soon?”

“The fairies,” shouted Jack; “the fairies!”

“I am afraid,” muttered the Lord of Ballybegmullinahone, “the last glass you took was too little watered; but, no matter — come in and cool yourself over a tumbler of punch.”

He came in and sat down again at table. In great spirits he told his story; — how he had seen thousands and tens of thousands of fairies dancing about the old oak of Ballinghassig; he described their beautiful dresses of shining silver; their flat-crowned hats, glittering in the moonbeams; and the princely stature and demeanour of the central figure. He added, that he heard them singing and playing the most enchanting music; but this was merely imagination. The young men laughed, but Jack held his ground. “Suppose,” said one of the lads, “we join company with you on the road, and ride along to the place, where you saw that fine company of fairies?”

“Done!” cried Jack; “but I will not promise that you will find them there, for I saw them scudding up in the sky like a flight of bees, and heard their wings whizzing through the air.” This, you know, was a bounce, for Jack had heard no such thing.

Off rode the three, and came to the demesne of Oakwood. They arrived at the wall flanking the field where stood the great oak; and the moon, by this time, having again emerged from the clouds, shone bright as when Jack had passed. “Look there,” he cried, exultingly: for the same spectacle again caught his eyes, and he pointed to it with his horsewhip; “look, and deny if you can.”

“Why,” said one of the lads, pausing, “true it is that we do see a company of white creatures; but were they fairies ten times over, I shall go among them;” and he dismounted to climb over the wall.

“Ah, Tom! Tom,” cried Jack, “stop, man, stop! what are you doing? The fairies — the good people, I mean — hate to be meddled with. You will be pinched or blinded; or your horse will cast its shoe; or — look! a wilful man will have his way. Oh! oh! he is almost at the oak — God help him! for he is past the help of man.”

By this time Tom was under the tree, and burst out laughing. “Jack,” said he, “keep your prayers to yourself. Your fairies are not bad at all. I believe they will make tolerably good catsup.”

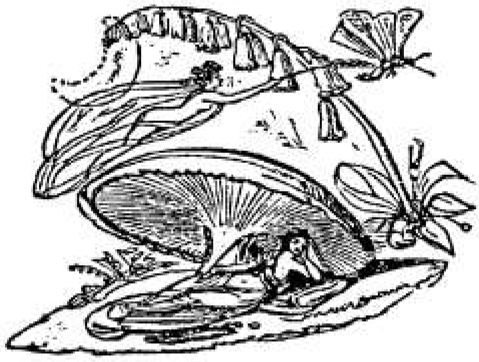
“Catsup,” said Jack, who, when he found that the two lads (for the second had followed his brother) were both laughing in the middle of the fairies, had dismounted and advanced slowly— “What do you mean by catsup?”

“Nothing,” replied Tom, “but that they are mushrooms (as indeed they were:) and your Oberon is merely this overgrown puff-ball.”

Poor Mulligan gave a long whistle of amazement, staggered back to his horse without saying a word, and rode home in a hard gallop, never looking behind him. Many a long day was it before he ventured to face the laughers at Ballybegmullinahone; and to the day of his death the people of the parish, ay, and five parishes round called him nothing but musharoon Jack, such being their pronunciation of mushroom.

I should be sorry if all my fairy stories ended with so little dignity: but —

“These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air — into thin air.”



The name Shefro, by which the foregoing section is distinguished, literally signifies a fairy house or mansion, and is adopted as a general name for the Elves who are supposed to live in troops or communities, and were popularly supposed to have castles or mansions of their own. — See *Stewart’s Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*, 1823, p, 91, &c.

Sia, *sigh*, *sighe*, *sigheann*, *siabhra*, *siachaire*, *siogidh*, are Irish words, evidently springing from a common Celtic root, used to express a fairy or goblin, and even a hag or witch. Thus we have the compounds *Leannan-sighe*, a familiar, from *Leannan*, a pet, and *Sioghdhraoidheachd*, enchantment with or by spirits.

Sigh gàoithe or *siaheann-gàoithe*, a whirlwind, is so termed because it is said to be raised by the fairies. The close of day called *Sia*, because twilight,

“That sweet hour, when day is almost closing,”

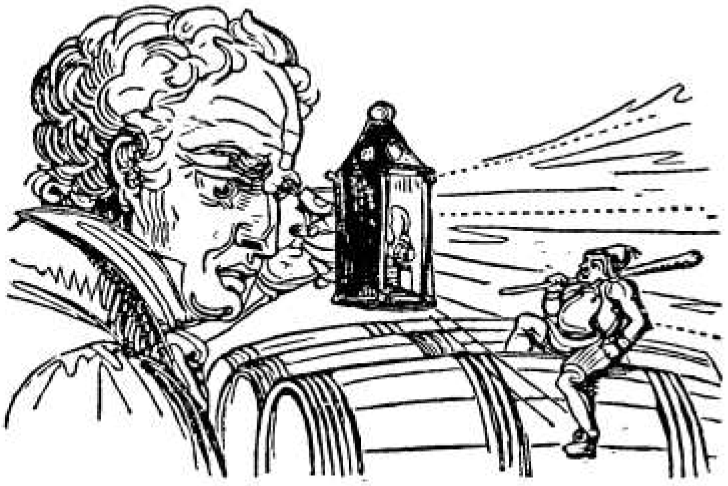
is the time when the fairies are most frequently seen. Again, *Sigh* is a hill or hillock, because the fairies are believed to dwell within. *Sidhe*, *sidheadh*, and *sigh*, are names for a blast or blight, because it is supposed to proceed from the fairies.

The term *Shoges*, i.e. *Sigh oges* (young or little spirits,) Fairies, is used in a curious poem printed under the name of “The Irish Hudibras,” 1689, p, and 81; a copy of which, entitled “The Fingallian Travesty,” is among the Sloane MSS. No. 900. In the Third Part of O’Flaherty’s Ogygia, it is related that St. Patrick and some of his followers, who were chanting matins beside a fountain, were taken for “*Sidhe*, or fairies,” by some pagan ladies.

“The Irish,” according to the Rev. James Hely’s translation of O’Flaherty, “call these *Sidhe*, aërial spirits or phantoms, because they are seen to come out of pleasant hills, where the common people imagine they reside, which fictitious habitations are called by us *Sidhe* or *Siodha*.”

For a similar extended use of the German word *Alp*, *Elf*, &c. see Introductory Essay to the Grimms' *Irische Elfenmärchen*, p-62.

LEGENDS OF THE CLURICAUNE.



“—— —— —— —— That sottish elf
Who quaffs with swollen lips the ruby wine,
Draining the cellar with as free a hand
As if it were his purse which ne’er lacked coin; —
And then, with feign’d contrition ruminates
Upon his wasteful pranks, and revelry,
In some secluded dell or lonely grove
Tinsel’d by Twilight.” —

Δ

THE HAUNTED CELLAR.

IX.

There are few people who have not heard of the Mac Carthies — one of the real old Irish families, with the true Milesian blood running in their veins, as thick as buttermilk. Many were the clans of this family in the south; as the Mac Carthy-more — and the Mac Carthy-reagh — and the Mac Carthy of Muskerry; and all of them were noted for their hospitality to strangers, gentle and simple.

But not one of that name, or of any other, exceeded Justin Mac Carthy, of Ballinacarthy, at putting plenty to eat and drink upon his table; and there was a right hearty welcome for every one who would share it with him. Many a wine-cellar would be ashamed of the name if that at Ballinacarthy was the proper pattern for one; large as that cellar was, it was crowded with bins of wine, and long rows of pipes, and hogsheads, and casks, that it would take more time to count than any sober man could spare in such a place, with plenty to drink about him, and a hearty welcome to do so.

There are many, no doubt, who will think that the butler would have little to complain of in such a house; and the whole country round would have agreed with them, if a man could be found to remain as Mr. Mac Carthy's butler for any length of time worth speaking of; yet not one who had been in his service gave him a bad word.

"We have no fault," they would say, "to find with the master; and if he could but get any one to fetch his wine from the cellar, we might every one of us have grown gray in the house, and have lived quiet and contented enough in his service until the end of our days."

"'Tis a queer thing that, surely," thought young Jack Leary, a lad who had been brought up from a mere child in the stables of Ballinacarthy to assist in taking care of the horses, and had occasionally lent a hand in the butler's pantry:—"'tis a mighty queer thing, surely, that one man after another cannot content himself with the best place in the house of a good master, but that every one of them must quit, all through the means, as they say, of the wine-cellar. If the master, long life to him! would but make me his butler, I warrant never the word more would be heard of grumbling at his bidding to go to the wine-cellar."

Young Leary accordingly watched for what he conceived to be a favourable opportunity of presenting himself to the notice of his master.

A few mornings after, Mr. Mac Carthy went into his stable-yard rather earlier than usual, and called loudly for the groom to saddle his horse, as he intended going out with the hounds. But there was no groom to answer, and young Jack Leary led Rainbow out of the stable.

"Where is William?" inquired Mr. Mac Carthy.

"Sir?" said Jack; and Mr. Mac Carthy repeated the question.

"Is it William, please your honour?" returned Jack; "why, then, to tell the truth, he had just *one* drop too much last night."

"Where did he get it?" said Mr. Mac Carthy; "for since Thomas went away, the key of the wine-cellar has been in my pocket, and I have been obliged to fetch what was drank myself."

"Sorrow a know I know," said Leary, "unless the cook might have given him the *least taste* in life of whiskey. But," continued he, performing a low bow by seizing with his right hand a lock of hair, and pulling down his head by it, whilst his left leg which had been put forward, was scraped back against the ground, "may I make so bold as just to ask your honour one question?"

"Speak out, Jack," said Mr. Mac Carthy.

"Why, then, does your honour want a butler?"

"Can you recommend me one," returned his master, with a smile of good humour upon his countenance, "and one who will not be afraid of going to my wine-cellar?"

"Is the wine-cellar all the matter?" said young Leary: "not a doubt have I of myself then for that."

"So you mean to offer me your services in the capacity of butler?" said Mr. Mac Carthy, with some surprise.

"Exactly so," answered Leary, now for the first time looking up from the ground.

"Well, I believe you to be a good lad, and have no objection to give you a trial."

"Long may your honour reign over us, and the Lord spare you to us!" ejaculated Leary, with another national bow, as his master rode off; and he continued for some time to gaze after him with a vacant stare, which slowly and gradually assumed a look of importance.

"Jack Leary," said he at length, "Jack — is it Jack?" in a tone of wonder; "faith, 'tis not Jack now, but Mr. John, the butler;" and with an air of becoming consequence he strided out of the stable-yard towards the kitchen.

It is of little purport to my story, although it may afford an instructive lesson to the reader, to depict the sudden transition of nobody into somebody. Jack's former stable companion, a poor superannuated hound named Bran, who had been accustomed to receive many an affectionate tap on the head, was spurned from him with a kick and an "Out of the way, sirrah." Indeed, poor Jack's memory seemed sadly affected by this sudden change of situation. What established the point beyond all doubt was his almost forgetting the pretty face of Peggy, the kitchen wench, whose heart he had assailed but the preceding week by the offer of purchasing a gold ring for the fourth finger of her right hand, and a lusty imprint of good-will upon her lips.

When Mr. Mac Carthy returned from hunting, he sent for Jack Leary — so he still continued to call his new butler. "Jack," said he, "I believe you are a trustworthy lad, and here are the keys of my cellar. I have asked the gentlemen with whom I hunted to-day to dine with me, and I hope they may be satisfied at the way in which you will wait on them at table; but, above all, let there be no want of wine after dinner."

Mr. John having a tolerably quick eye for such things, and being naturally a handy lad, spread his cloth accordingly, laid his plates and knives and forks in the same manner he had seen his predecessors in office perform these mysteries, and really, for the first time, got through attendance on dinner very well.

It must not be forgotten, however, that it was at the house of an Irish country squire, who was entertaining a company of booted and spurred fox-hunters, not very particular about what are considered matters of infinite importance under other circumstances and in other societies.

For instance, few of Mr. Mac Carthy's guests, (though all excellent and worthy men in their way,) cared much whether the punch produced after soup was made of Jamaica or Antigua rum; some even would not have been inclined to question the correctness of good old Irish whiskey; and, with the exception of their liberal host himself, every one in company preferred the port which Mr. Mac Carthy put on his table to the less ardent flavour of claret, — a choice rather at variance with modern sentiment.

It was waxing near midnight, when Mr. Mac Carthy rang the bell three times. This was a signal for more wine; and Jack proceeded to the cellar to procure a fresh supply, but it must be confessed not without some little hesitation.

The luxury of ice was then unknown in the south of Ireland; but the superiority of cool wine had been acknowledged by all men of sound judgment and true taste.

The grandfather of Mr. Mac Carthy, who had built the mansion of Ballinacarthy upon the site of an old castle which had belonged to his ancestors, was fully aware of this important fact; and in the construction of his magnificent wine-cellar had availed himself of a deep vault, excavated out of the solid rock in former times as a place of retreat and security. The descent to this vault was by a flight of steep stone stairs, and here and there in the wall were narrow passages — I ought rather to call them crevices; and also certain projections which cast deep shadows, and looked very frightful when any one went down the cellar stairs with a single light: indeed, two lights did not much improve the matter, for though the breadth of the shadows became less, the narrow crevices remained as dark and darker than ever.

Summoning up all his resolution, down went the new butler, bearing in his right hand a lantern and the key of the cellar, and in his left a basket, which he considered sufficiently capacious to contain an adequate stock for the remainder of the evening; he arrived at the door without any interruption whatever; but when he put the key, which was of an ancient and clumsy kind — for it was before the days of Bramah's patent, — and turned it in the lock, he thought he heard a strange kind of laughing within the cellar, to which some empty bottles that stood upon the floor outside vibrated so violently, that they struck against each other: in this he could not be mistaken, although he may have been deceived in the laugh; for the bottles were just at his feet, and he saw them in motion.

Leary paused for a moment, and looked about him with becoming caution. He then boldly seized the handle of the key, and turned it with all his strength in the lock, as if he doubted his own power of doing so; and the door flew open with a most tremendous crash, that, if the house had not been built upon the solid rock, would have shook it from the foundation.

To recount what the poor fellow saw would be impossible, for he seems not to know very clearly himself: but what he told the cook the next morning was, that he heard a roaring and bellowing like a mad bull, and that all the pipes and hogsheads and casks in the cellar went rocking backwards and forwards with so much force, that he thought every one would have been staved in, and that he should have been drowned or smothered in wine.

When Leary recovered, he made his way back as well as he could to the dining-room, where he found his master and the company very impatient for his return.

“What kept-you?” said Mr. Mac Carthy in an angry voice; “and where is the wine? I rung for it half an hour since.”

“The wine is in the cellar, I hope, sir,” said Jack, trembling violently; “I hope ’tis not all lost.”

“What do you mean, fool?” exclaimed Mr. Mac Carthy in a still more angry tone: “why did you not fetch some with you?”

Jack looked wildly about him, and only uttered a deep groan.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr. Mac Carthy to his guests, “this is too much. When I next see you to dinner, I hope it will be in another house, for it is impossible I can remain longer in this, where a man has no command over his own wine-cellar, and cannot get a butler to do his duty. I have long thought of moving from Ballinacarthy; and I am now determined, with the blessing of God, to leave it to-morrow. But wine shall you have, were I to go myself to the cellar for it.” So saying, he rose from the table, took the key and lantern from his half stupified servant, who regarded him with a look of vacancy, and descended the narrow stairs, already described, which led to his cellar.

When he arrived at the door, which he found open, he thought he heard a noise, as if of rats or mice scrambling over the casks, and on advancing perceived a little figure, about six inches in height, seated astride upon the pipe of the oldest port in the place, and bearing the spigot upon his shoulder. Raising the lantern, Mr. Mac Carthy contemplated the little fellow with wonder: he wore a red nightcap on his head; before him was a short leather apron, which now, from his attitude, fell rather on one side; and he had stockings of a light blue colour, so long as nearly to cover the entire of his legs; with shoes, having huge silver buckles in them, and with high heels (perhaps out of vanity to make him appear taller). His face was like a withered winter apple; and his nose, which was of a bright crimson colour, about the tip wore a delicate purple bloom, like that of a plum: yet his eyes twinkled

“like those mites
Of candied dew in moony nights —

and his mouth twitched up at one side with an arch grin.

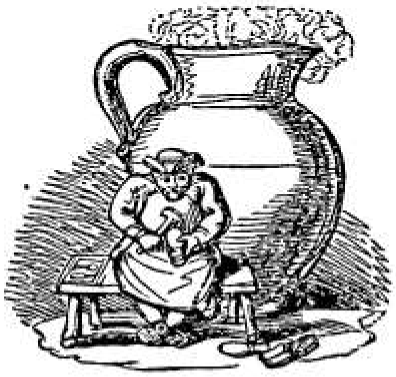
“Ha, scoundrel!” exclaimed Mr. Mac Carthy, “have I found you at last? disturber of my cellar — what are you doing there?”

“Sure, and master,” returned the little fellow, looking up at him with one eye, and with the other throwing a sly glance towards the spigot on his shoulder, “a’n’t we going to move to-morrow? and sure you would not leave your own little Cluricaune Naggeneen behind you?”

“Oh!” thought Mr. Mac Carthy, “if you are to follow me, Master Naggeneen, I don’t see much use in quitting Ballinacarthy.” So filling with wine the basket which young Leary in his fright had left behind him, and locking the cellar door, he rejoined his guests.

For some years after, Mr. Mac Carthy had always to fetch the wine for his table himself, as the little Cluricaune Naggeneen seemed to feel a personal respect towards him. Notwithstanding the labour of these journeys, the worthy lord of Ballinacarthy lived in his paternal mansion to a good round age, and was famous to the last for the excellence of his wine, and the conviviality of his company; but at the time of his death, that same conviviality had nearly emptied his wine-cellar; and as it was never so well filled again, nor so often visited, the revels of Master Naggeneen became less celebrated, and are now only spoken of amongst the legendary lore of the country. It is even said that the poor little fellow took the declension of the cellar so to heart, that he became negligent and careless of himself, and that he has been sometimes seen going about with hardly a skreed to cover him.

Some, however, believe that he turned brogue-maker, and assert that they have seen him at his work, and heard him whistling as merry as a blackbird on a May morning, under the shadow of a brown jug of foaming ale, bigger — ay bigger than himself; decently dressed enough, they say; — only looking mighty old. But still ’tis clear he has his wits about him, since no one ever had the luck to catch him, or to get hold of the purse he has with him, which they call *spré-na-skillinagh*, and ’tis said is never without a shilling in it.



MASTER AND MAN.

X.

Billy Mac Daniel was once as likely a young man as ever shook his brogue at a patron, emptied a quart, or handled a shillelagh: fearing for nothing but the want of drink; caring for nothing but who should pay for it; and thinking of nothing but how to make fun over it: drunk or sober, a word and a blow was ever the way with Billy Mac Daniel; and a mighty easy way it is of either getting into or ending a dispute. More is the pity, that through the means of his drinking, and fearing and caring for nothing, this same Billy Mac Daniel fell into bad company; for surely the good people are the worst of all company any one could come across.

It so happened that Billy was going home one clear frosty night not long after Christmas; the moon was round and bright; but although it was as fine a night as heart could wish for, he felt pinched with the cold. “By my word,” chattered Billy, “a drop of good liquor would be no bad thing to keep a man’s soul from freezing in him; and I wish I had a full measure of the best.”

“Never wish it twice, Billy,” said a little man in a three-cornered hat, bound all about with gold lace, and with great silver buckles in his shoes, so big that it was a wonder how he could carry them, and he held out a glass as big as himself, filled with as good liquor as ever eye looked on or lip tasted.

“Success, my little fellow,” said Billy Mac Daniel, nothing daunted, though well he knew the little man to belong to the *good people*; “here’s your health, any way, and thank you kindly; no matter who pays for the drink;” and he took the glass and drained it to the very bottom, without ever taking a second breath to it.

“Success,” said the little man; “and you’re heartily welcome, Billy; but don’t think to cheat me as you have done others, — out with your purse and pay me like a gentleman.”

“Is it I pay you?” said Billy: “could I not just take you up and put you in my pocket as easily as a blackberry?”

“Billy Mac Daniel,” said the little man, getting very angry, “you shall be my servant for seven years and a day, and that is the way I will be paid; so make ready to follow me.”

When Billy heard this, he began to be very sorry for having used such bold words towards the little man; and he felt himself, yet could not tell how, obliged to follow the little man the livelong night about the country, up and down, and over hedge and ditch, and through bog and brake, without any rest.

When morning began to dawn, the little man turned round to him and said, “You may now go home, Billy, but on your peril don’t fail to meet me in the Fort-field to-night; or if you do, it may be the worse for you in the long run. If I find you a good servant, you will find me an indulgent master.”

Home went Billy Mac Daniel; and though he was tired and weary enough, never a wink of sleep could he get for thinking of the little man; but he was afraid not to do his bidding, so up he got in the evening, and away he went to the Fort-field. He was not long there before the little man came towards him and said, “Billy, I want to go a long journey to-night; so saddle one of my horses, and you may saddle another for yourself, as you are to go along with me, and may be tired after your walk last night.”

Billy thought this very considerate of his master, and thanked him accordingly: “But,” said he, “if I may be so bold, sir, I would ask which is the way to your stable, for never a thing do I see but the fort here, and the old thorn tree in the corner of the field, and the stream running at the bottom of the hill, with the bit of bog over against us.”

“Ask no questions, Billy,” said the little man, “but go over to that bit of bog, and bring me two of the strongest rushes you can find.”

Billy did accordingly, wondering what the little man would be at; and he picked out two of the stoutest rushes he could find, with a little bunch of brown blossom stuck at the side of each, and brought them back to his master. “Get up, Billy,” said the little man, taking one of the rushes from him and striding across it.

“Where will I get up, please your honour?” said Billy.

“Why, upon horseback, like me, to be sure,” said the little man.

“Is it after making a fool of me you’d be,” said Billy, “bidding me get a horse-back upon that bit of a rush? May be you want to persuade me that the rush I pulled but awhile ago out of the bog over there is a horse?”

“Up! up! and no words,” said the little man, looking very vexed; “the best horse you ever rode was but a fool to it.” So Billy, thinking all this was in joke, and fearing to vex his master, straddled across the rush: “Borram! Borram! Borram!” cried the little man three times (which in English, means to become great), and Billy did the same after him: presently the rushes swelled up into fine horses, and away they went full speed; but Billy, who had put the rush between his legs, without much minding how he did it, found himself sitting on horseback the wrong way, which was rather awkward, with his face to the horse’s tail; and so quickly had his steed started off with him, that he had no power to turn round, and there was therefore nothing for it but to hold on by the tail.

At last they came to their journey’s end, and stopped at the gate of a fine house: “Now, Billy,” said the little man, “do as you see me do, and follow me close; but as you did not know your horse’s head from his tail, mind that your own head does not spin round until you can’t tell whether you are standing on it or on your heels: for remember that old liquor, though able to make a cat speak, can make a man dumb.”

The little man then said some queer kind of words, out of which Billy could make no meaning; but he contrived to say them after him for all that; and in they both went through the key-hole of the door, and through one key-hole after another, until they got into the wine-cellar, which was well stored with all kinds of wine.

The little man fell to drinking as hard as he could, and Billy, noway disliking the example, did the same. “The best of masters are you surely,” said Billy to him; “no matter who is the next; and well pleased will I be with your service if you continue to give me plenty to drink.”

“I have made no bargain with you,” said the little man, “and will make none; but up and follow me.” Away they went, through key-hole after key-hole; and each mounting upon the rush which he had left at the hall door, scampered off, kicking the clouds before them like snowballs, as soon as the words, “Borram, Borram, Borram,” had passed their lips.

When they came back to the Fort-field, the little man dismissed Billy, bidding him to be there the next night at the same hour. Thus did they go on, night after night, shaping their course one night here, and another night there — sometimes north, and sometimes east, and sometimes south, until there was not a gentleman’s wine-cellar in all Ireland they had not visited, and could tell the flavour of every wine in it as well — ay, better than the butler himself.

One night, when Billy Mac Daniel met the little man as usual in the Fort-field, and was going to the bog to fetch the horses for their journey, his master said to him, “Billy, I shall want another horse to-night, for may be we may bring back more company with us than we take.” So Billy, who now knew better than to question any order given to him by his master, brought a third rush, much wondering who it might be that should travel back in their company, and whether he was about to have a fellow-servant. “If I have,” thought Billy, “he shall go and fetch the horses from the bog every night; for I don’t see why I am not, every inch of me, as good a gentleman as my master.”

Well, away they went, Billy leading the third horse, and never stopped until they came to a snug farmer’s house in the county Limerick, close under the old castle of Carrigogunniel, that was built, they say, by the great Brian Boru. Within the house there was great carousing going forward, and the little man stopped outside for some time to listen; then turning round all of a sudden, said, “Billy, I will be a thousand years old to-morrow!”

“God bless us, sir,” said Billy, “will you?”

“Don’t say these words again, Billy,” said the little man, “or you will be my ruin for ever. Now, Billy, as I will be a thousand years in the world to-morrow, I think it is full time for me to get married.”

“I think so too, without any kind of doubt at all,” said Billy, “if ever you mean to marry.”

“And to that purpose,” said the little man, “have I come all the way to Carrigogunniel; for in this house, this very night, is young Darby Riley going to be married to Bridget Rooney; and as she is a tall and comely girl, and has come of decent people, I think of marrying her myself, and taking her off with me.”

“And what will Darby Riley say to that?” said Billy.

“Silence!” said the little man, putting on a mighty severe look: “I did not bring you here with me to ask questions;” and without holding further argument, he began saying the queer words, which had the power of passing him through the key-hole as free as air, and which Billy thought himself mighty clever to be able to say after him.

In they both went; and for the better viewing the company, the little man perched himself up as nimbly as a cocksparrow upon one of the big beams which went across the house over all their heads, and Billy did the same upon another facing him; but not being much accustomed to roosting in such a place, his legs hung down as untidy as may be, and it was quite clear he had not taken pattern after the way in which the little man had bundled himself up together. If the little man had been a tailor all his life, he could not have sat more contentedly upon his haunches.

There they were, both master and man, looking down upon the fun that was going forward — and under them were the priest and piper — and the father of Darby Riley, with Darby's two brothers and his uncle's son — and there were both the father and the mother of Bridget Rooney, and proud enough the old couple were that night of their daughter, as good right they had — and her four sisters with bran new ribands in their caps, and her three brothers all looking as clean and as clever as any three boys in Munster — and there were uncles and aunts, and gossips and cousins enough besides to make a full house of it — and plenty was there to eat and drink on the table for every one of them, if they had been double the number.

Now it happened, just as Mrs. Rooney had helped his reverence to the first cut of the pig's head which was placed before her, beautifully bolstered up with white savoys, that the bride gave a sneeze which made every one at table start, but not a soul said "God bless us." All thinking that the priest would have done so, as he ought if he had done his duty, no one wished to take the word out of his mouth, which unfortunately was pre-occupied with pig's head and greens. And after a moment's pause, the fun and merriment of the bridal feast went on without the pious benediction.

Of this circumstance both Billy and his master were no inattentive spectators from their exalted stations. "Ha!" exclaimed the little man, throwing one leg from under him with a joyous flourish, and his eye twinkled with a strange light, whilst his eyebrows became elevated into the curvature of Gothic arches— "Ha!" said he, leering down at the bride, and then up at Billy, "I have half of her now, surely. Let her sneeze but twice more, and she is mine, in spite of priest, mass-book, and Darby Riley."

Again the fair Bridget sneezed; but it was so gently, and she blushed so much, that few except the little man took or seemed to take any notice: and no one thought of saying "God bless us."

Billy all this time regarded the poor girl with a most rueful expression of countenance; for he could not help thinking what a terrible thing it was for a nice young girl of nineteen, with large blue eyes, transparent skin, and dimpled cheeks, suffused with health and joy, to be obliged to marry an ugly little bit of a man who was a thousand years old, barring a day.

At this critical moment the bride gave a third sneeze, and Billy roared out with all his might, "God save us!" Whether this exclamation resulted from his soliloquy, or from the mere force of habit, he never could tell exactly himself; but no sooner was it uttered, than the little man, his face glowing with rage and disappointment, sprung from the beam on which he had perched himself, and shrieking out in the shrill voice of a cracked bagpipe, “I discharge you my service, Billy Mac Daniel — take *that* for your wages,” gave poor Billy a most furious kick in the back, which sent his unfortunate servant sprawling upon his face and hands right in the middle of the supper table.

If Billy was astonished, how much more so was every one of the company into which he was thrown with so little ceremony; but when they heard his story, Father Cooney laid down his knife and fork, and married the young couple out of hand with all speed; and Billy Mac Daniel danced the Rinka at their wedding, and plenty did he drink at it too, which was what he thought more of than dancing.

* * *

THE LITTLE SHOE.

XI.

"Now tell me, Molly," said Mr. Coote to Molly Cogan, as he met her on the road one day, close to one of the old gateways of Kilmallock, "did you ever hear of the Cluricaune?"

"Is it the Cluricaune? why, then, sure I did, often and often; many's the time I heard my father, rest his soul! tell about 'em."

"But did you ever see one, Molly, yourself?"

"Och! no, I never *see* one in my life; but my grandfather, that's my father's father, you know, he *see* one, one time, and caught him too."

"Caught him! Oh! Molly, tell me how?"

"Why, then, I'll tell you. My grandfather, you see, was out there above in the bog, drawing home turf, and the poor old mare was tired after her day's work, and the old man went out to the stable to look after her, and to see if she was eating her hay; and when he came to the stable door there, my dear, he heard something hammering, hammering, hammering, just for all the world like a shoemaker making a shoe, and whistling all the time the prettiest tune he ever heard in his whole life before. Well, my grandfather, he thought it was the Cluricaune, and he said to himself, says he, 'I'll catch you, if I can, and then, I'll have money enough always.' So he opened the door very quietly, and didn't make a bit of noise in the world that ever was heard; and looked all about, but the never a bit of the little man he could see anywhere, but he heard him hammering and whistling, and so he looked and looked, till at last he *see* the little fellow; and where was he, do you think, but in the girth under the mare; and there he was with his little bit of an apron on him, and hammer in his hand, and a little red nightcap on his head, and he making a shoe; and he was so busy with his work, and he was hammering and whistling so loud, that he never minded my grandfather till he caught him fast in his hand. 'Faith I have you now,' says he, 'and I'll never let you go till I get your purse — that's what I won't; so give it here to me at once, now.'— 'Stop, stop,' says the Cluricaune, 'stop, stop,' says he, 'till I get it for you.' So my grandfather, like a fool, you see, opened his hand a little, and the little fellow jumped away laughing, and he never saw him any more, and the never the bit of the purse did he get, only the Cluricaune left his little shoe that he was making; and my grandfather was mad enough angry with himself for letting him go; but he had the shoe all his life, and my own mother told me she often *see* it, and had it in her hand, and 'twas the prettiest little shoe she ever saw."

"And did you see it yourself, Molly?"

"Oh! no, my dear, it was lost long afore I was born; but my mother told me about it often and often enough."

The main point of distinction between the Cluricaune and the Shefro, arises from the sottish and solitary habits of the former, who are rarely found in troops or communities.

The Cluricaune of the county of Cork, the Luricaune of Kerry, and the Lurigadaune of Tipperary, appear to be the same as the Leprechan or Leprochaune of Leinster, and the Logherry-man of Ulster; and these words are probably all provincialisms of the Irish for a pigmy.

It is possible, and is in some measure borne out by the text of one of the preceding stories [IX.], that the word *luacharman* is merely an Anglo-Irish induction, compounded of (a rush,) and the English word, *man*. — A rushy man, — that may be, a man of the height of a rush, or a being who dwelt among rushes, that is, unfrequented or boggy places.

The following dialogue is said to have taken place in an Irish court of justice, upon the witness having used the word Leprochaune: —

Court. — Pray what is a leprochaune? the law knows no such character or designation.

Witness. — My lord, it is a little counsellor man in the fairies, or an attorney that robs them all, and he always carries a purse that is full of money, and if you see him and keep your eyes on him, and that you never turn them aside, he cannot get away, and if you catch him he gives you the purse to let him go, and then you’re as rich as a Jew.

Court. — Did you ever know of any one that caught a Leprochaune? I wish I could catch one.

Witness. — Yes, my lord, there was one —

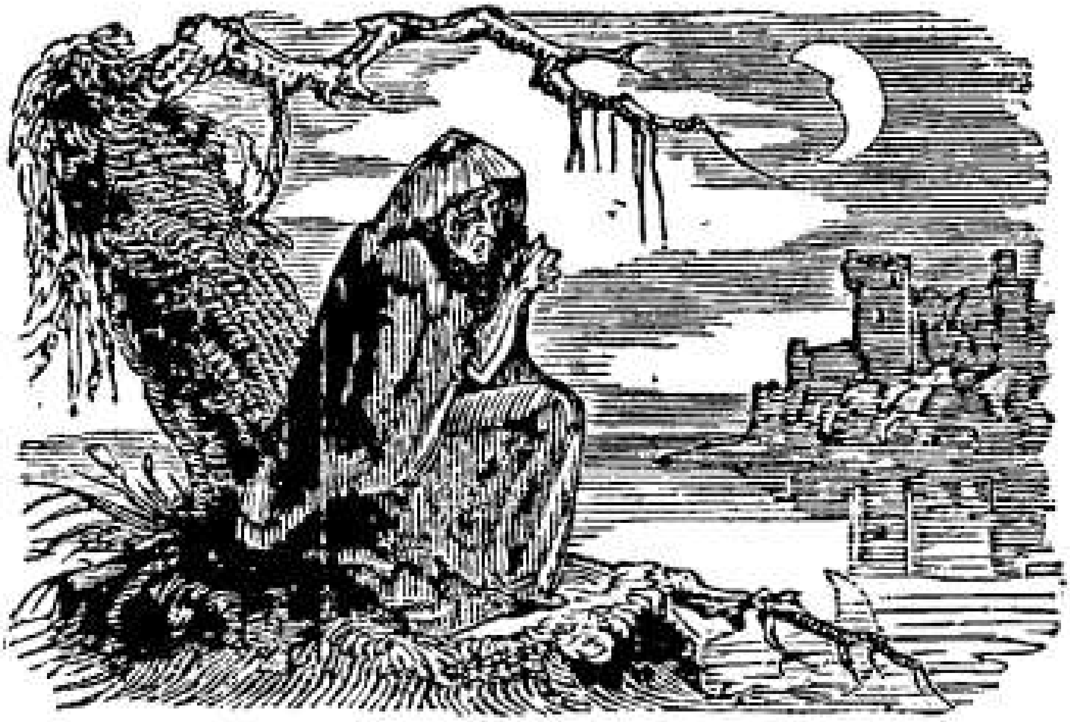
Court. — That will do.

With respect to “money matters,” there appears to be a strong resemblance between the ancient Roman Incubus and the Irish Cluricaune. — “Sed quomodo dicunt, ego nihil scio, sed audivi, quomodo incuboni pileum rapuisset et thesaurum invenit,” are the words of Petronius. — See, for farther arguments in support of identity of the two spirits, the Brothers Grimm’s Essay on the Nature of the Elves, prefixed to their translation of this work, under the head of “Ancient Testimonies.”

“Old German and Northern poems contain numerous accounts of the skill of the dwarfs in curious smith’s-work.”— “The Irish Cluricaune is heard hammering; he is particularly fond of making shoes, but these were in ancient times made of metal (in the old Northern language a shoe-maker is called a *shoe-smith*;) and, singularly enough, the wights in a German tradition manifest the same propensity; for, whatever work the shoe-maker has been able to cut out in the day, they finish with incredible quickness during the night.”

The Brothers Grimm.

LEGENDS OF THE BANSHEE.



“Who sits upon the heath forlorn,
With robe so free and tresses torn?
Anon she pours a harrowing strain,
And then — she sits all mute again!
Now peals the wild funereal cry —
And now — it sinks into a sigh.”

Ourawns.

THE BUNWORTH BANSHEE.

XII.

The Reverend Charles Bunworth was rector of Buttevant, in the county of Cork, about the middle of the last century. He was a man of unaffected piety, and of sound learning; pure in heart, and benevolent in intention. By the rich he was respected, and by the poor beloved; nor did a difference of creed prevent their looking up to "*the minister*" (so was Mr. Bunworth called by them) in matters of difficulty and in seasons of distress, confident of receiving from him the advice and assistance that a father would afford to his children. He was the friend and the benefactor of the surrounding country — to him, from the neighbouring town of Newmarket, came both Curran and Yelverton for advice and instruction, previous to their entrance at Dublin College. Young, indigent and inexperienced, these afterwards eminent men received from him, in addition to the advice they sought, pecuniary aid; and the brilliant career which was theirs, justified the discrimination of the giver.

But what extended the fame of Mr. Bunworth, far beyond the limits of the parishes adjacent to his own, was his performance on the Irish harp, and his hospitable reception and entertainment of the poor harpers who travelled from house to house about the country. Grateful to their patron, these itinerant minstrels sang his praises to the tingling accompaniment of their harps, invoking in return for his bounty abundant blessings on his white head, and celebrating in their rude verses the blooming charms of his daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. It was all these poor fellows could do; but who can doubt that their gratitude was sincere, when, at the time of Mr. Bunworth's death, no less than fifteen harps were deposited in the loft of his granary, bequeathed to him by the last members of a race which has now ceased to exist. Trifling, no doubt, in intrinsic value were these relics, yet there is something in gifts of the heart that merits preservation; and it is to be regretted that, when he died, these harps were broken up one after the other, and used as fire-wood by an ignorant follower of the family, who, on a removal to Cork for a temporary change of scene, was left in charge of the house.

The circumstances attending the death of Mr. Bunworth may be doubted by some; but there are still living credible witnesses who declare their authenticity, and who can be produced to attest most, if not all of the following particulars.

About a week previous to his dissolution, and early in the evening a noise was heard at the hall-door resembling the shearing of sheep; but at the time no particular attention was paid to it. It was nearly eleven o'clock the same night, when Kavanagh, the herdsman, returned from Mallow, whither he had been sent in the afternoon for some medicine, and was observed by Miss Bunworth, to whom he delivered the parcel, to be much agitated. At this time, it must be observed, her father was by no means considered in danger.

"What is the matter, Kavanagh?" asked Miss Bunworth: but the poor fellow, with a bewildered look, only uttered, "The master, Miss — the master — he is going from us;" and, overcome with real grief, he burst into a flood of tears.

Miss Bunworth, who was a woman of strong nerve, inquired if any thing he had learned in Mallow induced him to suppose that her father was worse. "No, Miss," said Kavanagh; "it was not in Mallow — —"

"Kavanagh," said Miss Bunworth, with that stateliness of manner for which she is said to have been remarkable, "I fear you have been drinking, which, I must say, I did not expect at such a time as the present, when it was your duty to have kept yourself sober; — I thought you might have been trusted: — what should we have done if you had broken the medicine bottle, or lost it? for the doctor said it was of the greatest consequence that your master should take the medicine to-night. But I will speak to you in the morning, when you are in a fitter state to understand what I say."

Kavanagh looked up with a stupidity of aspect which did not serve to remove the impression of his being drunk, as his eyes appeared heavy and dull after the flood of tears; — but his voice was not that of an intoxicated person.

"Miss," said he, "as I hope to receive mercy hereafter, neither bit nor sup has passed my lips since I left this house; but the master — —"

"Speak softly," said Miss Bunworth; "he sleeps, and is going on as well as we could expect."

"Praise be to God for that, any way," replied Kavanagh; "but oh! Miss, he is going from us surely — we will lose him — the master — we will lose him, we will lose him!" and he wrung his hands together.

"What is it you mean, Kavanagh?" asked Miss Bunworth.

"Is it mean?" said Kavanagh: "the Banshee has come for him, Miss, and 'tis not I alone who have heard her."

"'Tis an idle superstition," said Miss Bunworth.

"May be so," replied Kavanagh, as if the words 'idle superstition' only sounded upon his ear without reaching his mind— "May be so," he continued; "but as I came through the glen of Ballybeg, she was along with me, keening, and screeching, and clapping her hands, by my side, every step of the way, with her long white hair falling about her shoulders, and I could hear her repeat the master's name every now and then, as plain as ever I heard it. When I came to the old abbey, she parted from me there, and turned into the pigeon-field next the *berrin* ground, and folding her cloak about her, down she sat under the tree that was struck by the lightning, and began keening so bitterly, that it went through one's heart to hear it."

"Kavanagh," said Miss Bunworth, who had, however, listened attentively to this remarkable relation, "my father is, I believe, better; and I hope will himself soon be up and able to convince you that all this is but your own fancy; nevertheless, I charge you not to mention what you have told me, for there is no occasion to frighten your fellow-servants with the story."

Mr. Bunworth gradually declined; but nothing particular occurred until the night previous to his death: that night both his daughters, exhausted with continued attendance and watching, were prevailed upon to seek some repose; and an elderly lady, a near relative and friend of the family, remained by the bedside of their father. The old gentleman then lay in the parlour, where he had been in the morning removed at his own request, fancying the change would afford him relief; and the head of his bed was placed close to the window. In a room adjoining sat some male friends, and, as usual on like occasions of illness, in the kitchen many of the followers of the family had assembled.

The night was serene and moonlit — the sick man slept — and nothing broke the stillness of their melancholy watch, when the little party in the room adjoining the parlour, the door of which stood open, was suddenly roused by a sound at the window near the bed: a rose tree grew outside the window, so close as to touch the glass; this was forced aside with some noise, and a low moaning was heard, accompanied by clapping of hands, as if of a female in deep affliction. It seemed as if the sound proceeded from a person holding her mouth close to the window. The lady who sat by the bedside of Mr. Bunworth went into the adjoining room, and in a tone of alarm, inquired of the gentlemen there, if they had heard the Banshee? Skeptical of supernatural appearances, two of them rose hastily and went out to discover the cause of these sounds, which they also had distinctly heard. They walked all around the house, examining every spot of ground, particularly near the window from whence the voice had proceeded; the bed of earth beneath, in which the rose tree was planted, had been recently dug, and the print of a footstep — if the tree had been forced aside by mortal hand — would have inevitably remained; but they could perceive no such impression; and an unbroken stillness reigned without. Hoping to dispel the mystery, they continued their search anxiously along the road, from the straightness of which and the lightness of the night, they were enabled to see some distance around them; but all was silent and deserted, and they returned surprised and disappointed. How much more then were they astonished at learning that the whole time of their absence, those who remained within the house had heard the moaning and clapping of hands even louder and more distinct than before they had gone out; and no sooner was the door of the room closed on them, than they again heard the same mournful sounds! Every succeeding hour the sick man became worse, and as the first glimpse of the morning appeared, Mr. Bunworth expired.

THE MCCARTHY BANSHEE.

XIII.

The family of Mac Carthy have for some generations possessed a small estate in the county of Tipperary. They are the descendants of a race, once numerous and powerful in the south of Ireland; and though it is probable that the property they at present hold is no part of the large possessions of their ancestors, yet the district in which they live is so connected with the name of Mac Carthy by those associations which are never forgotten in Ireland, that they have preserved with all ranks a sort of influence much greater than that which their fortune or connexions could otherwise give them. They are, like most of this class, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, to which they adhere with somewhat of the pride of ancestry, blended with a something, call it what you will, whether bigotry, or a sense of wrong, arising out of repeated diminutions of their family possessions, during the more rigorous periods of the penal laws. Being an old family, and especially being an old Catholic family, they have of course their Banshee; and the circumstances under which the appearance, which I shall relate, of this mysterious harbinger of death, took place, were told me by an old lady, a near connexion of theirs, who knew many of the parties concerned, and who, though not deficient in understanding or education, cannot to this day be brought to give a decisive opinion as to the truth or authenticity of the story. The plain inference to be drawn from this is, that she believes it, though she does not own it; and as she was a contemporary of the persons concerned — as she heard the account from many persons about the same period, all concurring in the important particulars — as some of her authorities were themselves actors in the scene — and as none of the parties were interested in speaking what was false; I think we have about as good evidence that the whole is undeniably true as we have of many narratives of modern history, which I could name, and which many grave and sober-minded people would deem it very great pyrrhonism to question. This, however, is a point which it is not my province to determine. People who deal out stories of this sort must be content to act like certain young politicians, who tell very freely to their friends what they hear at a great man's table; not guilty of the impertinence of weighing the doctrines, and leaving it to their hearers to understand them in any sense, or in no sense, just as they may please.

Charles Mac Carthy was, in the year 1749, the only surviving son of a very numerous family. His father died when he was little more than twenty, leaving him the Mac Carthy estate, not much encumbered, considering that it was an Irish one. Charles was gay, handsome, unfettered either by poverty, a father, or guardians, and therefore was not at the age of one-and-twenty, a pattern of regularity and virtue. In plain terms, he was an exceedingly dissipated — I fear I may say debauched young man. His companions were, as may be supposed, of the higher classes of the youth in his neighbourhood, and, in general, of those whose fortunes were larger than his own, whose dispositions to pleasure were therefore under still less restrictions, and in whose example he found at once an incentive and an apology for his irregularities. Besides, Ireland, a place to this day not very remarkable for the coolness and steadiness of its youth, was then one of the cheapest countries in the world in most of those articles which money supplies for the indulgence of the passions. The odious exciseman, with his portentous book in one hand, his unrelenting pen held in the other, or stuck beneath his hat-band, and the ink-bottle ('black emblem of the informer') dangling from his waist-coat-button — went not then from ale-house to ale-house, denouncing all those patriotic dealers in spirit, who preferred selling whisky, which had nothing to do with English laws (but to elude them,) to retailing that poisonous liquor, which derived its name from the British "parliament," that compelled its circulation among a reluctant people. Or if the gauger — recording angel of the law — wrote down the peccadillo of a publican, he dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever! For, welcome to the tables of their hospitable neighbours, the guardians of the excise, where they existed at all, scrupled to abridge those luxuries which they freely shared; and thus the competition in the market between the smuggler, who incurred little hazard, and the personage ycleped fair trader, who enjoyed little protection, made Ireland a land flowing, not merely with milk and honey, but with whisky and wine. In the enjoyments supplied by these, and in the many kindred pleasures to which frail youth is but too prone, Charles Mac Carthy indulged to such a degree, that just about the time when he had completed his four-and-twentieth year, after a week of great excesses, he was seized with a violent fever, which, from its malignity, and the weakness of his frame, left scarcely a hope of his recovery. His mother, who had at first made many efforts to check his vices, and at last had been obliged to look on at his rapid progress to ruin in silent despair, watched day and night at his pillow. The anguish of parental feeling was blended with that still deeper misery which those only know who have striven hard to rear in virtue and piety a beloved and favourite child; have found him grow up all that their hearts could desire, until he reached manhood; and then, when their pride was highest, and their hopes almost ended in the fulfilment of their fondest expectations, have seen this idol of their affections plunge headlong into a course of reckless profligacy, and, after a rapid career of vice, hang upon the verge of eternity, without the leisure for, or the power of, repentance. Fervently she prayed that, if his life could not be spared, at least the delirium, which continued with increasing violence from the first few hours of his disorder, might vanish before death, and leave enough of light and of calm for making his peace with offended Heaven. After several days, however, nature seemed quite exhausted, and he sunk into a state too like death to be mistaken for the repose of sleep. His face had that pale, glossy, marble look, which is in general so sure a symptom that life has left its tenement of clay. His eyes were closed and sunk; the lids having that compressed and stiffened appearance which seemed to indicate that some friendly hand had done its last office. The lips, half-closed and perfectly ashy, discovered just so much of the teeth as to give to the features of death their most ghastly, but most impressive look. He lay upon his back, with his hands stretched beside, quite motionless; and his distracted mother, after repeated trials, could discover not the least symptom of animation. The medical man who attended, having tried the usual modes for ascertaining the presence of life, declared at last his opinion that it was flown, and prepared to depart from the house of mourning. His horse was seen to come to the door. A crowd of people who were collected before the windows, or scattered in groups on the lawn in front, gathered round when the door opened. These were tenants, fosterers, and poor relations of the family, with others attracted by affection, or by that interest which partakes of curiosity, but is something more, and which collects the lower ranks round a house where a human being is in his passage to another world. They saw the professional man come out from the hall door and approach his horse, and while slowly, and with a melancholy air, he prepared to mount, they clustered round him with inquiring and wishful looks. Not a word was spoken; but their meaning could not be misunderstood; and the physician, when he had got into his saddle, and while the servant was still holding the bridle, as if to delay him, and was looking anxiously at his face, as if expecting that he would relieve the general suspense, shook his head, and said in a low voice, "It's all over, James;" and moved slowly away. The moment he had spoken, the women present, who were very numerous, uttered a shrill cry, which, having been sustained for about half a minute, fell suddenly into a full, loud, continued and discordant but plaintive wailing, above which occasionally were heard the deep sounds of a man's voice, sometimes in broken sobs, sometimes in more distinct exclamations of sorrow. This was Charles's foster-brother, who moved about in the crowd, now clapping his hands, now rubbing them together in an agony of grief. The poor fellow had been Charles's playmate and companion when a boy, and afterwards his servant; had always been distinguished by his peculiar regard, and loved his young master, as much, at least, as he did his own life.

When Mrs. Mac Carthy became convinced that the blow was indeed struck, and that her beloved son was sent to his last account, even in the blossoms of his sin, she remained for some time gazing with fixedness upon his cold features; then, as if something had suddenly touched the string of her tenderest affections, tear after tear trickled down her cheeks, pale with anxiety and watching. Still she continued looking at her son, apparently unconscious that she was weeping, without once lifting her handkerchief to her eyes, until reminded of the sad duties which the custom of the country imposed upon her, by the crowd of females belonging to the better class of the peasantry, who now, crying audibly, nearly filled the apartment. She then withdrew, to give directions for the ceremony of waking, and for supplying the numerous visiters of all ranks with the refreshments usual on these melancholy occasions. Though her voice was scarcely heard, and though no one saw her but the servants and one or two old followers of the family, who assisted her in the necessary arrangements, every thing was conducted with the greatest regularity; and though she made no effort to check her sorrows, they never once suspended her attention, now more than ever required to preserve order in her household, which, in this season of calamity, but for her would have been all confusion.

The night was pretty far advanced; the boisterous lamentations which had prevailed during part of the day in and about the house had given place to a solemn and mournful stillness; and Mrs. Mac Carthy, whose heart, notwithstanding her long fatigue and watching, was yet too sore for sleep, was kneeling in fervent prayer in a chamber adjoining that of her son: — suddenly her devotions were disturbed by an unusual noise, proceeding from the persons who were watching round the body. First, there was a low murmur — then all was silent, as if the movements of those in the chamber were checked by a sudden panic — and then a loud cry of terror burst from all within: — the door of the chamber was thrown open, and all who were not overturned in the press rushed wildly into the passage which led to the stairs, and into which Mrs. Mac Carthy's room opened. Mrs. Mac Carthy made her way through the crowd into her son's chamber, where she found him sitting up in the bed, and looking vacantly around like one risen from the grave. The glare thrown upon his sunk features and thin lathy frame gave an unearthly horror to his whole aspect. Mrs. Mac Carthy was a woman of some firmness; but she was a woman, and not quite free from the superstitions of her country. She dropped on her knees, and, clasping her hands, began to pray aloud. The form before her moved only its lips and barely uttered, "Mother;" — but though the pale lips moved, as if there was a design to finish the sentence, the tongue refused its office. Mrs. Mac Carthy sprung forward, and catching the arm of her son, exclaimed, "Speak! in the name of God and his saints, speak! are you alive?"

He turned to her slowly, and said, speaking still with apparent difficulty, "Yes, my mother, alive, and —— But sit down and collect yourself; I have that to tell, which will astonish you still more than what you have seen." He leaned back on his pillow, and while his mother remained kneeling by the bed-side, holding one of his hands clasped in hers, and gazing on him with the look of one who distrusted all her senses, he proceeded:— "do not interrupt me until I have done. I wish to speak while the excitement of returning life is upon me, as I know I shall soon need much repose. Of the commencement of my illness I have only a confused recollection; but within the last twelve hours, I have been before the judgment-seat of God. Do not stare incredulously on me— 'tis as true as have been my crimes, and, as I trust, shall be my repentance. I saw the awful Judge arrayed in all the terrors which invest him when mercy gives place to justice. The dreadful pomp of offended omnipotence, I saw, — I remember. It is fixed here; printed on my brain in characters indelible; but it passeth human language. What I *can* describe I *will* — I may speak it briefly. It is enough to say, I was weighed in the balance and found wanting. The irrevocable sentence was upon the point of being pronounced; the eye of my Almighty Judge, which had already glanced upon me, half spoke my doom; when I observed the guardian saint, to whom you so often directed my prayers when I was a child, looking at me with an expression of benevolence and compassion. I stretched forth my hands to him, and besought his intercession; I implored that one year, one month might be given to me on earth, to do penance and atonement for my transgressions. He threw himself at the feet of my Judge, and supplicated for mercy. Oh! never — not if I should pass through ten thousand successive states of being — never, for eternity, shall I forget the horrors of that moment, when my fate hung suspended — when an instant was to decide whether torments unutterable were to be my portion for endless ages? But Justice suspended its decree, and Mercy spoke in accents of firmness, but mildness, ‘Return to that world in which thou hast lived but to outrage the laws of Him who made that world and thee. Three years are given thee for repentance; when these are ended, thou shalt again stand here, to be saved or lost for ever.’ — I heard no more; I saw no more, until I awoke to life, the moment before you entered.”

Charles’s strength continued just long enough to finish these last words, and on uttering them he closed his eyes, and lay quite exhausted. His mother, though, as was before said, somewhat disposed to give credit to supernatural visitations, yet hesitated whether or not she should believe that, although awakened from a swoon, which might have been the crisis of his disease, he was still under the influence of delirium. Repose, however, was at all events necessary, and she took immediate measures that he should enjoy it undisturbed. After some hours’ sleep, he awoke refreshed, and thenceforward gradually but steadily recovered.

Still he persisted in his account of the vision, as he had at first related it; and his persuasion of its reality had an obvious and decided influence on his habits and conduct. He did not altogether abandon the society of his former associates, for his temper was not soured by his reformation; but he never joined in their excesses, and often endeavoured to reclaim them. How his pious exertions succeeded, I have never learnt; but of himself it is recorded, that he was religious without ostentation, and temperate without austerity; giving a practical proof that vice may be exchanged for virtue, without a loss of respectability, popularity, or happiness.

Time rolled on, and long before the three years were ended, the story of his vision was forgotten, or, when spoken of, was usually mentioned as an instance proving the folly of believing in such things. Charles’s health from the temperance and regularity of his habits, became more robust than ever. His friends, indeed, had often occasion to rally him upon a seriousness and abstractedness of demeanour, which grew upon him as he approached the completion of his seven-and-twentieth year, but for the most part his manner exhibited the same animation and cheerfulness for which he had always been remarkable. In company he evaded every endeavour to draw from him a distinct opinion on the subject of the supposed prediction; but among his own family it was well known that he still firmly believed it. However, when the day had nearly arrived on which the prophecy was, if at all, to be fulfilled, his whole appearance gave such promise of a long and healthy life, that he was persuaded by his friends to ask a large party to an entertainment at Spring House, to celebrate his birth-day. But the occasion of this party, and the circumstances which attended it, will be best learned from a perusal of the following letters, which have been carefully preserved by some relations of his family. The first is from Mrs. Mac Carthy to a lady, a very near connexion and valued friend of hers, who lived in the county of Cork, at about fifty miles' distance from Spring House.

"To Mrs. Barry, Castle Barry.

Spring House, Tuesday morning,
October 15th, 1752.

"MY DEAREST MARY,

"I am afraid I am going to put your affection for your old friend and kinswoman to a severe trial. A two days' journey at this season, over bad roads and through a troubled country, it will indeed require friendship such as yours to persuade a sober woman to encounter. But the truth is, I have, or fancy I have, more than usual cause for wishing you near me. You know my son's story. I can't tell how it is, but as next Sunday approaches, when the prediction of his dream or his vision will be proved false or true, I feel a sickening of the heart, which I cannot suppress, but which your presence, my dear Mary, will soften, as it has done so many of my sorrows. My nephew, James Ryan, is to be married to Jane Osborne (who, you know, is my son's ward,) and the bridal entertainment will take place here on Sunday next, though Charles pleaded hard to have it postponed a day or two longer. Would to God — but no more of this till we meet. Do prevail upon yourself to leave your good man for *one* week, if his farming concerns will not admit of his accompanying you; and come to us with the girls, as soon before Sunday as you can.

"Ever my dear Mary's attached cousin and friend,

"Ann Mac Carthy".

Although this letter reached Castle Barry early on Wednesday, the messenger having travelled on foot, over bog and moor, by paths impassable to horse or carriage, Mrs. Barry, who at once determined on going, had so many arrangements to make for the regulation of her domestic affairs (which, in Ireland, among the middle orders of the gentry, fall soon into confusion when the mistress of the family is away,) that she and her two younger daughters were unable to leave home until late on the morning of Friday. The eldest daughter remained, to keep her father company, and superintend the concerns of the household. As the travellers were to journey in an open one-horse vehicle, called a jaunting-car (still used in Ireland,) and as the roads, bad at all times, were rendered still worse by the heavy rains, it was their design to make two easy stages; to stop about mid-way the first night, and reach Spring House early on Saturday evening. This arrangement was now altered, as they found that from the lateness of their departure, they could proceed, at the utmost, no further than twenty miles on the first day; and they therefore purposed sleeping at the house of a Mr. Bourke, a friend of theirs, who lived at somewhat less than that distance from Castle Barry. They reached Mr. Bourke's in safety, after rather a disagreeable drive. What befell them on their journey the next day to the Spring House, and after their arrival there, is fully related in a letter from the second Miss Barry to her eldest sister.

"Spring House, Sunday evening,
20th October, 1752.

"DEAR ELLEN,

"As my mother's letter, which encloses this, will announce to you briefly the sad intelligence which I shall here relate more fully, I think it better to go regularly through the recital of the extraordinary events of the last two days.

"The Bourkes kept us up so late on Friday night, that yesterday was pretty far advanced before we could begin our journey, and the day closed when we were nearly fifteen miles distant from this place. The roads were excessively deep, from the heavy rains of the last week, and we proceeded so slowly, that at last my mother resolved on passing the night at the house of Mr. Bourke's brother (who lives about a quarter of a mile off the road), and coming here to breakfast in the morning. The day had been windy and showery, and the sky looked fitful, gloomy, and uncertain. The moon was full, and at times shone clear and bright; at others, it was wholly concealed behind the thick, black, and rugged masses of clouds, that rolled rapidly along, and were every moment becoming larger, and collecting together, as if gathering strength for a coming storm. The wind, which blew in our faces, whistled bleakly along the low hedges of the narrow road, on which we proceeded with difficulty from the number of deep sloughs, and which afforded not the least shelter, no plantation being within some miles of us. My mother, therefore, asked Leary, who drove the jaunting-car, how far we were from Mr. Bourke's. ''Tis about ten spades from this to the cross, and we have then only to turn to the left into the avenue, ma'am.' 'Very well, Leary: turn up to Mr. Bourke's as soon as you reach the cross roads.' My mother had scarcely spoken these words, when a shriek that made us thrill as if our very hearts were pierced by it, burst from the hedge to the right of our way. If it resembled any thing earthly, it seemed the cry of a female, struck by a sudden and mortal blow, and giving out her life in one long deep pang of expiring agony. 'Heaven defend us!' exclaimed my mother. 'Go you over the hedge, Leary, and save that woman, if she is not yet dead, while we run back to the hut we just passed, and alarm the village near it.' 'Woman!' said Leary, beating the horse violently, while his voice trembled— 'that's no woman: the sooner we get on, ma'am, the better;' and he continued his efforts to quicken the horse's pace. We saw nothing. The moon was hid. It was quite dark, and we had been for some time expecting a heavy fall of rain. But just as Leary had spoken, and had succeeded in making the horse trot briskly forward, we distinctly heard a loud clapping of hands, followed by a succession of screams, that seemed to denote the last excess of despair and anguish, and to issue from a person running forward inside the hedge, to keep pace with our progress. Still we saw nothing; until, when we were within about ten yards of the place where an avenue branched off to Mr. Bourke's to the left, and the road turned to Spring House on the right, the moon started suddenly from behind a cloud, and enabled us to see, as plainly as I now see this paper, the figure of a tall thin woman, with uncovered head, and longhair that floated round her shoulders, attired in something which seemed either a loose white cloak, or a sheet thrown hastily about her. She stood on the corner hedge, where the road on which we were, met that which leads to Spring House, with her face towards us, her left hand pointing to this place, and her right arm waving rapidly and violently, as if to draw us on in that direction. The horse had stopped, apparently frightened at the sudden presence of the figure, which stood in the manner I have described, still uttering the same piercing cries, for about half a minute. It then leaped upon the road, disappeared from our view for one instant, and the next was seen standing upon a high wall a little way up the avenue, on which we proposed going, still pointing towards the road to Spring House, but in an attitude of defiance and command, as if prepared to oppose our passage up the avenue. The figure was now quite silent, and its garments, which had before flown loosely in the wind, were closely wrapped around it. 'Go on, Leary, to Spring House, in God's name,' said my mother; 'whatever world it belongs to, we will provoke it no longer.' ''Tis the Banshee, ma'am,' said Leary; 'and I would not, for what my life is worth, go any where this blessed night but to Spring House. But I'm afraid there's something bad going forward, or *she* would not send us there.' So saying, he drove forward; and as we turned on the road to the right, the moon suddenly withdrew its light, and we saw the apparition no more; but we heard plainly a prolonged clapping of hands, gradually dying away, as if it issued from a person rapidly retreating. We proceeded as quickly as the badness of the roads and the fatigue of the poor animal that drew us would allow, and arrived here about eleven o'clock last night. The scene which awaited us you have learned from my mother's letter. To explain it fully, I must recount to you some of the transactions which took place here during the last week.

"You are aware that Jane Osborne was to have been married this day to James Ryan, and that they and their friends have been here for the last week. On Tuesday last, the very day on the morning of which cousin Mac Carthy despatched the letter inviting us here, the whole of the company were walking about the grounds a little before dinner. It seems that an unfortunate creature, who had been seduced by James Ryan, was seen prowling in the neighbourhood in a moody melancholy state for some days previous. He had separated from her for several months, and, they say, had provided for her rather handsomely; but she had been seduced by the promise of his marrying her; and the shame of her unhappy condition, uniting with disappointment and jealousy, had disordered her intellects. During the whole forenoon of this Tuesday, she had been walking in the plantations near Spring House, with her cloak folded tight around her, the hood nearly covering her face; and she had avoided conversing with or even meeting any of the family.

"Charles Mac Carthy, at the time I mentioned, was walking between James Ryan and another, at a little distance from the rest, on a gravel path, skirting a shrubbery. The whole party were thrown into the utmost consternation by the report of a pistol, fired from a thickly planted part of the shrubbery, which Charles and his companions had just passed. He fell instantly, and it was found that he had been wounded in the leg. One of the party was a medical man; his assistance was immediately given, and, on examining, he declared that the injury was very slight, that no bone was broken, that it was merely a flesh wound, and that it would certainly be well in a few days. 'We shall know more by Sunday,' said Charles, as he was carried to his chamber. His wound was immediately dressed, and so slight was the inconvenience which it gave, that several of his friends spent a portion of the evening in his apartment.

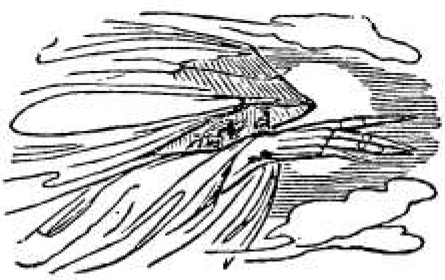
"On inquiry, it was found that the unlucky shot was fired by the poor girl I just mentioned. It was also manifest that she had aimed, not at Charles, but at the destroyer of her innocence and happiness, who was walking beside him. After a fruitless search for her through the grounds, she walked into the house of her own accord, laughing, and dancing and singing wildly, and every moment exclaiming that she had at last killed Mr. Ryan. When she heard that it was Charles, and not Mr. Ryan, who was shot, she fell into a violent fit, out of which, after working convulsively for some time, she sprung to the door, escaped from the crowd that pursued her, and could never be taken until last night, when she was brought here, perfectly frantic, a little before our arrival.

"Charles's wound was thought of such little consequence, that the preparations went forward, as usual, for the wedding entertainment on Sunday. But on Friday night he grew restless and feverish, and on Saturday (yesterday) morning felt so ill, that it was deemed necessary to obtain additional medical advice. Two physicians and a surgeon met in consultation about twelve o'clock in the day, and the dreadful intelligence was announced, that unless a change, hardly hoped for, took place before night, death must happen within twenty-four hours after. The wound it seems, had been too tightly bandaged, and otherwise injudiciously treated. The physicians were right in their anticipations. No favourable symptom appeared, and long before we reached Spring House every ray of hope had vanished. The scene we witnessed on our arrival would have wrung the heart of a demon. We heard briefly at the gate that Mr. Charles was upon his death-bed. When we reached the house, the information was confirmed by the servant who opened the door. But just as we entered, we were horrified by the most appalling screams issuing from the staircase. My mother thought she heard the voice of poor Mrs. Mac Carthy, and sprung forward. We followed, and on ascending a few steps of the stairs, we found a young woman, in a state of frantic passion, struggling furiously with two men-servants, whose united strength was hardly sufficient to prevent her rushing up stairs over the body of Mrs. Mac Carthy, who was lying in strong hysterics upon the steps. This, I afterwards discovered, was the unhappy girl I before described, who was attempting to gain access to Charles's room, to 'get his forgiveness,' as she said, 'before he went away to accuse her for having killed him.' This wild idea was mingled with another, which seemed to dispute with the former possession of her mind. In one sentence she called on Charles to forgive her, in the next she would denounce James Ryan as the murderer both of Charles and her. At length she was torn away; and the last words I heard her scream were, 'James Ryan, 'twas you killed him, and not I — 'twas you killed him, and not I.'

"Mrs. Mac Carthy, on recovering, fell into the arms of my mother, whose presence seemed a great relief to her. She wept the first tears, I was told, that she had shed since the fatal accident. She conducted us to Charles's room, who she said, had desired to see us the moment of our arrival, as he found his end approaching, and wished to devote the last hours of his existence to uninterrupted prayer and meditation. We found him perfectly calm, resigned, and even cheerful. He spoke of the awful event which was at hand with courage and confidence, and treated it as a doom for which he had been preparing ever since his former remarkable illness, and which he never once doubted was truly foretold to him. He bade us farewell with the air of one who was about to travel a short and easy journey; and we left him with impressions which, notwithstanding all their anguish, will, I trust, never entirely forsake us.

"Poor Mrs. Mac Carthy —— but I am just called away. There seems a slight stir in the family; perhaps — —"

The above letter was never finished. The enclosure to which it more than once alludes, told the sequel briefly, and it is all that I have farther learned of this branch of the Mac Carthy family. Before the sun had gone down upon Charles's seven-and-twentieth birthday, his soul had gone to render its last account to its Creator.



"Banshee, correctly written she-fairies or women fairies, credulously supposed, by the common people, to be so affected to certain families, that they are heard to sing mournful lamentations about their houses at night, whenever any of the family labours under a sickness which is to end in death. But no families which are not of an ancient and noble stock are believed to be honoured with this fairy privilege." — O'Brien's *Irish*

Dictionary.

For accounts of the appearance of the Irish Banshee, see "Personal Sketches, &c. by Sir Jonah Barrington;" Miss Lefanu's Memoirs of her Grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sheridan (1824,) ; "The Memoirs of Lady Fanshaw" (quoted by Sir Walter Scott in a note on "the Lady of the Lake,") &c.

Sir Walter Scott terms the belief in the appearance of the Banshee "one of the most beautiful" of the leading superstitions of Europe. In his "Letters on Demonology," he says that "several families of the Highlands of Scotland anciently laid claim to the distinction of an attendant spirit, who performed the office of the Irish Banshee," and particularly refers to the supernatural cries and lamentations which foreboded the death of the gallant Mac Lean of Lochbuy.

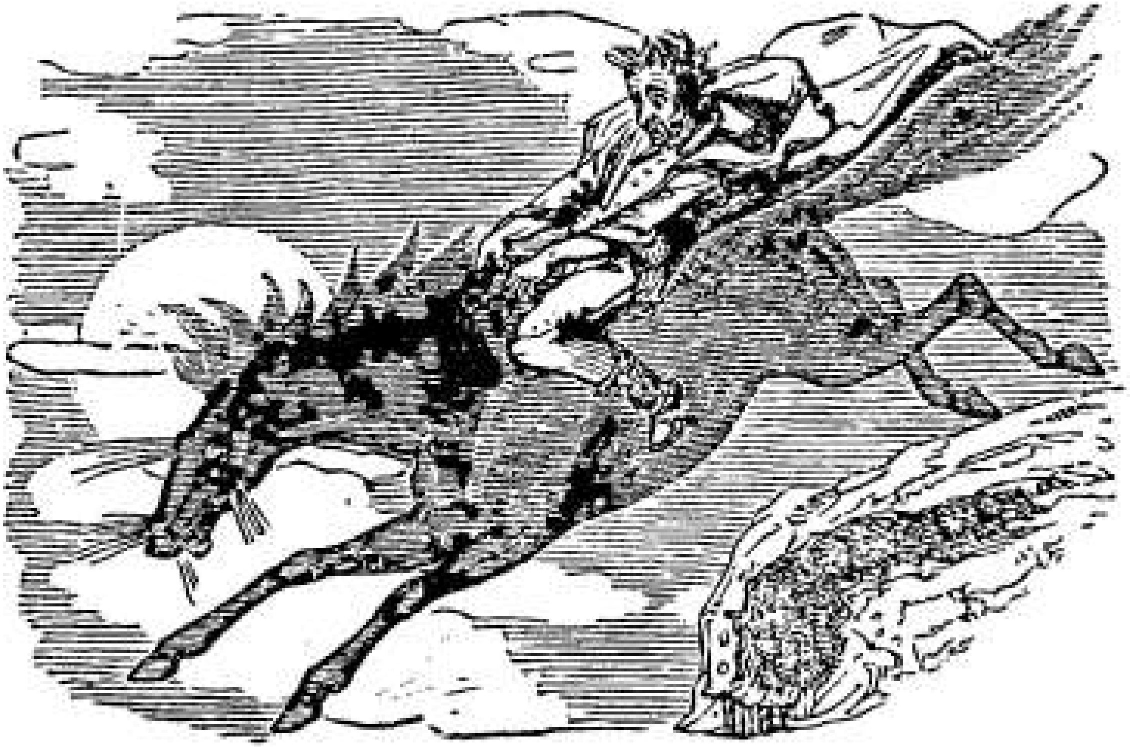
"The Welsh Gwrâch y Rhibyn (or the hag of the Dribble) bears some resemblance to the Irish Banshee, being regarded as an omen of death. She is said to come after dusk and flap her leathern wings against the window where she warns of death, and in a broken, howling tone, to call on the one who is to quit mortality by his or her name several times, as thus, *A-a-a-n-ni-i-i-i! Anni.*" — *MS. Communication from* Dr. Owen Pughe. For some farther particulars, see, in "A Relation of Apparitions, &c. by the Rev. Edmund Jones," his account of the *Kyhirraeth*, "a doleful foreboding noise before death;" and Howell's "Cambrian Superstitions," (Tipton, 1831,) .

The reader will probably remember the White Lady of the House of Brandenburgh, and the fairy Melusine, who usually prognosticated the recurrence of mortality in some noble family of Poitou. Prince, in his "Worthies of Devon," records the appearance of a white bird performing the same office for the worshipful lineage of Oxenham.

"In the Tyrol, too, they believe in a spirit which looks in at the window of the house in which a person is to die (*Deutsche Sagen*, No. 266;) the white woman with a veil over her head (267,) answers to the Banshee; but the tradition of the *Klage-weib* (mourning woman,) in the *Lüneburger Heath Spiels Archiv.* ii. 297,) resembles it still more closely. On stormy nights, when the moon shines faintly through the fleeting clouds, she stalks, of gigantic stature, with death-like aspect, and black hollow eyes, wrapt in grave-clothes which float in the wind, and stretches her immense arm over the solitary hut, uttering lamentable cries in the tempestuous darkness. Beneath the roof over which the *Klage-weib* has leaned, one of the inmates must die in the course of the month." —

The Brothers Grimm, *and MS. Communication from* Dr. William Grimm.

LEGENDS OF THE PHOOKA.



“Ne let house-fires, nor lightnings’ helpless harms,
Ne let the *Pouke*, nor other evil spright,
Ne let mischievous witches with their charms,
Ne let hobgoblins, names whose sense we see not,
Fray us with things that be not.”

Spenser.

THE SPIRIT HORSE.

XIV.

The history of Morty Sullivan ought to be a warning to all young men to stay at home, and to live decently and soberly if they can, and not to go roving about the world. Morty, when he had just turned of fourteen, ran away from his father and mother, who were a mighty respectable old couple, and many and many a tear they shed on his account. It is said they both died heart-broken for his loss: all they ever learned about him was that he went on board of a ship bound to America.

Thirty years after the old couple had been laid peacefully in their graves, there came a stranger to Beerhaven inquiring after them — it was their son Morty; and, to speak the truth of him, his heart did seem full of sorrow when he heard that his parents were dead and gone; — but what else could he expect to hear? Repentance generally comes when it is too late.

Morty Sullivan, however, as an atonement for his sins, was recommended to perform a pilgrimage to the blessed chapel of Saint Gobnate, which is in a wild place called Ballyvourney.

This he readily undertook: and willing to lose no time, commenced his journey the same afternoon. He had not proceeded many miles before the evening came on: there was no moon, and the star-light was obscured by a thick fog, which ascended from the valleys. His way was through a mountainous country, with many cross-paths and by-ways, so that it was difficult for a stranger like Morty to travel without a guide. He was anxious to reach his destination, and exerted himself to do so; but the fog grew thicker and thicker, and at last he became doubtful if the track he was in led to the blessed chapel of Saint Gobnate. But seeing a light which he imagined not to be far off, he went towards it, and when he thought himself close to it, the light suddenly seemed at a great distance, twinkling dimly through the fog. Though Morty felt some surprise at this, he was not disheartened, for he thought that it was a light sent by the holy Saint Gobnate to guide his feet through the mountains to her chapel.

And thus did he travel for many a mile, continually, as he believed, approaching the light, which would suddenly start off to a great distance. At length he came so close as to perceive that the light came from a fire: seated beside which he plainly saw an old woman; — then, indeed, his faith was a little shaken, and much did he wonder that both the fire and the old woman should travel before him, so many weary miles, and over such uneven roads.

“In the holy names of the pious Gobnate, and of her preceptor Saint Abban,” said Morty, “how can that burning fire move on so fast before me, and who can that old woman be sitting beside the moving fire?”

These words had no sooner passed Morty’s lips than he found himself, without taking another step, close to this wonderful fire, beside which the old woman was sitting munching her supper. With every wag of the old woman's jaw her eyes would roll fiercely upon Morty, as if she was angry at being disturbed; and he saw with more astonishment than ever that her eyes were neither black, nor blue, nor gray, nor hazel, like the human eye, but of a wild red colour, like the eye of a ferret. If before he wondered at the fire, much greater was his wonder at the old woman's appearance; and stout-hearted as he was, he could not but look upon her with fear — judging, and judging rightly, that it was for no good purpose her supping in so unfrequented a place, and at so late an hour, for it was near midnight. She said not one word, but munched and munched away, while Morty looked at her in silence.— "What's your name?" at last demanded the old hag, a sulphureous puff coming out of her mouth, her nostrils distending, and her eyes growing redder than ever, when she had finished her question.

Plucking up all his courage, "Morty Sullivan," replied he "at your service;" meaning the latter words only in civility.

"*Ubbubbo!*" said the old woman, "we'll soon see that;" and the red fire of her eyes turned into a pale green colour. Bold and fearless as Morty was, yet much did he tremble at hearing this dreadful exclamation: he would have fallen down on his knees and prayed to Saint Gobnate, or any other saint, for he was not particular; but he was so petrified with horror, that he could not move in the slightest way, much less go down on his knees.

"Take hold of my hand, Morty," said the old woman: "I'll give you a horse to ride that will soon carry you to your journey's end." So saying, she led the way, the fire going before them; — it is beyond mortal knowledge to say how, but on it went, shooting out bright tongues of flame, and flickering fiercely.

Presently they came to a natural cavern in the side of the mountain, and the old hag called aloud in a most discordant voice for her horse! In a moment a jet-black steed started from its gloomy stable, the rocky floor whereof rung with a sepulchral echo to the clanging hoofs.

"Mount, Morty, mount!" cried she, seizing him with supernatural strength, and forcing him upon the back of the horse. Morty finding human power of no avail, muttered, "O that I had spurs!" and tried to grasp the horse's mane; but he caught at a shadow; it nevertheless bore him up and bounded forward with him, now springing down a fearful precipice, now clearing the rugged bed of a torrent, and rushing like the dark midnight storm through the mountains.

The following morning Morty Sullivan was discovered by some pilgrims (who came that way after taking their rounds at Gougane Barra) lying on the flat of his back, under a steep cliff, down which he had been flung by the Phooka. Morty was severely bruised by the fall, and he is said to have sworn on the spot, by the hand of O'Sullivan (and that is no small oath), never again to take a full quart bottle of whisky with him on a pilgrimage.

DANIEL O'ROURKE.

XV.

People may have heard of the renowned adventures of Daniel O'Rourke, but how few are there who know that the cause of all his perils, above and below, was neither more nor less than his having slept under the walls of the Phooka's tower! I knew the man well; he lived at the bottom of Hungry Hill, just at the right hand side of the road as you go towards Bantry. An old man was he at the time that he told me the story, with gray hair, and a red nose; and it was on the 25th of June, 1813, that I heard it from his own lips, as he sat smoking his pipe under the old poplar tree, on as fine an evening as ever shone from the sky. I was going to visit the caves in Dursey Island, having spent the morning at Glengariff.

"I am often *axed* to tell it, sir," said he, "so that this is not the first time. The master's son, you see, had come from beyond foreign parts in France and Spain, as young gentlemen used to go, before Bonaparte or any such was heard of; and sure enough there was a dinner given to all the people on the ground, gentle and simple, high and low, rich and poor. The *ould* gentlemen were the gentlemen, after all, saving your honour's presence. They'd swear at a body a little, to be sure, and may be, give one a cut of a whip now and then, but we were no losers by it in the end; — and they were so easy and civil, and kept such rattling houses, and thousands of welcomes; — and there was no grinding for rent, and few agents; and there was hardly a tenant on the estate that did not taste of his landlord's bounty often and often in the year; — but now it's another thing: no matter for that, sir; for I'd better be telling you my story.

"Well, we had every thing of the best, and plenty of it; and we ate, and we drank, and we danced, and the young master by the same token danced with Peggy Barry, from the Bohereen — a lovely young couple they were, though they are both low enough now. To make a long story short, I got, as a body may say, the same thing as tipsy almost; for I can't remember ever at all, no ways, how it was I left the place: only I did leave it, that's certain. Well, I thought, for all that, in myself, I'd just step to Molly Cronohan's, the fairy woman, to speak a word about the bracket heifer that was bewitched; and so as I was crossing the stepping-stones of the ford of Ballyasheenough, and was looking up at the stars and blessing myself — for why? it was Lady-day — I missed my foot, and souse I fell into the water. 'Death alive!' thought I, 'I'll be drowned now!' However, I began swimming, swimming, swimming away for the dear life, till at last I got ashore, somehow or other, but never the one of me can tell how, upon a *dissolute* island.

"I wandered and wandered about there, without knowing where I wandered, until at last I got into a big bog. The moon was shining as bright as day, or your fair lady's eyes, sir, (with your pardon for mentioning her,) and I looked east and west, and north and south, and every way, and nothing did I see but bog, bog, bog; — I could never find out how I got into it; and my heart grew cold with fear, for sure and certain I was that it would be my *berrin* place. So I sat down upon a stone which, as good luck would have it, was close by me, and I began to scratch my head and sing the *Ullagone* — when all of a sudden the moon grew black, and I looked up, and saw something for all the world as if it was moving down between me and it, and I could not tell what it was. Down it came with a pounce, and looked at me full in the face; and what was it but an eagle? as fine a one as ever flew from the kingdom of Kerry.

"So he looked at me in the face, and says he to me, 'Daniel O'Rourke,' says he, 'how do you do?' 'Very well, I thank you, sir,' says I: 'I hope you're well;' wondering out of my senses all the time how an eagle came to speak like a Christian. 'What brings you here, Dan?' says he. 'Nothing at all, sir,' says I: 'only I wish I was safe home again.' 'Is it out of the Island you want to go, Dan?' says he. ''Tis, sir,' says I: so I up and told him how I had taken a drop too much and fell into the water; how I swam to the Island; and how I got into the bog, and did not know my way out of it. 'Dan,' says he, after a minute's thought, 'though it is very improper for you to get drunk on Lady-day, yet as you are a decent sober man, who 'tends mass well, and never flings stones at me nor mine, nor cries out after us in the fields — my life for yours,' says he; 'so get up on my back, and grip me well for fear you'd fall off, and I'll fly you out of the bog.' 'I am afraid,' says I, 'your honour's making game of me; for who ever heard of riding a horseback on an eagle before?' ''Pon the honour of a gentleman,' says he, putting his right foot on his breast, 'I am quite in earnest; and so now either take my offer or starve in the bog — besides, I see that your weight is sinking the stone.'

"It was true enough as he said, for I found the stone every minute going from under me. I had no choice; so thinks I to myself, faint heart never won fair lady, and this is fair persuadance:— 'I thank your honour,' says I, 'for the loan of your civility; and I'll take your kind offer.' I therefore mounted upon the back of the eagle, and held him tight enough by the throat, and up he flew in the air like a lark. Little I knew the trick he was going to serve me. Up — up — up — I know not how far up he flew.

"'Why, then,' said I to him, — thinking he did not know the right road home — very civilly, because why? — I was in his power entirely;— 'sir,' says I, 'please your honour's glory, and with humble submission to your better judgment, if you'd fly down a bit, you're now just over my cabin, and I could put down there, and many thanks to your worship.'

"'*Arrah*, Dan,' said he, 'do you think me a fool? Look down in the next field, and don't you see two men and a gun? By my word it would be no joke to be shot this way, to oblige a drunken blackguard that I picked up off of a *cowld* stone in a bog.' 'Bother you,' said I to myself, but I did not speak out, for where was the use? Well, sir, up he kept, flying, flying, and I asking him every minute to fly down, and all to no use. 'Where in the world are you going, sir?' says I to him. 'Hold your tongue, Dan,' says he: 'mind your own business, and don't be interfering with the business of other people.' 'Faith, this is my business, I think,' says I. 'Be quiet, Dan,' says he: so I said no more.

"At last, where should we come to, but to the moon itself. Now you can't see it from this, but there is, or there was in my time, a reaping-hook sticking out of the side of the moon, this way, (drawing the figure thus on the ground with the end of his stick.)

"'Dan,' said the eagle, 'I'm tired with this long fly; I had no notion 'twas so far.' 'And my lord, sir,' said I, 'who in the world *axed* you to fly so far — was it I? did not I beg, and pray, and beseech you to stop half an hour ago?' 'There's no use talking, Dan,' said he; 'I'm tired bad enough, so you must get off, and sit down on the moon until I rest myself.' 'Is it sit down on the moon?' said I; 'is it upon that little round thing, then? why, then, sure I'd fall off in a minute, and be *kilt* and split, and smashed all to bits: you are a vile deceiver, — so you are.' 'Not at all, Dan,' said he: 'you can catch fast hold of the reaping-hook that's sticking out of the side of the moon, and 'twill keep you up.' 'I won't, then,' said I. 'May be not,' said he, quite quiet. 'If you don't, my man, I shall just give you a shake, and one slap of my wing, and send you down to the ground, where every bone in your body will be smashed as small as a drop of dew on a cabbage-leaf in the morning.' 'Why, then, I'm in a fine way,' said I to myself, 'ever to have come along with the likes of you;' and so giving him a hearty curse in Irish, for fear he'd know what I said, I got off his back with a heavy heart, took a hold of the reaping hook, and sat down upon the moon; and a mighty cold seat it was, I can tell you that.

"When he had me there fairly landed, he turned about on me, and said, 'Good morning to you, Daniel O'Rourke,' said he: 'I think I've nicked you fairly now. You robbed my nest last year,' ('twas true enough for him, but how he found it out is hard to say,) 'and in return you are freely welcome to cool your heels dangling upon the moon like a cockthrow.'

"'Is that all, and is this the way you leave me, you brute, you?' says I. 'You ugly unnatural *baste*, and is this the way you serve me at last? Bad luck to yourself, with your hooked nose, and to all your breed, you blackguard.' 'Twas all to no manner of use: he spread out his great big wings, burst out a laughing, and flew away like lightning. I bawled after him to stop; but I might have called and bawled for ever, without his minding me. Away he went, and I never saw him from that day to this — sorrow fly away with him! You may be sure I was in a disconsolate condition, and kept roaring out for the bare grief, when all at once a door opened right in the middle of the moon, creaking on its hinges as if it had not been opened for a month before. I suppose they never thought of greasing 'em, and out there walks — who do you think but the man in the moon himself? I knew him by his bush.

"'Good morrow to you, Daniel O'Rourke,' said he: 'How do you do?' 'Very well, thank your honour,' said I. 'I hope your honour's well.' 'What brought you here, Dan?' said he. So I told him how I was a little overtaken in liquor at the master's, and how I was cast on a *dissolute* island, and how I lost my way in the bog, and how the thief of an eagle promised to fly me out of it, and how instead of that he had flew me up to the moon.

"'Dan,' said the man in the moon, taking a pinch of snuff when I was done, 'you must not stay here.' 'Indeed, sir,' says I, ''tis much against my will I'm here at all; but how am I to go back?' 'That's your business,' said he, 'Dan: mine is to tell you that here you must not stay; so be off in less than no time.' 'I'm doing no harm,' says I, 'only holding on hard by the reaping-hook, lest I fall off.' 'That's what you must not do, Dan,' says he. 'Pray, sir,' says I, 'may I ask how many you are in family, that you would not give a poor traveller lodging: I'm sure 'tis not so often you're troubled with strangers coming to see you, for 'tis a long way.' 'I'm by myself, Dan,' says he; 'but you'd better let go the reaping-hook.' 'Indeed, and with your leave,' says I, 'I'll not let go the grip, and the more you bids me, the more I won't let go; — so I will.' 'You had better, Dan,' says he again. 'Why, then, my little fellow,' says I, taking the whole weight of him with my eye from head to foot, 'there are two words to that bargain, and I'll not budge, but you may if you like.' 'We'll see how that is to be,' says he; and back he went, giving the door such a great bang after him (for it was plain he was huffed), that I thought the moon and all would fall down with it.

"Well, I was preparing myself to try strength with him, when back again he comes, with the kitchen cleaver in his hand, and without saying a word, he gives two bangs to the handle of the reaping-hook that was keeping me up, and *whap*! it came in two. 'Good morning to you, Dan,' says the spiteful little old blackguard, when he saw me cleanly falling down with a bit of the handle in my hand: 'I thank you for your visit, and fair weather after you, Daniel.' I had not time to make any answer to him, for I was tumbling over and over, and rolling and rolling at the rate of a fox-hunt. 'Now help me,' says I, 'but this is a pretty pickle for a decent man to be seen in at this time of night; I am now sold fairly.' The word was not out of my mouth, when whiz! what should fly by close to my ear but a flock of wild geese; all the way from my own bog of Ballyasheenough, else how should they know *me*? The *ould* gander, who was their general, turning about his head, cried out to me, 'Is that you, Dan?' 'The same,' said I, not a bit daunted now at what he said, for I was by this time used to all kinds of *bedevilment*, and, besides, I knew him of *ould*. 'Good morrow to you,' says he, 'Daniel O'Rourke: how are you in health this morning?' 'Very well, sir,' says I, 'I thank you kindly,' drawing my breath, for I was mightily in want of some. 'I hope your honour's the same.' 'I think 'tis falling you are, Daniel,' says he. 'You may say that, sir,' says I. 'And where are you going all the way so fast?' said the gander. So I told him how I had taken the drop, and how I came on the island, and how I lost my way in the bog, and how the thief of an eagle flew me up to the moon, and how the man in the moon turned me out. 'Dan,' said he, 'I'll save you: put out your hand and catch me by the leg, and I'll fly you home.' 'Sweet is your hand in a pitcher of honey, my jewel,' says I, though all the time I thought in myself that I don't much trust you; but there was no help, so I caught the gander by the leg, and away I and the other geese flew after him as fast as hops.

“We flew, and we flew, and we flew, until we came right over the wide ocean. I knew it well, for I saw Cape Clear to my right hand, sticking up out of the water. ‘Ah! my lord,’ said I to the goose, for I thought it best to keep a civil tongue in my head any way, ‘fly to land if you please.’ ‘It is impossible, you see, Dan,’ said he, ‘for awhile, because you see we are going to Arabia.’ ‘To Arabia!’ said I; ‘that’s surely some place in foreign parts, far away. Oh! Mr. Goose: why then to be sure, I’m a man to be pitied among you.’ ‘Whist, whist, you fool,’ said he, ‘hold your tongue; I tell you Arabia is a very decent sort of place, as like West Carbery as one egg is like another, only there is a little more sand there.’

“Just as we were talking, a ship hove in sight, scudding so beautiful before the wind: ‘Ah! then, sir,’ said I, ‘will you drop me on the ship, if you please?’ ‘We are not fair over it,’ said he. ‘We are,’ said I. ‘We are not,’ said he: ‘If I dropped you now you would go splash into the sea.’ ‘I would not,’ says I: ‘I know better than that, for it’s just clean under us, so let me drop now at once.’

“‘If you must, you must,’ said he. ‘There, take your own way;’ and he opened his claw, and indeed he was right — sure enough I came down plump into the very bottom of the salt sea! Down to the very bottom I went, and I gave myself up then for ever, when a whale walked up to me, scratching himself after his night’s sleep, and looked me full in the face, and never the word did he say, but lifting up his tail, he splashed me all over again with the cold salt water, till there wasn’t a dry stitch upon my whole carcass; and I heard somebody saying— ’twas a voice I knew too— ‘Get up, you drunken brute, off of that;’ and with that I woke up, and there was Judy with a tub full of water, which she was splashing all over me; — for, rest her soul! though she was a good wife, she never could bear to see me in drink, and had a bitter hand of her own.

“‘Get up,’ said she again: ‘and of all places in the parish, would no place *sarve* your turn to lie down upon but under the *ould* walls of Carrigaphooka? an uneasy resting I am sure you had of it.’ And sure enough I had; for I was fairly bothered out of my senses with eagles, and men of the moon, and flying ganders, and whales, driving me through bogs, and up to the moon, and down to the bottom of the green ocean. If I was in drink ten times over, long would it be before I’d lie down on the same spot again; I know that.”

THE CROOKENED BACK.

XVI.

Peggy Barrett was once tall, well shaped, and comely. She was in her youth remarkable for two qualities, not often found together, of being the most thrifty housewife, and the best dancer in her native village of Ballyhooley. But she is now upwards of sixty years old; and during the last ten years of her life, she has never been able to stand upright. Her back is bent nearly to a level; yet she has the freest use of all her limbs that can be enjoyed in such a posture; her health is good, and her mind vigorous; and, in the family of her eldest son, with whom she has lived since the death of her husband, she performs all the domestic services which her age, and the infirmity just mentioned, allow. She washes the potatoes, makes the fire, sweeps the house (labours in which she good-humouredly says "she finds her crooked back mighty convenient"), plays with the children, and tells stories to the family and their neighbouring friends, who often collect round her son's fire-side to hear them during the long winter evenings. Her powers of conversation are highly extolled, both for humour and in narration; and anecdotes of droll, awkward incidents, connected with the posture in which she has been so long fixed, as well as the history of the occurrence to which she owes that misfortune, are favourite topics of her discourse. Among other matters, she is fond of relating how, on a certain day at the close of a bad harvest, when several tenants of the estate on which she lived concerted in a field a petition for an abatement of rent, they placed the paper on which they wrote upon her back, which was found no very inconvenient substitute for a table.

Peggy, like all experienced story-tellers, suited her tales, both in length and subject, to the audience and the occasion. She knew that, in broad daylight, when the sun shines brightly, and the trees are budding, and the birds singing around us, when men and women, like ourselves, are moving and speaking, employed variously in business or amusement; she knew, in short (though certainly without knowing or much caring wherefore), that when we are engaged about the realities of life and nature, we want that spirit of credulity, without which tales of the deepest interest will lose their power. At such times Peggy was brief, very particular as to facts, and never dealt in the marvellous. But round the blazing hearth of a Christmas evening, when infidelity is banished from all companies, at least in low and simple life, as a quality, to say the least of it, out of season; when the winds of "dark December" whistled bleakly round the walls, and almost through the doors of the little mansion, reminding its inmates, that as the world is vexed by elements superior to human power, so it may be visited by beings of a superior nature: — at such times would Peggy Barrett give full scope to her memory, or her imagination, or both; and upon one of these occasions, she gave the following circumstantial account of the "crookening of her back."

“It was, of all days in the year, the day before May-day, that I went out to the garden to weed the potatoes. I would not have gone out that day, but I was dull in myself, and sorrowful, and wanted to be alone; all the boys and girls were laughing and joking in the house, making goaling-balls and dressing out ribands for the mummers next day. I couldn’t bear it. ’Twas only at the Easter that was then past (and that’s ten years last Easter — I won’t forget the time,) that I buried my poor man; and I thought how gay and joyful I was, many a long year before that, at the May-eve before our wedding, when with Robin by my side, I sat cutting and sewing the ribands for the goaling-ball I was to give the boys on the next day, proud to be preferred above all the other girls of the banks of the Blackwater, by the handsomest boy and the best hurler in the village; so I left the house and went to the garden. I staid there all the day, and didn’t come home to dinner. I don’t know how it was, but somehow I continued on, weeding, and thinking sorrowfully enough, and singing over some of the old songs that I sung many and many a time in the days that are gone, and for them that never will come back to me to hear them. The truth is, I hated to go and sit silent and mournful among the people in the house, that were merry and young, and had the best of their days before them. ’Twas late before I thought of returning home, and I did not leave the garden till some time after sunset. The moon was up; but though there wasn’t a cloud to be seen, and though a star was winking here and there in the sky, the day wasn’t long enough gone to have it clear moonlight; still it shone enough to make every thing on one side of the heavens look pale and silvery-like; and the thin white mist was just beginning to creep along the fields. On the other side, near where the sun was set, there was more of daylight, and the sky looked angry, red, and fiery through the trees, like as if it was lighted up by a great town burning below. Every thing was as silent as a churchyard, only now and then one could hear far off a dog barking, or a cow lowing after being milked. There wasn’t a creature to be seen on the road or in the fields. I wondered at this first, but then I remembered it was May-eve, and that many a thing, both good and bad, would be wandering about that night, and that I ought to shun danger as well as others. So I walked on as quick as I could, and soon came to the end of the demesne wall, where the trees rise high and thick at each side of the road, and almost meet at the top. My heart misgave me when I got under the shade. There was so much light let down from the opening above, that I could see about a stone-throw before me. All of a sudden I heard a rustling among the branches, on the right side of the road, and saw something like a small black goat, only with long wide horns turned out instead of being bent backwards, standing upon its hind legs upon the top of the wall, and looking down on me. My breath was stopped, and I couldn’t move for near a minute. I couldn’t help, somehow, keeping my eyes fixed on it; and it never stirred, but kept looking in the same fixed way down at me. At last I made a rush, and went on; but I didn’t go ten steps, when I saw the very same sight, on the wall to the left of me, standing in exactly the same manner, but three or four times as high, and almost as tall as the tallest man. The horns looked frightful; it gazed upon me as before; my legs shook, and my teeth chattered, and I thought I would drop down dead every moment. At last I felt as if I was obliged to go on — and on I went; but it was without feeling how I moved, or whether my legs carried me. Just as I passed the spot where this frightful thing was standing, I heard a noise as if something sprung from the wall, and felt like as if a heavy animal plumped down upon me, and held with the fore feet clinging to my shoulder, and the hind ones fixed in my gown, that was folded and pinned up behind me. 'Tis the wonder of my life ever since how I bore the shock; but so it was, I neither fell, nor even staggered with the weight, but walked on as if I had the strength of ten men, though I felt as if I couldn't help moving, and couldn't stand still if I wished it. Though I gasped with fear, I knew as well as I do now what I was doing. I tried to cry out, but couldn't; I tried to run, but wasn't able; I tried to look back, but my head and neck were as if they were screwed in a vice. I could barely roll my eyes on each side, and then I could see, as clearly and plainly as if it was in the broad light of the blessed sun, a black and cloven foot planted upon each of my shoulders. I heard a low breathing in my ear; I felt at every step I took, my leg strike back against the feet of the creature that was on my back. Still I could do nothing but walk straight on. At last I came within sight of the house, and a welcome sight it was to me, for I thought I would be released when I reached it. I soon came close to the door, but it was shut; I looked at the little window, but it was shut too, for they were more cautious about May-eve than I was; I saw the light inside, through the chinks of the door; I heard 'em talking and laughing within; I felt myself at three yards' distance from them that would die to save me; — and may the Lord save me from ever again feeling what I did that night, when I found myself held by what couldn't be good nor friendly, but without the power to help myself, or to call my friends, or to put out my hand to knock, or even to lift my leg to strike the door, and let them know that I was outside it! 'Twas as if my hands grew to my sides, and my feet were glued to the ground, or had the weight of a rock fixed to them. At last I thought of blessing myself; and my right hand, that would do nothing else, did that for me. Still the weight remained on my back, and all was as before. I blessed myself again: 'twas still all the same. I then gave myself up for lost: but I blessed myself a third time, and my hand no sooner finished the sign, than all at once I felt the burden spring off of my back; the door flew open as if a clap of thunder burst it, and I was pitched forward on my forehead, in upon the middle of the floor. When I got up my back was crookened, and I never stood straight from that night to this blessed hour."

There was a pause when Peggy Barrett finished. Those who heard the story before had listened with a look of half-satisfied interest, blended, however, with an expression of that serious and solemn feeling, which always attends a tale of supernatural wonders, how often soever told. They moved upon their seats out of the posture in which they had remained fixed during the narrative, and sat in an attitude which denoted that their curiosity as to the cause of this strange occurrence had been long since allayed. Those to whom it was before unknown still retained their look and posture of strained attention, and anxious but solemn expectation. A grandson of Peggy's, about nine years old (not the child of the son with whom she lived,) had never before heard the story. As it grew in interest, he was observed to cling closer and closer to the old woman's side; and at the close he was gazing steadfastly at her, with his body bent back across her knees, and his face turned up to hers, with a look, through which a disposition to weep seemed contending with curiosity. After a moment's pause, he could no longer restrain his impatience, and catching her gray locks in one hand, while a tear of dread and wonder was just dropping from his eye-lash, he cried, "Granny, what was it?"

The old woman smiled first at the elder part of her audience, and then at her grandson, and patting him on the forehead, she said, "It was the Phooka."

The *Pouke* or *Phooka*, as the word is pronounced, means, in plain terms, the Evil One. "Playing the puck," a common Anglo-Irish phrase, is equivalent to "playing the devil." Much learning has been displayed in tracing this word through various languages, vide Quarterly Review [vol. xxii. &c.] The commentators on Shakspeare derive the beautiful and frolicksome Puck of the Midsummer Night's Dream from the mischievous Pouke. — Vide Drayton's Nymphidia.

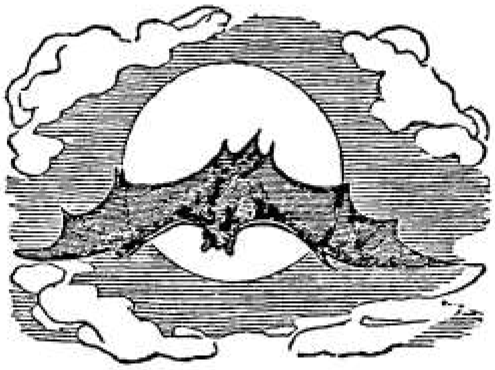
"This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,
Still walking like a ragged colt," &c.

In Golding's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses (1587) we find,

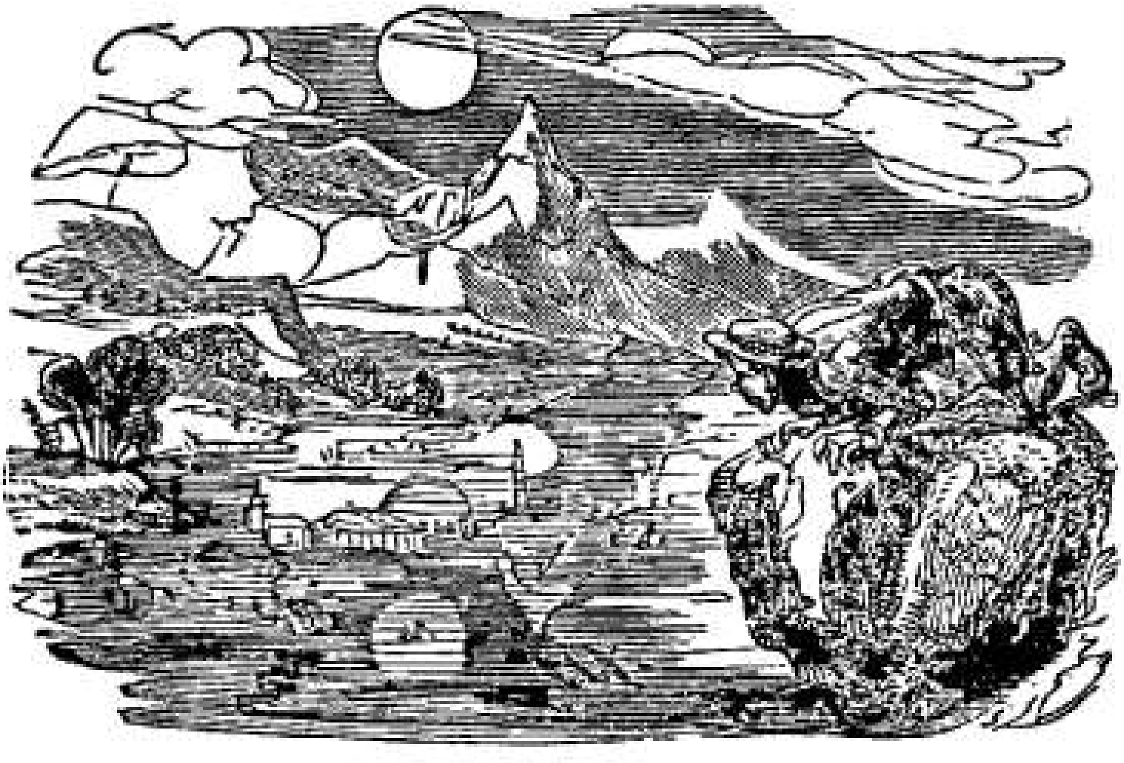
" —— and the countrie where Chgmæra, that same *Pooke*,
Hath goatish bodie," &c.

The Irish Phooka, in its nature, perfectly resembles the *Mahr*; and we have only to observe, that there is a particular German tradition of a spirit, which sits among reeds and alder bushes; and which, like the Phooka, leaps upon the back of those who pass by in the night, and does not leave them till they faint and fall to the earth.

The Brothers Grimm.



THIERNA NA OGE.



“On Lough-Neagh’s bank, as the fisherman strays,
When the clear cold eve’s declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining.”

Moore.

FIOR USGA.

XVII.

A little way beyond the Gallows Green of Cork, and just outside the town, there is a great lough of water, where people in the winter go and skate for the sake of diversion; but the sport above the water is nothing to what is under it, for at the very bottom of this lough there are buildings and gardens, far more beautiful than any now to be seen, and how they came there was in this manner.

Long before Saxon foot pressed Irish ground, there was a great king called Core, whose palace stood where the lough now is, in a round green valley, that was just a mile about. In the middle of the court-yard was a spring of fair water, so pure, and so clear, that it was the wonder of all the world. Much did the king rejoice at having so great a curiosity within his palace; but as people came in crowds from far and near to draw the precious water of this spring, he was sorely afraid that in time it might become dry; so he caused a high wall to be built up round it, and would allow nobody to have the water, which was a very great loss to the poor people living about the palace. Whenever he wanted any for himself, he would send his daughter to get it, not liking to trust his servants with the key of the well-door, fearing that they might give some away.

One night the king gave a grand entertainment, and there were many great princes present, and lords and nobles without end; and there were wonderful doings throughout the palace: there were bonfires, whose blaze reached up to the very sky; and dancing was there, to such sweet music, that it ought to have waked up the dead out of their graves; and feasting was there in the greatest of plenty for all who came; nor was any one turned away from the palace gates — but “you’re welcome — you’re welcome, heartily,” was the porter’s salute for all.

Now it happened at this grand entertainment there was one young prince above all the rest mighty comely to behold, and as tall and as straight as ever eye would wish to look on. Right merrily did he dance that night with the old king’s daughter, wheeling here, and wheeling there, as light as a feather, and footing it away to the admiration of every one. The musicians played the better for seeing their dancing; and they danced as if their lives depended upon it. After all this dancing came the supper; and the young prince was seated at table by the side of his beautiful partner, who smiled upon him as often as he spoke to her; and that was by no means so often as he wished, for he had constantly to turn to the company and thank them for the many compliments passed upon his fair partner and himself.

In the midst of this banquet, one of the great lords said to King Core, “May it please your majesty, here is every thing in abundance that heart can wish for, both to eat and drink, except water.”

"Water!" said the king, mightily pleased at some one calling for that of which purposely there was a want: "water shall you have, my lord, speedily, and that of such a delicious kind, that I challenge all the world to equal it. Daughter," said he, "go fetch some in the golden vessel which I caused to be made for the purpose."

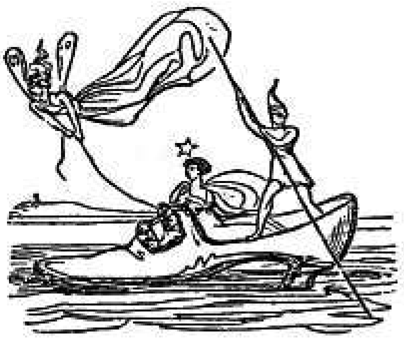
The king's daughter, who was called Fior Usga, (which signifies, in English, Spring Water,) did not much like to be told to perform so menial a service before so many people, and though she did not venture to refuse the commands of her father, yet hesitated to obey him, and looked down upon the ground. The king, who loved his daughter very much, seeing this, was sorry for what he had desired her to do, but having said the word, he was never known to recall it; he therefore thought of a way to make his daughter go speedily and fetch the water, and it was by proposing that the young prince her partner should go along with her. Accordingly, with a loud voice, he said, "Daughter, I wonder not at your fearing to go alone so late at night; but I doubt not the young prince at your side will go with you." The prince was not displeased at hearing this; and taking the golden vessel in one hand, with the other led the king's daughter out of the hall so gracefully that all present gazed after them with delight.

When they came to the spring of water, in the court-yard of the palace, the fair Usga unlocked the door with the greatest care, and stooping down with the golden vessel to take some of the water out of the well, found the vessel so heavy that she lost her balance and fell in. The young prince tried in vain to save her, for the water rose and rose so fast, that the entire court-yard was speedily covered with it, and he hastened back almost in a state of distraction to the king.

The door of the well being left open, the water, which had been so long confined, rejoiced at obtaining its liberty, rushed forth incessantly, every moment rising higher and higher, and was in the hall of the entertainment sooner than the young prince himself, so that when he attempted to speak to the king he was up to his neck in water. At length the water rose to such a height, that it filled the entire of the green valley in which the king's palace stood, and so the present lough of Cork was formed.

Yet the king and his guests were not drowned, as would now happen, if such an awful inundation were to take place; neither was his daughter, the fair Usga, who returned to the banquet-hall the very next night after this dreadful event; and every night since the same entertainment and dancing goes on in the palace at the bottom of the lough, and will last until some one has the luck to bring up out of it the golden vessel which was the cause of all this mischief.

Nobody can doubt that it was a judgment upon the king for his shutting up the well in the court-yard from the poor people: and if there are any who do not credit my story, they may go and see the lough of Cork, for there it is to be seen to this day; the road to Kinsale passes at one side of it; and when its waters are low and clear, the tops of towers and stately buildings may be plainly viewed in the bottom by those who have good eyesight, without the help of spectacles.



CORMAC AND MARY.

XVIII.

“She is not dead — she has no grave —
She lives beneath Lough Corrib’s water;
And in the murmur of each wave
Methinks I catch the songs I taught her.”

Thus many an evening on the shore
Sat Cormac raving wild and lowly;
Still idly muttering o’er and o’er,
“She lives, detain’d by spells unholy.

“Death claims her not, too fair for earth,
Her spirit lives — alien of heaven;
Nor will it know a second birth
When sinful mortals are forgiven!

“Cold is this rock — the wind comes chill,
And mists the gloomy waters cover;
But oh! her soul is colder still —
To lose her God — to leave her lover!”

The lake was in profound repose,
Yet one white wave came gently curling,
And as it reach’d the shore, arose
Dim figures — banners gay unfurling.

Onward they move, an airy crowd:
Through each thin form a moonlight ray shone;
While spear and helm, in pageant proud,
Appear in liquid undulation.

Bright barbed steeds curvetting tread
Their trackless way with antic capers;
And curtain clouds hang overhead,
Festoon’d by rainbow-colour’d vapours.

And when a breath of air would stir
That drapery of Heaven’s own wreathing,
Light wings of prismy gossamer
Just moved and sparkled to the breathing.

Nor wanting was the choral song,
Swelling in silvery chimes of sweetness;

To sound of which this subtile throng
Advanced in playful grace and fleetness.

With music's strain, all came and went
Upon poor Cormac's doubting vision;
Now rising in wild merriment,
Now softly fading in derision.

"Christ save her soul," he boldly cried;
And when that blessed name was spoken,
Fierce yells and fiendish shrieks replied,
And vanished all, — the spell was broken.

And now on Corrib's lonely shore,
Freed by his word from power of faëry,
To life, to love, restored once more,
Young Cormac welcomes back his Mary.

THE LEGEND OF LOUGH GUR.

XIX.

Larry Cotter had a farm on one side of Lough Gur, and was thriving in it, for he was an industrious proper sort of man, who would have lived quietly and soberly to the end of his days, but for the misfortune that came upon him, and you shall hear how that was. He had as nice a bit of meadow-land, down by the water-side, as ever a man would wish for; but its growth was spoiled entirely on him, and no one could tell how.

One year after the other it was all ruined just in the same way: the bounds were well made up, and not a stone of them was disturbed; neither could his neighbours' cattle have been guilty of the trespass, for they were spancelled; but however it was done, the grass of the meadow was destroyed, which was a great loss to Larry.

"What in the wide world will I do?" said Larry Cotter to his neighbour, Tom Welsh, who was a very decent sort of man himself: "that bit of meadow-land, which I am paying the great rent for, is doing nothing at all to make it for me; and the times are bitter bad, without the help of that to make them worse."

"'Tis true for you, Larry," replied Welsh: "the times are bitter bad — no doubt of that; but may be if you were to watch by night, you might make out all about it: sure there's Mick and Terry, my two boys, will watch with you; for 'tis a thousand pities any honest man like you should be ruined in such a scheming way."

Accordingly, the following night, Larry Cotter, with Welsh's two sons, took their station in a corner of the meadow. It was just at the full of the moon, which was shining beautifully down upon the lake, that was as calm all over as the sky itself; not a cloud was there to be seen any where, nor a sound to be heard, but the cry of the corncreaks answering one another across the water.

"Boys! boys!" said Larry, "look there! look there! but for your lives don't make a bit of noise, nor stir a step till I say the word."

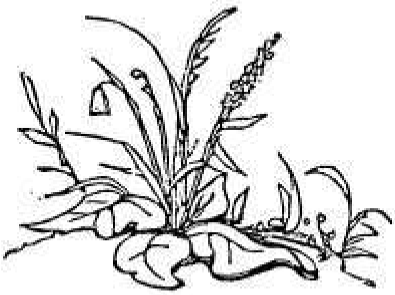
They looked, and saw a great fat cow, followed by seven milk-white heifers, moving on the smooth surface of the lake towards the meadow.

"'Tis not Tim Dwyer the piper's cow, any way, that danced all the flesh off her bones," whispered Mick to his brother.

"Now boys!" said Larry Cotter, when he saw the fine cow and her seven white heifers fairly in the meadow, "get between them and the lake if you can, and, no matter who they belong to, we'll just put them into the pound."

But the cow must have overheard Larry speaking, for down she went in a great hurry to the shore of the lake, and into it with her, before all their eyes: away made the seven heifers after her, but the boys got down to the bank before them, and work enough they had to drive them up from the lake to Larry Cotter.

Larry drove the seven heifers, and beautiful beasts they were, to the pound: but after he had them there for three days, and could hear of no owner, he took them out, and put them up in a field of his own. There he kept them, and they were thriving mighty well with him, until one night the gate of the field was left open, and in the morning the seven heifers were gone. Larry could not get any account of them after; and, beyond all doubt, it was back into the lake they went. Wherever they came from, or to whatever world they belonged, Larry Cotter never had a crop of grass off the meadow through their means. So he took to drink, fairly out of the grief; and it was the drink that killed him, they say.



THE ENCHANTED LAKE.

XX.

In the west of Ireland there was a lake, and no doubt it is there still, in which many young men had been at various times drowned. What made the circumstance remarkable was, that the bodies of the drowned persons were never found. People naturally wondered at this: and at length the lake came to have a bad repute. Many dreadful stories were told about that lake; some would affirm, that on a dark night its waters appeared like fire — others would speak of horrid forms which were seen to glide over it; and every one agreed that a strange sulphureous smell issued from out of it.

There lived, not far distant from this lake a young farmer, named Roderick Keating, who was about to be married to one of the prettiest girls in that part of the country. On his return from Limerick, where he had been to purchase the wedding-ring, he came up with two or three of his acquaintance, who were standing on the shore, and they began to joke with him about Peggy Honan. One said that young Delaney, his rival, had in his absence contrived to win the affection of his mistress: — but Roderick's confidence in his intended bride was too great to be disturbed at this tale, and putting his hand in his pocket, he produced and held up with a significant look the wedding-ring. As he was turning it between his fore-finger and thumb, in token of triumph, somehow or other the ring fell from his hand, and rolled into the lake: Roderick looked after it with the greatest sorrow; it was not so much for its value, though it had cost him half-a-guinea, as for the ill-luck of the thing; and the water was so deep, that there was little chance of recovering it. His companions laughed at him, and he in vain endeavoured to tempt any of them by the offer of a handsome reward to dive after the ring: they were all as little inclined to venture as Roderick Keating himself; for the tales which they had heard when children were strongly impressed on their memories, and a superstitious dread filled the mind of each.

"Must I then go back to Limerick to buy another ring?" exclaimed the young farmer. "Will not ten times what the ring cost tempt any one of you to venture after it?"

There was within hearing a man who was considered to be a poor, crazy, half-witted fellow, but he was as harmless as a child, and used to go wandering up and down through the country from one place to another. When he heard of so great a reward, Paddeen, for that was his name, spoke out, and said, that if Roderick Keating would give him encouragement equal to what he had offered to others, he was ready to venture after the ring into the lake; and Paddeen, all the while he spoke, looked as covetous after the sport as the money.

"I'll take you at your word," said Keating. So Paddeen pulled off his coat, and without a single syllable more, down he plunged, head foremost, into the lake: what depth he went to, no one can tell exactly; but he was going, going, going down through the water, until the water parted from him, and he came upon the dry land; the sky, and the light, and every thing, was there just as it is here; and he saw fine pleasure-grounds, with an elegant avenue through them, and a grand house, with a power of steps going up to the door. When he had recovered from his wonder at finding the land so dry and comfortable under the water, he looked about him, and what should he see but all the young men that were drowned working away in the pleasure-grounds as if nothing had ever happened to them! Some of them were mowing down the grass, and more were settling out the gravel walks, and doing all manner of nice work, as neat and as clever as if they had never been drowned; and they were singing away with high glee: —

“She is fair as Cappoquin;
Have you courage her to win?
And her wealth it far outshines
Cullen’s bog and Silvermines.
She exceeds all heart can wish;
Not brawling like the Foherish,
But as the brightly flowing Lee,
Graceful, mild, and pure is she!”

Well, Paddeen could not but look at the young men, for he knew some of them before they were lost in the lake; but he said nothing, though he thought a great deal more for all that, like an oyster: — no, not the wind of a word passed his lips; so on he went towards the big house, bold enough, as if he had seen nothing to speak of; yet all the time mightily wishing to know who the young woman could be that the young men were singing the song about.

When he had nearly reached the door of the great house, out walks from the kitchen a powerful fat woman, moving along like a beer-barrel on two legs, with teeth as big as horses’ teeth, and up she made towards him.

“Good morrow, Paddeen,” said she.

“Good morrow, Ma’am,” said he.

“What brought you here?” said she.

“’Tis after Rory Keating’s gold ring,” said he, “I’m come.”

“Here it is for you,” said Paddeen’s fat friend, with a smile on her face that moved like boiling stirabout [gruel.]

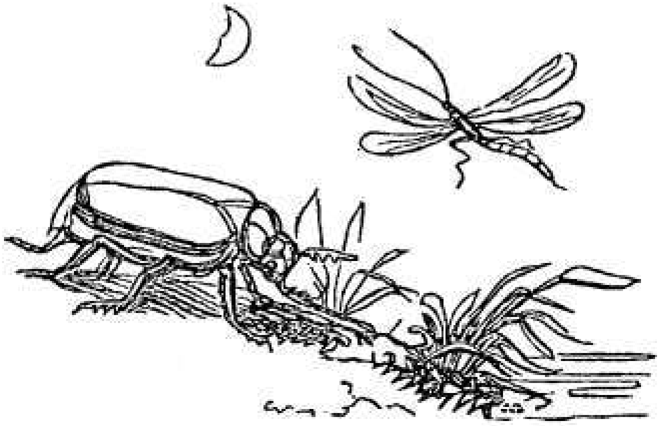
“Thank you, Ma’am,” replied Paddeen, taking it from her:— “I need not say the Lord increase you, for you’re fat enough already. Will you tell me, if you please, am I to go back the same way I came?”

“Then you did not come to marry me?” cried the corpulent woman in a desperate fury.

“Just wait till I come back again, my darling,” said Paddeen: “I’m to be paid for my message, and I must return with the answer, or else they’ll wonder what has become of me.”

"Never mind the money," said the fat woman: "if you marry me, you shall live for ever and a day in that house, and want for nothing."

Paddeen saw clearly that, having got possession of the ring, the fat woman had no power to detain him; so without minding any thing she said, he kept moving and moving down the avenue, quite quietly, and looking about him; for, to tell the truth, he had no particular inclination to marry a fat fairy. When he came to the gate, without ever saying good by, out he bolted, and he found the water coming all about him again. Up he plunged through it, and wonder enough there was, when Paddeen was seen swimming away at the opposite side of the lake; but he soon made the shore, and told Roderick Keating, and the other boys that were standing there looking out for him, all that had happened. Roderick paid him the five guineas for the ring on the spot; and Paddeen thought himself so rich with such a sum of money in his pocket, that he did not go back to marry the fat lady with the fine house at the bottom of the lake, knowing she had plenty of young men to choose a husband from, if she pleased to be married.



THE LEGEND OF O’DONOGHUE.

XXI.

In an age so distant that the precise period is unknown, a chieftain named O’Donoghue ruled over the country which surrounds the romantic Lough Lean, now called the lake of Killarney. Wisdom, beneficence, and justice, distinguished his reign, and the prosperity and happiness of his subjects were their natural results. He is said to have been as renowned for his warlike exploits as for his pacific virtues; and as a proof that his domestic administration was not the less rigorous because it was mild, a rocky island is pointed out to strangers, called “O’Donoghue’s Prison,” in which this prince once confined his own son for some act of disorder and disobedience.

His end — for it cannot correctly be called his death — was singular and mysterious. At one of those splendid feasts for which his court was celebrated, surrounded by the most distinguished of his subjects, he was engaged in a prophetic relation of the events which were to happen in ages yet to come. His auditors listened, now wrapt in wonder, now fired with indignation, burning with shame, or melted into sorrow, as he faithfully detailed the heroism, the injuries, the crimes, and the miseries of their descendants. In the midst of his predictions he rose slowly from his seat, advanced with a solemn, measured, and majestic tread to the shore of the lake, and walked forward composedly upon its unyielding surface. When he had nearly reached the centre, he paused for a moment, then turning slowly round, looked towards his friends, and waving his arms to them with the cheerful air of one taking a short farewell, disappeared from their view.

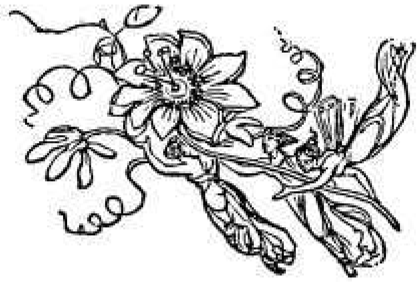
The memory of the good O’Donoghue has been cherished by successive generations with affectionate reverence: and it is believed that at sunrise, on every May-dew morning, the anniversary of his departure, he revisits his ancient domains: a favoured few only are in general permitted to see him, and this distinction is always an omen of good fortune to the beholders: when it is granted to many, it is a sure token of an abundant harvest, — a blessing, the want of which during this prince’s reign was never felt by his people.

Some years have elapsed since the last appearance of O’Donoghue. The April of that year had been remarkably wild and stormy; but on May-morning the fury of the elements had altogether subsided. The air was hushed and still; and the sky, which was reflected in the serene lake, resembled a beautiful but deceitful countenance, whose smiles, after the most tempestuous emotions, tempt the stranger to believe that it belongs to a soul which no passion has ever ruffled.

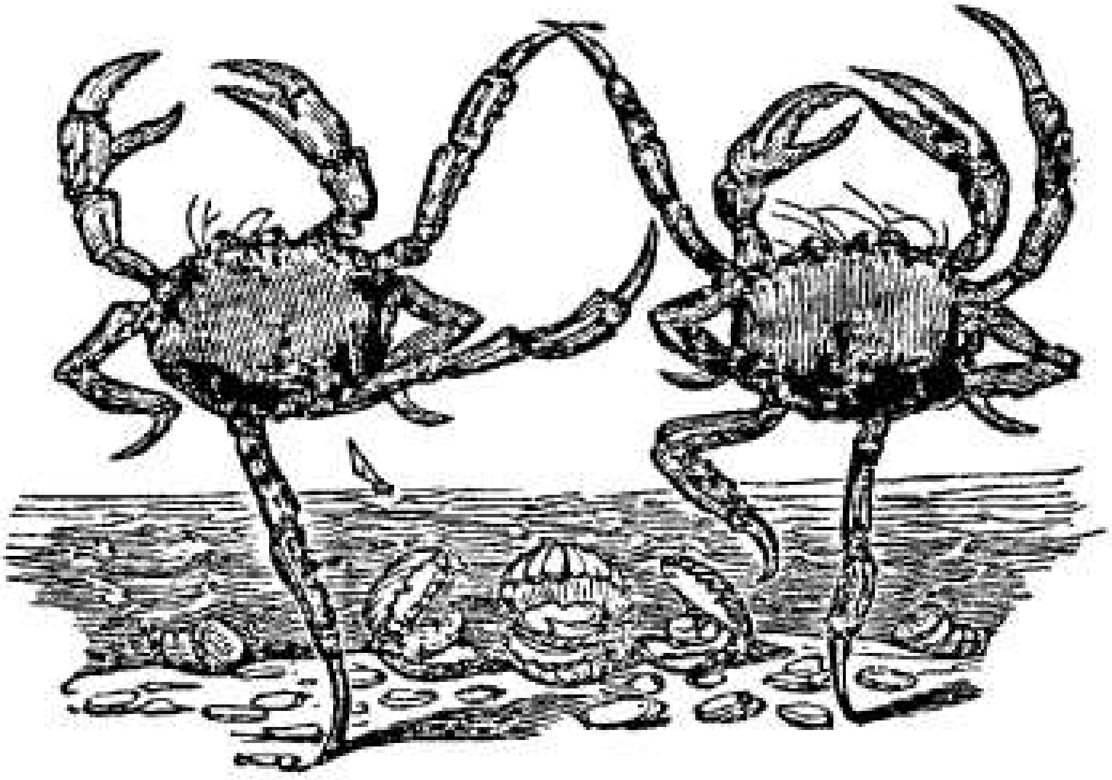
The first beams of the rising sun were just gilding the lofty summit of Glenaa, when the waters near the eastern shores of the lake became suddenly and violently agitated, though all the rest of its surface lay smooth and still as a tomb of polished marble; the next moment a foaming wave darted forward, and, like a proud high-crested war-horse, exulting in his strength, rushed across the lake towards Toomies mountain. Behind this wave appeared a stately warrior fully armed, mounted upon a milk-white steed; his snowy plume waved gracefully from a helmet of polished steel, and at his back fluttered a light blue scarf. The horse, apparently exulting in his noble burden, sprang after the wave along the water, which bore him up like firm earth, while showers of spray that glittered brightly in the morning sun were dashed up at every bound.

The warrior was O'Donoghue; he was followed by numberless youths and maidens who moved lightly and unconstrained over the watery plain, as the moonlight fairies glide through the fields of air: they were linked together by garlands of delicious spring flowers, and they timed their movements to strains of enchanting melody. When O'Donoghue had nearly reached the western side of the lake, he suddenly turned his steed, and directed his course along the wood-fringed shore of Glenaa, preceded by the huge wave that curled and foamed up as high as the horse's neck, whose fiery nostrils snorted above it. The long train of attendants followed with playful deviations the track of their leader, and moved on with unabated fleetness to their celestial music, till gradually, as they entered the narrow strait between Glenaa and Dinis, they became involved in the mists which still partially floated over the lakes, and faded from the view of the wondering beholders: but the sound of their music still fell upon the ear, and echo, catching up the harmonious strains, fondly repeated and prolonged them in soft and softer tones, till the last faint repetition died away, and the hearers awoke as from a dream of bliss.

Thierna na Oge, or the Country of Youth, is the name given to the foregoing section, from the belief that those who dwell in regions of enchantment beneath the water are not affected by the movements of time.



LEGENDS OF THE MERROW.



— — "The mysterious depths
And wild and wondrous forms of ocean old."

Mattima's *Conchologist*.

THE LADY OF GOLLERUS.

XXII.

On the shore of Smerwick harbour, one fine summer's morning, just at day-break, stood Dick Fitzgerald "shoghing the dudeen," which may be translated, smoking his pipe. The sun was gradually rising behind the lofty Brandon, the dark sea was getting green in the light, and the mists, clearing away out of the valleys, went rolling and curling like the smoke from the corner of Dick's mouth.

"'Tis just the pattern of a pretty morning," said Dick, taking the pipe from between his lips, and looking towards the distant ocean, which lay as still and tranquil as a tomb of polished marble. "Well, to be sure," continued he, after a pause, "'tis mighty lonesome to be talking to one's self by way of company, and not to have another soul to answer one — nothing but the child of one's own voice, the echo! I know this, that if I had the luck, or may be the misfortune," said Dick with a melancholy smile, "to have the woman, it would not be this way with me! — and what in the wide world is a man without a wife? He's no more surely than a bottle without a drop of drink in it, or dancing without music, or the left leg of a scissors, or a fishing line without a hook, or any other matter that is no ways complete — Is it not so?" said Dick Fitzgerald, casting his eyes towards a rock upon the strand, which though it could not speak, stood up as firm and looked as bold as ever Kerry witness did.

But what was his astonishment at beholding, just at the foot of that rock a beautiful young creature combing her hair, which was of a sea-green colour; and now the salt water shining on it, appeared in the morning light, like melted butter upon cabbage.

Dick guessed at once that she was a Merrow, although he had never seen one before, for he spied the *cohuleen driuth*, or little enchanted cap, which the sea people use for diving down into the ocean, lying upon the strand, near her; and he had heard that if once he could possess himself of the cap, she would lose the power of going away into the water: so he seized it with all speed, and she, hearing the noise, turned her head about as natural as any Christian.

When the Merrow saw that her little diving-cap was gone, the salt tears — doubly salt, no doubt, from her — came trickling down her cheeks, and she began a low mournful cry with just the tender voice of a new-born infant. Dick, although he knew well enough what she was crying for, determined to keep the *cohuleen driuth*, let her cry never so much, to see what luck would come out of it. Yet he could not help pitying her, and when the dumb thing looked up in his face, and her cheeks all moist with tears, 'twas enough to make any one feel let alone Dick, who had ever and always, like most of his countrymen, a mighty tender heart of his own.

“Don’t cry, my darling,” said Dick Fitzgerald; but the Merrow, like any bold child, only cried the more for that.

Dick sat himself down by her side, and took hold of her hand, by way of comforting her. ’Twas in no particular an ugly hand, only there was a small web between the fingers, as there is in a duck’s foot; but ’twas as thin and as white as the skin between egg and shell.

“What’s your name, my darling?” says Dick, thinking to make her conversant with him; but he got no answer; and he was certain sure now, either that she could not speak, or did not understand him: he therefore squeezed her hand in his, as the only way he had of talking to her. It’s the universal language; and there’s not a woman in the world, be she fish or lady, that does not understand it.

The Merrow did not seem much displeased at this mode of conversation; and, making an end of her whining all at once— “Man,” says she, looking up in Dick Fitzgerald’s face, “Man, will you eat me?”

“By all the red petticoats and check aprons between Dingle and Tralee,” cried Dick, jumping up in amazement, “I’d as soon eat myself, my jewel! Is it I eat you, my pet? — Now ’twas some ugly ill-looking thief of a fish put that notion into your own pretty head, with the nice green hair down upon it, that is so cleanly combed out this morning!”

“Man,” said the Merrow, “what will you do with me, if you won’t eat me?”

Dick’s thoughts were running on a wife: he saw, at the first glimpse, that she was handsome; but since she spoke, and spoke too like any real woman, he was fairly in love with her. ’Twas the neat way she called him man, that settled the matter entirely.

“Fish,” says Dick, trying to speak to her after her own short fashion; “fish,” says he, “here’s my word, fresh and fasting, for you this blessed morning, that I’ll make you mistress Fitzgerald before all the world, and that’s what I’ll do.”

“Never say the word twice,” says she; “I’m ready and willing to be yours, mister Fitzgerald; but stop, if you please, ‘till I twist up my hair.”

It was some time before she had settled it entirely to her liking; for she guessed, I suppose, that she was going among strangers, where she would be looked at. When that was done, the Merrow put the comb in her pocket, and then bent down her head and whispered some words to the water that was close to the foot of the rock.

Dick saw the murmur of the words upon the top of the sea, going out towards the wide ocean, just like a breath of wind rippling along, and says he in the greatest wonder; “Is it speaking you are, my darling, to the salt water?”

“It’s nothing else,” says she quite carelessly, “I’m just sending word home to my father, not to be waiting breakfast for me; just to keep him from being uneasy in his mind.”

“And who’s your father, my duck?” says Dick.

"What!" said the Merrow, "did you never hear of my father? he's the king of the waves, to be sure!"

"And yourself, then, is a real king's daughter?" said Dick, opening his two eyes to take a full and true survey of his wife that was to be.

"Oh, I'm nothing else but a made man with you, and a king your father; — to be sure he has all the money that's down in the bottom of the sea!"

"Money," repeated the Merrow, "what's money?"

"'Tis no bad thing to have when one wants it," replied Dick; "and may be now the fishes have the understanding to bring up whatever you bid them?"

"Oh! yes," said the Merrow, "they bring me what I want."

"To speak the truth, then," said Dick, "'tis a straw bed I have at home before you, and that, I'm thinking, is no ways fitting for a king's daughter: so, if 'twould not be displeasing to you, just to mention, a nice feather-bed, with a pair of new blankets — but what am I talking about? may be you have not such things as beds down under the water?"

"By all means," said she, "Mr. Fitzgerald — plenty of beds at your service. I've fourteen oyster-beds of my own, not to mention one just planting for the rearing of young ones."

"You have?" says Dick, scratching his head and looking a little puzzled. "'Tis a feather-bed I was speaking of — but clearly, yours is the very cut of a decent plan, to have bed and supper so handy to each other, that a person when they'd have the one, need never ask for the other."

However, bed or no bed, money or no money, Dick Fitzgerald determined to marry the Merrow, and the Merrow had given her consent. Away they went, therefore, across the strand, from Gollerus to Ballinrunnig, where Father Fitzgibbon happened to be that morning.

"There are two words to this bargain, Dick Fitzgerald," said his Reverence, looking mighty glum. "And is it a fishy woman you'd marry? — the Lord preserve us! — Send the scaly creature home to her own people, that's my advice to you, wherever she came from."

Dick had the *cohuleen driuth* in his hand, and was about to give it back to the Merrow, who looked covetously at it, but he thought for a moment, and then, says he —

"Please your Reverence she's a king's daughter."

"If she was the daughter of fifty kings," said Father Fitzgibbon, "I tell you, you can't marry her, she being a fish."

"Please your Reverence," said Dick again, in an under tone, "she is as mild and as beautiful as the moon."

"If she was as mild and as beautiful as the sun, moon, and stars, all put together, I tell you, Dick Fitzgerald," said the Priest stamping his right foot, "you can't marry her, she being a fish!"

"But she has all the gold that's down in the sea only for the asking, and I'm a made man if I marry her; and," said Dick, looking up slily, "I can make it worth any one's while to do the job."

"Oh! that alters the case entirely," replied the Priest; "why there's some reason now in what you say: why didn't you tell me this before? — marry her by all means if she was ten times a fish. Money, you know, is not to be refused in these bad times, and I may as well have the hansel of it as another, that may be would not take half the pains in counselling you as I have done.”

So Father Fitzgibbon married Dick Fitzgerald to the Merrow, and like any loving couple, they returned to Gollerus well pleased with each other. Every thing prospered with Dick — he was at the sunny side of the world; the Merrow made the best of wives, and they lived together in the greatest contentment.

It was wonderful to see, considering where she had been brought up, how she would busy herself about the house, and how well she nursed the children; for, at the end of three years, there were as many young Fitzgeralds — two boys and a girl.

In short, Dick was a happy man, and so he might have continued to the end of his days, if he had only the sense to take proper care of what he had got; many another man, however, beside Dick, has not had wit enough to do that.

One day when Dick was obliged to go to Tralee, he left his wife, minding the children at home after him, and thinking she had plenty to do without disturbing his fishing tackle.

Dick was no sooner gone than Mrs. Fitzgerald set about cleaning up the house, and chancing to pull down a fishingnet, what should she find behind it in a hole in the wall but her own *cohuleen driuth*.

She took it out and looked at it, and then she thought of her father the king, and her mother the queen, and her brothers and sisters, and she felt a longing to go back to them.

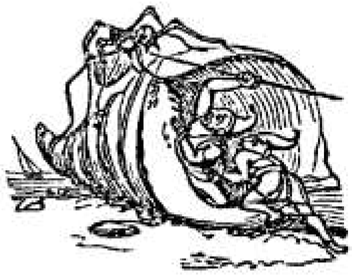
She sat down on a little stool and thought over the happy days she had spent under the sea; then she looked at her children, and thought on the love and affection of poor Dick, and how it would break his heart to lose her. “But,” says she, “he won’t lose me entirely, for I’ll come back to him again; and who can blame me for going to see my father and my mother, after being so long away from them.”

She got up and went towards the door, but came back again to look once more at the child that was sleeping in the cradle. She kissed it gently, and as she kissed it, a tear trembled for an instant in her eye and then fell on its rosy cheek. She wiped away the tear, and turning to the eldest little girl, told her to take good care of her brothers, and to be a good child herself, until she came back. The Merrow then went down to the strand. — The sea was lying calm and smooth, just heaving and glittering in the sun, and she thought she heard a faint sweet singing, inviting her to come down. All her old ideas and feelings came flooding over her mind, Dick and her children were at the instant forgotten, and placing the *cohuleen driuth* on her head, she plunged in.

Dick came home in the evening, and missing his wife, he asked Kathelin, his little girl, what had become of her mother, but she could not tell him. He then inquired of the neighbours, and he learned that she was seen going towards the strand with a strange looking thing like a cocked hat in her hand. He returned to his cabin to search for the *cohuleen driuth*. It was gone and the truth now flashed upon him.

Year after year did Dick Fitzgerald wait, expecting the return of his wife, but he never saw her more. Dick never married again, always thinking that the Merrow would sooner or later return to him, and nothing could ever persuade him but that her father the king kept her below by main force; "For," says Dick, "she surely would not of herself give up her husband and her children."

While she was with him, she was so good a wife in every respect, that to this day she is spoken of in the tradition of the country as the pattern for one, under the name of the Lady of Gollerus.



FLORY CANTILLON'S FUNERAL.

XXIII.

The ancient burial-place of the Cantillon family was on an island in Ballyheigh Bay. This island was situated at no great distance from the shore, and at a remote period was overflowed in one of the encroachments which the Atlantic has made on that part of the coast of Kerry. The fishermen declare they have often seen the ruined walls of an old chapel beneath them in the water, as they sailed over the clear green sea, of a sunny afternoon. However this may be, it is well known that the Cantillons were, like most other Irish families, strongly attached to their ancient burial place; and this attachment led to the custom, when any of the family died, of carrying the corpse to the seaside, where the coffin was left on the shore within reach of the tide. In the morning it had disappeared, being, as was traditionally believed, conveyed away by the ancestors of the deceased to their family tomb.

Connor Crowe, a county Clare man, was related to the Cantillons by marriage. "Connor Mac in Cruagh, of the seven quarters of Breintragh," as he was commonly called, and a proud man he was of the name. Connor, be it known, would drink a quart of salt water, for its medicinal virtues, before breakfast; and for the same reason, I suppose, double that quantity of raw whisky between breakfast and night, which last he did with as little inconvenience to himself as any man in the barony of Moyferta; and were I to add Clanderalaw and Ibrickan, I don't think I should say wrong.

On the death of Florence Cantillon, Connor Crowe was determined to satisfy himself about the truth of this story of the old church under the sea: so when he heard the news of the old fellow's death, away with him to Ardfert, where Flory was laid out in high style, and a beautiful corpse he made.

Flory had been as jolly and as rollocking a boy in his day as ever was stretched, and his wake was in every respect worthy of him. There was all kind of entertainment and all sort of diversion at it, and no less than three girls got husbands there — more luck to them. Every thing was as it should be: all that side of the country, from Dingle to Tarbet, was at the funeral. The Keen was sung long and bitterly; and, according to the family custom, the coffin was carried to Ballyheigh strand, where it was laid upon the shore with a prayer for the repose of the dead.

The mourners departed, one group after another, and at last Connor Crowe was left alone: he then pulled out his whisky bottle, his drop of comfort as he called it, which he required, being in grief; and down he sat upon a big stone that was sheltered by a projecting rock, and partly concealed from view, to await with patience the appearance of the ghostly undertakers.

The evening came on mild and beautiful; he whistled an old air which he had heard in his childhood, hoping to keep idle fears out of his head; but the wild strain of that melody brought a thousand recollections with it, which only made the twilight appear more pensive.

“If ’twas near the gloomy tower of Dunmore, in my own sweet county, I was,” said Connor Crowe, with a sigh, “one might well believe that the prisoners, who were murdered long ago, there in the vaults under the castle, would be the hands to carry off the coffin out of envy, for never a one of them was buried decently, nor had as much as a coffin amongst them all. ’Tis often, sure enough, I have heard lamentations and great mourning coming from the vaults of Dunmore Castle; but,” continued he, after fondly pressing his lips to the mouth of his companion and silent comforter, the whisky bottle, “didn’t I know all the time well enough, ’twas the dismal sounding waves working through the cliffs and hollows of the rocks, and fretting themselves to foam. Oh then, Dunmore Castle, it is you that are the gloomy-looking tower on a gloomy day, with the gloomy hills behind you; when one has gloomy thoughts on their heart, and sees you like a ghost rising out of the smoke made by the kelp-burners on the strand, there is, the Lord save us! as fearful a look about you as about the Blue Man’s Lake at midnight. Well then, any how,” said Connor, after a pause, “is it not a blessed night, though surely the moon looks mighty pale in the face? St. Senan himself between us and all kinds of harm!”

It was, in truth a lovely moonlight night; nothing was to be seen around but the dark rocks, and the white pebbly beach, upon which the sea broke with a hoarse and melancholy murmur. Connor, notwithstanding his frequent draughts, felt rather queerish, and almost began to repent his curiosity. It was certainly a solemn sight to behold the black coffin resting upon the white strand. His imagination gradually converted the deep moaning of old ocean into a mournful wail for the dead, and from the shadowy recesses of the rocks he imaged forth strange and visionary forms.

As the night advanced, Connor became weary of watching; he caught himself more than once in the fact of nodding, when suddenly giving his head a shake, he would look towards the black coffin. But the narrow house of death remained unmoved before him.

It was long past midnight, and the moon was sinking into the sea, when he heard the sound of many voices, which gradually became stronger, above the heavy and monotonous roll of the sea: he listened, and presently could distinguish a Keen, of exquisite sweetness, the notes of which rose and fell with the heaving of the waves, whose deep murmur mingled with and supported the strain!

The Keen grew louder and louder, and seemed to approach the beach, and then fell into a low plaintive wail. As it ended, Connor beheld a number of strange, and in the dim light, mysterious-looking figures, emerge from the sea, and surround the coffin, which they prepared to launch into the water.

“This comes of marrying with the creatures of earth,” said one of the figures, in a clear, yet hollow tone.

"True," replied another, with a voice still more fearful, "our king would never have commanded his gnawing white-toothed waves to devour the rocky roots of the island cemetery, had not his daughter, Durfulla, been buried there by her mortal husband!"

"But the time will come," said a third, bending over the coffin,

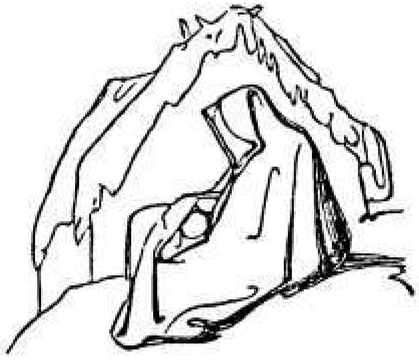
"When mortal eye — our work shall spy,
And mortal ear — our dirge shall hear."

"Then," said a fourth, "our burial of the Cantillons is at an end for ever!"

As this was spoken the coffin was borne from the beach by a retiring wave, and the company of sea people prepared to follow it; but at the moment one chanced to discover Connor Crowe, as fixed with wonder and as motionless with fear as the stone on which he sat.

"The time is come," cried the unearthly being, "the time is come: a human eye looks on the forms of ocean, a human ear has heard their voices; farewell to the Cantillons; the sons of the sea are no longer doomed to bury the dust of the earth!"

One after the other turned slowly round, and regarded Connor Crowe, who still remained as if bound by a spell. Again arose their funeral song; and on the next wave they followed the coffin. The sound of the lamentation died away, and at length nothing was heard but the rush of waters. The coffin and the train of sea people sank over the old church-yard, and never, since the funeral of old Flory Cantillon, have any of the family been carried to the strand of Ballyheigh, for conveyance to their rightful burial-place, beneath the waves of the Atlantic.



THE LORD OF DUNKERRON.

XXIV.

The lord of Dunkerron — O’Sullivan More,
Why seeks he at midnight the sea-beaten shore?
His bark lies in haven his hounds are asleep;
No foes are abroad on the land or the deep.

Yet nightly the lord of Dunkerron is known
On the wild shore to watch and to wander alone;
For a beautiful spirit of ocean, ’tis said,
The lord of Dunkerron would win to his bed.

When, by moonlight, the waters were hush’d to repose,
That beautiful spirit of ocean arose;
Her hair, full of lustre, just floated and fell
O’er her bosom, that heaved with a billowy swell.

Long, long had he loved her — long vainly essay’d
To lure from her dwelling the coy ocean maid;
And long had he wander’d and watch’d by the tide,
To claim the fair spirit O’Sullivan’s bride!

The maiden she gazed on the creature of earth,
Whose voice in her breast to a feeling gave birth;
Then smiled; and, abashed as a maiden might be,
Looking down, gently sank to her home in the sea.

Though gentle that smile, as the moonlight above,
O’Sullivan felt ’twas the dawning of love,
And hope came on hope, spreading over his mind,
Like the eddy of circles her wake left behind.

The lord of Dunkerron he plunged in the waves,
And sought through the fierce rush of waters, their caves;
The gloom of whose depth studded over with spars,
Had the glitter of midnight when lit up by stars.

Who can tell or can fancy the treasures that sleep,
Entombed in the wonderful womb of the deep?
The pearls and the gems, as if valueless, thrown
To lie ‘mid the sea-wrack concealed and unknown.

Down, down went the maid, — still the chieftain pursued;
Who flies must be followed ere she can be wooed.

Untempted by treasures, unawed by alarms,
The maiden at length he has clasped in his arms!

They rose from the deep by a smooth-spreading strand,
Whence beauty and verdure stretch’d over the land.
’Twas an isle of enchantment! and lightly the breeze,
With a musical murmur, just crept through the trees.

The haze-woven shroud of that newly born isle,
Softly faded away, from a magical pile,
A palace of crystal, whose bright-beaming sheen
Had the tints of the rainbow — red, yellow, and green.

And grottoes, fantastic in hue and in form,
Were there, as flung up — the wild sport of the storm;
Yet all was so cloudless, so lovely, and calm,
It seemed but a region of sunshine and balm.

“Here, here shall we dwell in a dream of delight,
Where the glories of earth and of ocean unite!
Yet, loved son of earth! I must from thee away;
There are laws which e’en spirits are bound to obey!

“Once more must I visit the chief of my race,
His sanction to gain ere I meet thy embrace.
In a moment I dive to the chambers beneath:
One cause can detain me — one only— ’tis death!”

They parted in sorrow, with vows true and fond;
The language of promise had nothing beyond.
His soul all on fire, with anxiety burns:
The moment is gone — but no maiden returns.

What sounds from the deep meet his terrified ear —
What accents of rage and of grief does he hear?
What sees he? what change has come over the flood —
What tinges its green with a jetty of blood?

Can he doubt what the gush of warm blood would explain?
That she sought the consent of her monarch in vain!
For see all around him, in white foam and froth,
The waves of the ocean boil up in their wroth!

The palace of crystal has melted in air,
And the dyes of the rainbow no longer are there;
The grottoes with vapour and clouds are o’ercast,
The sunshine is darkness — the vision has past!

Loud, loud was the call of his serfs for their chief;
They sought him with accents of wailing and grief:
He heard, and he struggled — a wave to the shore,
Exhausted and faint, bears O’Sullivan More!

THE WONDERFUL TUNE.

XXV.

Maurice Connor was the king, and that’s no small word, of all the pipers in Munster. He could play jig and planxty without end, and Ollistrum’s March, and the Eagle’s Whistle, and the Hen’s Concert, and odd tunes of every sort and kind. But he knew one, far more surprising than the rest, which had in it the power to set every thing dead or alive dancing.

In what way he learned it is beyond my knowledge, for he was mighty cautious about telling how he came by so wonderful a tune. At the very first note of that tune, the brogues began shaking upon the feet of all who heard it — old or young it mattered not — just as if their brogues had the ague; then the feet began going — going — going from under them, and at last up and away with them, dancing like mad! — whisking here, there, and every where, like a straw in a storm — there was no halting while the music lasted!

Not a fair, nor a wedding, nor a patron in the seven parishes round, was counted worth the speaking of without “blind Maurice and his pipes.” His mother, poor woman, used to lead him about from one place to another, just like a dog.

Down through Iveragh — a place that ought to be proud of itself, for ’tis Daniel O’Connell’s country — Maurice Connor and his mother were taking their rounds. Beyond all other places Iveragh is the place for stormy coast and steep mountains: as proper a spot it is as any in Ireland to get yourself drowned, or your neck broken on the land, should you prefer that. But, notwithstanding, in Ballinskellig bay there is a neat bit of ground, well fitted for diversion, and down from it towards the water, is a clean smooth piece of strand — the dead image of a calm summer’s sea on a moonlight night, with just the curl of the small waves upon it.

Here it was that Maurice’s music had brought from all parts a great gathering of the young men and the young women — *O the darlints!* — for ’twas not every day the strand of Trafraska was stirred up by the voice of a bagpipe. The dance began; and as pretty a rinkafadda it was as ever was danced. “Brave music,” said every body, “and well done,” when Maurice stopped.

“More power to your elbow, Maurice, and a fair wind in the bellows,” cried Paddy Dorman, a hump-backed dancing-master, who was there to keep order. “’Tis a pity,” said he, “if we’d let the piper run dry after such music; ’twould be a disgrace to Iveragh, that didn’t come on it since the week of the three Sundays.” So, as well became him, for he was always a decent man, says he: “Did you drink, piper?”

“I will, sir,” says Maurice, answering the question on the safe side, for you never yet knew piper or schoolmaster who refused his drink.

“What will you drink, Maurice?” says Paddy.

"I'm no ways particular," says Maurice; "I drink any thing, and give God thanks, barring *raw* water; but if 'tis all the same to you, mister Dorman, may be you wouldn't lend me the loan of a glass of whiskey."

"I've no glass, Maurice," said Paddy; "I've only the bottle."

"Let that be no hindrance," answered Maurice; "my mouth just holds a glass to the drop; often I've tried it, sure."

So Paddy Dorman trusted him with the bottle — more fool was he; and, to his cost, he found that though Maurice's mouth might not hold more than the glass at one time, yet, owing to the hole in his throat, it took many a filling.

"That was no bad whisky neither," says Maurice, handing back the empty bottle.

"By the holy frost, then!" says Paddy, "'tis but *cowld* comfort there's in that bottle now; and 'tis your word we must take for the strength of the whisky, for you've left us no sample to judge by:" and to be sure Maurice had not.

Now I need not tell any gentleman or lady with common understanding, that if he or she was to drink an honest bottle of whiskey at one pull, it is not at all the same thing as drinking a bottle of water; and in the whole course of my life, I never knew more than five men who could do so without being overtaken by the liquor. Of these Maurice Connor was not one, though he had a stiff head enough of his own — he was fairly tipsy. Don't think I blame him for it; 'tis often a good man's case; but true is the word that says, "when liquor's in, sense is out;" and puff, at a breath, before you could say "Lord save us!" out he blasted his wonderful tune.

'Twas really then beyond all belief or telling the dancing Maurice himself could not keep quiet; staggering now on one leg, now on the other, and rolling about like a ship in a cross sea, trying to humour the tune. There was his mother too, moving her old bones as light as the youngest girl of them all; but her dancing, no, nor the dancing of all the rest, is not worthy the speaking about to the work that was going on down on the strand. Every inch of it covered with all manner of fish jumping and plunging about to the music, and every moment more and more would tumble in out of the water, charmed by the wonderful tune. Crabs of monstrous size spun round and round on one claw with the nimbleness of a dancing-master, and twirled and tossed their other claws about like limbs that did not belong to them. It was a sight surprising to behold. But perhaps you may have heard of father Florence Conry, a Franciscan Friar, and a great Irish poet; *bolg an dana*, as they used to call him — a wallet of poems. If you have not he was as pleasant a man as one would wish to drink with of a hot summer's day; and he has rhymed out all about the dancing fishes so neatly, that it would be a thousand pities not to give you his verses; so here's my hand at an upset of them into English:

The big seals in motion,
Like waves of the ocean,

Or gouty feet prancing,
Came heading the gay fish,
Crabs, lobsters, and cray fish,
Determined on dancing.

The sweet sounds they follow’d,
The gasping cod swallow’d;
’Twas wonderful, really!
And turbot and flounder,
‘Mid fish that were rounder,
Just caper’d as gaily.

John-dories came tripping;
Dull hake, by their skipping
To frisk it seem’d given;
Bright mackerel went springing,
Like small rainbows winging
Their flight up to heaven.

The whiting and haddock
Left salt-water paddock,
This dance to be put in:
Where skate with flat faces
Edged out some odd plaices;
But soles kept their footing.

Sprats and herrings in powers
Of silvery showers
All number out-number’d;
And great ling so lengthy
Were there in such plenty,
The shore was encumber’d.

The scollop and oyster
Their two shells did roister,
Like castanets fitting;
While limpets moved clearly,
And rocks very nearly
With laughter were splitting.

Never was such an ullabulloo in this world, before or since; ’twas as if heaven and earth were coming together; and all out of Maurice Connor’s wonderful tune!

In the height of all these doings, what should there be dancing among the outlandish set of fishes but a beautiful young woman — as beautiful as the dawn of day! She had a cocked hat upon her head; from under it her long green hair — just the colour of the sea — fell down behind, without hinderance to her dancing. Her teeth were like rows of pearl; her lips for all the world looked like red coral; and she had an elegant gown, as white as the foam of the wave, with little rows of purple and red sea-weeds settled out upon it; for you never yet saw a lady, under the water or over the water, who had not a good notion of dressing herself out.

Up she danced at last to Maurice, who was flinging his feet from under him as fast as hops — for nothing in this world could keep still while that tune of his was going on — and says she to him, chaunting it out with a voice as sweet as honey —

"I'm a lady of honour
Who live in the sea;
Come down, Maurice Connor,
And be married to me.

"Silver plates and gold dishes
You shall have, and shall be
The king of the fishes,
When you're married to me."

Drink was strong in Maurice's head, and out he chaunted in return for her great civility. It is not every lady, may be, that would be after making such an offer to a blind piper; therefore 'twas only right in him to give her as good as she gave herself — so says Maurice,

"I'm obliged to you, madam:
Off a gold dish or plate,
If a king, and I had 'em,
I could dine in great state.

"With your own father's daughter
I'd be sure to agree;
But to drink the salt water
Wouldn't do so with me!"

The lady looked at him quite amazed, and swinging her head from side to side like a great scholar, "Well," says she, "Maurice, if you're not a poet, where is poetry to be found?"

In this way they kept on at it, framing high compliments; one answering the other, and their feet going with the music as fast as their tongues. All the fish kept dancing too: Maurice heard the clatter, and was afraid to stop playing lest it might be displeasing to the fish, and not knowing what so many of them may take it into their heads to do to him if they got vexed.

Well, the lady with the green hair kept on coaxing of Maurice with soft speeches, till at last she overpersuaded him to promise to marry her, and be king over the fishes, great and small. Maurice was well fitted to be their king, if they wanted one that could make them dance; and he surely would drink, barring the salt water, with any fish of them all.

When Maurice's mother saw him, with that unnatural thing in the form of a green-haired lady as his guide, and he and she dancing down together so lovingly to the water's edge through the thick of the fishes, she called out after him to stop and come back. "Oh then," says she, "as if I was not widow enough before, there he is going away from me to be married to that scaly woman. And who knows but 'tis grandmother I may be to a hake or a cod — Lord help and pity me, but 'tis a mighty unnatural thing! — and may be 'tis boiling and eating my own grandchild I'll be, with a bit of salt butter, and I not knowing it! — Oh Maurice, Maurice, if there's any love or nature left in you, come back to your own *ould* mother, who reared you like a decent Christian!"

Then the poor woman began to cry and ullagoane so finely that it would do any one good to hear her.

Maurice was not long getting to the rim of the water; there he kept playing and dancing on as if nothing was the matter, and a great thundering wave coming in towards him ready to swallow him up alive; but as he could not see it, he did not fear it. His mother it was who saw it plainly through the big tears that were rolling down her cheeks; and though she saw it, and her heart was aching as much as ever mother's heart ached for a son, she kept dancing, dancing, all the time for the bare life of her. Certain it was she could not help it, for Maurice never stopped playing that wonderful tune of his.

He only turned the bothered ear to the sound of his mother's voice, fearing it might put him out in his steps, and all the answer he made back was —

"Whisht with you, mother — sure I'm going to be king over the fishes down in the sea, and for a token of luck, and a sign that I am alive and well, I'll send you in, every twelvemonth on this day, a piece of burned wood to Trafraska." Maurice had not the power to say a word more, for the strange lady with the green hair, seeing the wave just upon them, covered him up with herself in a thing like a cloak with a big hood to it, and the wave curling over twice as high as their heads, burst upon the strand, with a rush and a roar that might be heard as far as Cape Clear.

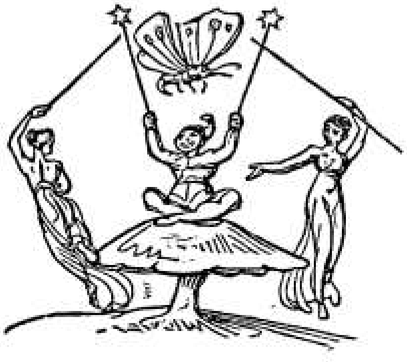
That day twelvemonth the piece of burned wood came ashore in Trafraska. It was a queer thing for Maurice to think of sending all the way from the bottom of the sea. A gown or a pair of shoes would have been something like a present for his poor mother; but he had said it, and he kept his word. The bit of burned wood regularly came ashore on the appointed day for as good, ay, and better than a hundred years. The day is now forgotten, and may be that is the reason why people say how Maurice Connor has stopped sending the luck-token to his mother. Poor woman, she did not live to get as much as one of them; for what through the loss of Maurice, and the fear of eating her own grandchildren, she died in three weeks after the dance — some say it was the fatigue that killed her, but whichever it was, Mrs. Connor was decently buried with her own people.

Seafaring men have often heard off the coast of Kerry, on a still night, the sound of music coming up from the water; and some, who have had good ears, could plainly distinguish Maurice Connor's voice singing these words to his pipes: —

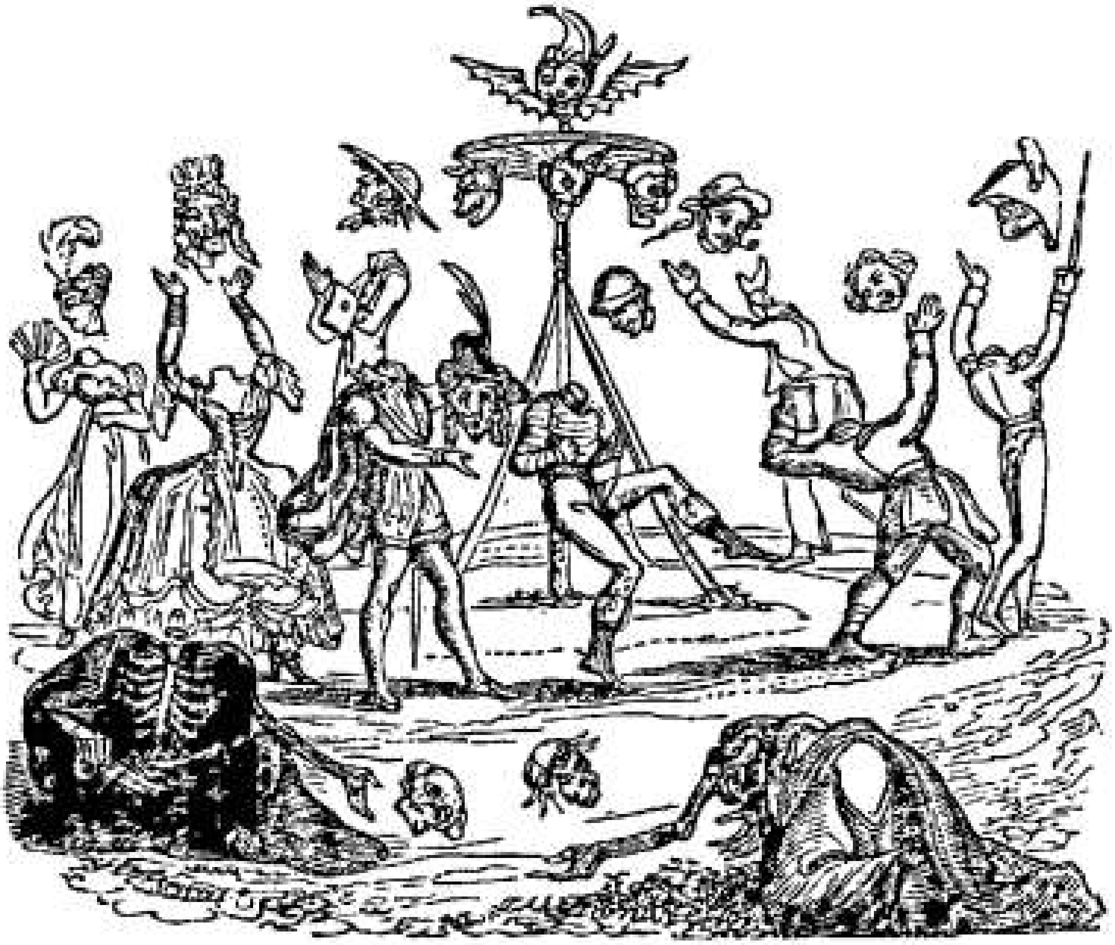
Beautiful shore, with thy spreading strand,
Thy crystal water, and diamond sand;
Never would I have parted from thee
But for the sake of my fair ladie.

The Irish *Merrow* answers exactly to the English Mermaid. It is also used to express a sea-monster, like the Armorick and Cornish *Morhuch*, to which it evidently bears analogy.

The romantic historians of Ireland describe the *Suire* as playing round the ships of the Milesians when on their passage to that Island.



THE DULLAHAN.



“Then wonder not at *headless folk*,
Since every day you greet ’em;
Nor treat old stories as a joke,
When fools you daily meet ’em.”

— *The Legendary.*

“Says the friar, ’tis strange headless horses should trot.”
Old Song.

THE GOOD WOMAN.

XXVI.

In a pleasant and not unpicturesque valley of the White Knight's country, at the foot of the Galtee mountains, lived Larry Dodd and his wife Nancy. They rented a cabin and a few acres of land, which they cultivated with great care, and its crops rewarded their industry. They were independent and respected by their neighbours; they loved each other in a marriageable sort of way, and few couples had altogether more the appearance of comfort about them.

Larry was a hard working, and, occasionally, a hard drinking, Dutch-built, little man, with a fiddle head and a round stern; a steady-going straight-forward fellow, barring when he carried too much whisky, which, it must be confessed, might occasionally prevent his walking the chalked line with perfect philomathical accuracy. He had a moist, ruddy countenance, rather inclined to an expression of gravity, and particularly so in the morning; but, taken all together he was generally looked upon as a marvellously proper person, notwithstanding he had, every day in the year, a sort of unholy dew upon his face, even in the coldest weather, which gave rise to a supposition (amongst censorious persons, of course,) that Larry was apt to indulge in strong and frequent potations. However, all men of talents have their faults, — indeed, who is without them? — and as Larry, setting aside his domestic virtues and skill in farming, was decidedly the most distinguished breaker of horses for forty miles round, he must be in some degree excused, considering the inducements of "the stirrup cup," and the fox-hunting society in which he mixed, if he had also been the greatest drunkard in the county: but, in truth, this was not the case.

Larry was a man of mixed habits, as well in his mode of life and his drink, as in his costume. His dress accorded well with his character — a sort of half-and-half between farmer and horse-jockey. He wore a blue coat of coarse cloth, with short skirts, and a stand-up collar; his waistcoat was red, and his lower habiliments were made of leather, which in course of time had shrunk so much, that they fitted like a second skin; and long use had absorbed their moisture to such a degree, that they made a strange sort of crackling noise as he walked along. A hat covered with oilskin; a cutting-whip, all worn and jagged at the end; a pair of second-hand, or, to speak more correctly second-footed, greasy top boots, that seemed never to have imbibed a refreshing draught of Warren's blacking of matchless lustre! — and one spur without a rowel, completed the every-day dress of Larry Dodd.

Thus equipped was Larry returning from Cashel, mounted on a rough-coated and wall-eyed nag, though, notwithstanding these and a few other trifling blemishes, a well-built animal; having just purchased the said nag, with a fancy that he could make his own money again of his bargain, and, may be, turn an odd penny more by it at the ensuing Kildorrery fair. Well pleased with himself, he trotted fair and easy along the road in the delicious and lingering twilight of a lovely June evening, thinking of nothing at all, only whistling, and wondering would horses always be so low. “If they go at this rate,” said he to himself, “for half nothing, and that paid in butter buyer’s notes, who would be the fool to walk?” This very thought, indeed, was passing in his mind, when his attention was roused by a woman pacing quickly by the side of his horse and hurrying on as if endeavouring to reach her destination before the night closed in. Her figure, considering the long strides she took, appeared to be under the common size — rather of the dumpy order; but farther, as to whether the damsel was young or old, fair or brown, pretty or ugly, Larry could form no precise notion, from her wearing a large cloak (the usual garb of the female Irish peasant,) the hood of which was turned up, and completely concealed every feature.

Enveloped in this mass of dark and concealing drapery, the strange woman, without much exertion, contrived to keep up with Larry Dodd’s steed for some time, when his master very civilly offered her a lift behind him, as far as he was going her way. “Civility begets civility,” they say; however he received no answer; and thinking that the lady’s silence proceeded only from bashfulness, like a man of true gallantry, not a word more said Larry until he pulled up by the side of a gap, and then says he,

“*Ma colleen beg*, just jump up behind me, without a word more, though never a one have you spoke, and I’ll take you safe and sound through the lonesome bit of road that is before us.”

She jumped at the offer, sure enough, and up with her on the back of the horse as light as a feather. In an instant there she was seated up behind Larry, with her hand and arm buckled round his waist holding on.

“I hope you’re comfortable there, my dear,” said Larry, in his own good-humoured way; but there was no answer; and on they went — trot, trot, trot — along the road; and all was so still and so quiet, that you might have heard the sound of the hoofs on the limestone a mile off; for that matter there was nothing else to hear except the moaning of a distant stream, that kept up a continued *cronane*, like a nurse *hushoing*. Larry, who had a keen ear, did not, however, require so profound a silence to detect the click of one of the shoes. “’Tis only loose the shoe is,” said he to his companion, as they were just entering on the lonesome bit of road of which he had before spoken. Some old trees, with huge trunks, all covered, and irregular branches festooned with ivy, grew over a dark pool of water, which had been formed as a drinking-place for cattle; and in the distance was seen the majestic head of Gaultee-more. Here the horse, as if in grateful recognition, made a dead halt; and Larry, not knowing what vicious tricks his new purchase might have, and unwilling that through any odd chance the young woman should get *spilt* in the water, dismounted, thinking to lead the horse quietly by the pool.

“By the piper’s luck, that always found what he wanted,” said Larry, recollecting himself, “I’ve a nail in my pocket: ’tis not the first time I’ve put on a shoe, and may be it won’t be the last; for here is no want of paving-stones to make hammers in plenty."

No sooner was Larry off, than off with a spring came the young woman just at his side. Her feet touched the ground without making the least noise in life, and away she bounded like an ill-mannered wench, as she was, without saying, "by your leave," or no matter what else. She seemed to glide rather than run, not along the road, but across a field, up towards the old ivy-covered walls of Kilnaslattery church — and a pretty church it was.

"Not so fast, if you please, young woman — not so fast," cried Larry, calling after her: but away she ran, and Larry followed, his leathern garment, already described, crack, crick, crackling at every step he took. "Where's my wages?" said Larry: "*Thorum pog, ma colleen oge*, — sure I've earned a kiss from your pair of pretty lips — and I'll have it too!" But she went on faster and faster, regardless of these and other flattering speeches from her pursuer; at last she came to the church-yard wall, and then over with her in an instant.

"Well, she's a mighty smart creature any how. To be sure, how neat she steps upon her pasterns! Did any one ever see the like of that before; — but I'll not be balked by any woman that ever wore a head, or any ditch either," exclaimed Larry, as with a desperate bound he vaulted, scrambled, and tumbled over the wall into the church-yard. Up he got from the elastic sod of a newly-made grave in which Tade Leary that morning was buried — rest his soul! — and on went Larry, stumbling over headstones, and foot-stones, over old graves and new graves, pieces of coffins, and the skulls and bones of dead men — the Lord save us! — that were scattered about there as plenty as paving-stones; floundering amidst great overgrown dock-leaves and brambles that, with their long prickly arms, tangled round his limbs, and held him back with a fearful grasp. Mean time the merry wench in the cloak moved through all these obstructions as evenly and as gaily as if the church-yard, crowded up as it was with graves and grave-stones (for people came to be buried there from far and near,) had been the floor of a dancing-room. Round and round the walls of the old church she went. "I'll just wait," said Larry, seeing this, and thinking it all nothing but a trick to frighten him; "when she comes round again, if I don't take the kiss, I won't, that's all, — and here she is!" Larry Dodd sprang forward with open arms, and clasped in them — a woman, it is true — but a woman without any lips to kiss, by reason of her having no head.

"Murder!" cried he. "Well, that accounts for her not speaking." Having uttered these words, Larry himself became dumb with fear and astonishment; his blood seemed turned to ice, and a dizziness came over him; and, staggering like a drunken man, he rolled against the broken window of the ruin, horrified at the conviction that he had actually held a Dullahan in his embrace!

When he recovered to something like a feeling of consciousness, he slowly opened his eyes, and then, indeed, a scene of wonder burst upon him. In the midst of the ruin stood an old wheel of torture, ornamented with heads, like Cork gaol, when the heads of Murty Sullivan and other gentlemen were stuck upon it. This was plainly visible in the strange light which spread itself around. It was fearful to behold, but Larry could not choose but look, for his limbs were powerless through the wonder and the fear. Useless as it was, he would have called for help, but his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and not one word could he say. In short, there was Larry, gazing through a shattered window of the old church, with eyes bleared and almost starting from their sockets; his breast resting on the thickness of the wall, over which, on one side, his head and outstretched neck projected, and on the other, although one toe touched the ground, it derived no support from thence: terror, as it were, kept him balanced. Strange noises assailed his ears, until at last they tingled painfully to the sharp clatter of little bells, which kept up a continued ding — ding — ding — ding: marrowless bones rattled and clanked, and the deep and solemn sound of a great bell came booming on the night wind.

’Twas a spectre rung
That bell when it swung —
Swing-swang!
And the chain it squeaked,
And the pulley creaked,
Swing-swang!

And with every roll
Of the deep death toll
Ding-dong!
The hollow vault rang
As the clapper went bang,
Ding-dong!

It was strange music to dance by; nevertheless, moving to it, round and round the wheel set with skulls, were well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, and soldiers and sailors, and priests and publicans, and jockeys and jennys, but all without their heads. Some poor skeletons, whose bleached bones were ill covered by moth-eaten palls, and who were not admitted into the ring, amused themselves by bowling their brainless noddles at one another, which seemed to enjoy the sport beyond measure.

Larry did not know what to think; his brains were all in a mist; and losing the balance which he had so long maintained, he fell head foremost into the midst of the company of Dullahans.

“I’m done for and lost for ever,” roared Larry, with his heels turned towards the stars, and souse down he came.

“Welcome, Larry Dodd, welcome,” cried every head, bobbing up and down in the air. “A drink for Larry Dodd,” shouted they, as with one voice, that quavered like a shake on the bagpipes. No sooner said than done, for a player at heads, catching his own as it was bowled at him, for fear of its going astray, jumped up, put the head, without a word, under his left arm, and, with the right stretched out, presented a brimming cup to Larry, who, to show his manners, drank it off like a man.

"'Tis capital stuff," he would have said, which surely it was, but he got no farther than cap, when decapitated was he, and his head began dancing over his shoulders like those of the rest of the party. Larry, however, was not the first man who lost his head through the temptation of looking at the bottom of a brimming cup. Nothing more did he remember clearly, — for it seems body and head being parted is not very favourable to thought — but a great hurry scurry with the noise of carriages and the cracking of whips.

When his senses returned, his first act was to put up his hand to where his head formerly grew, and to his great joy there he found it still. He then shook it gently, but his head remained firm enough, and somewhat assured at this, he proceeded to open his eyes and look around him. It was broad daylight, and in the old church of Kilnaslattery he found himself lying, with that head, the loss of which he had anticipated, quietly resting, poor youth, "upon the lap of earth." Could it have been an ugly dream? "Oh no," said Larry, "a dream could never have brought me here, stretched on the flat of my back, with that death's head and cross marrow bones forenenting me on the fine old tombstone there that was *faced* by Pat Kearney of Kilcrea — but where is the horse?" He got up slowly, every joint aching with pain from the bruises he had received, and went to the pool of water, but no horse was there. "'Tis home I must go," said Larry, with a rueful countenance; "but how will I face Nancy? — what will I tell her about the horse, and the seven I. O. U.'s that he cost me?— 'Tis them Dullahans that have made their own of him from me — the horse-stealing robbers of the world, that have no fear of the gallows! — but what's gone is gone, that's a clear case!" — so saying, he turned his steps homewards, and arrived at his cabin about noon without encountering any farther adventures. There he found Nancy, who, as he expected, looked as black as a thundercloud at him for being out all night. She listened to the marvellous relation which he gave with exclamations of astonishment, and, when he had concluded, of grief, at the loss of the horse that he had paid for like an honest man with seven I. O. U.'s, three of which she knew to be as good as gold.

"But what took you up to the old church at all, out of the road, and at that time of the night, Larry?" inquired his wife.

Larry looked like a criminal for whom there was no reprieve; he scratched his head for an excuse, but not one could he muster up, so he knew not what to say.

"Oh! Larry, Larry," muttered Nancy, after waiting some time for his answer, her jealous fears during the pause rising like barm; "'tis the very same way with you as with any other man — you are all alike for that matter — I've no pity for you — but, confess the truth."

Larry shuddered at the tempest which he perceived was about to break upon his devoted head.

"Nancy," said he, "I do confess: — it was a young woman without any head that — —"

His wife heard no more. “A woman I knew it was,” cried she; “but a woman without a head, Larry! — well, it is long before Nancy Gollagher ever thought it would come to that with her! — that she would be left dissolute and alone here by her *baste* of a husband, for a woman without a head! — O father, father! and O mother, mother! it is well you are low to-day! — that you don’t see this affliction and disgrace to your daughter that you reared decent and tender.

“O Larry, you villain, you’ll be the death of your lawful wife going after such O — O — O—”

“Well,” says Larry, putting his hands in his coatpockets, “least said is soonest mended. Of the young woman I know no more than I do of Moll Flanders: but this I know, that a woman without a head may well be called a Good Woman, because she has no tongue!”

How this remark operated on the matrimonial dispute history does not inform us. It is, however, reported that the lady had the last word.

HANLON'S MILL.

XXVII.

One fine summer's evening Michael Noonan went over to Jack Brien's, the shoemaker, at Ballyduff, for the pair of brogues which Jack was mending for him. It was a pretty walk the way he took, but very lonesome; all along by the river-side, down under the oak-wood, till he came to Hanlon's mill, that used to be, but that had gone to ruin many a long year ago.

Melancholy enough the walls of that same mill looked; the great old wheel, black with age, all covered over with moss and ferns, and the bushes all hanging down about it. There it stood silent and motionless; and a sad contrast it was to its former busy clack, with the stream which once gave it use rippling idly along.

Old Hanlon was a man that had great knowledge of all sorts; there was not an herb that grew in the field but he could tell the name of it and its use, out of a big book he had written, every word of it in the real Irish *karacter*. He kept a school once, and could teach the Latin; that surely is a blessed tongue all over the wide world; and I hear tell as how "the great Burke" went to school to him. Master Edmund lived up at the old house there, which was then in the family, and it was the Nagles that got it afterwards, but they sold it.

But it was Michael Noonan's walk I was about speaking of. It was fairly between lights, the day was clean gone, and the moon was not yet up, when Mick was walking smartly across the Inch. Well, he heard, coming down out of the wood, such blowing of horns and hallooing, and the cry of all the hounds in the world, and he thought they were coming after him; and the galloping of the horses, and the voice of the whipper-in, and he shouting out, just like the fine old song,

"Hallo Piper, Lilly, agus Finder;"

and the echo over from the gray rock across the river giving back every word as plainly as it was spoken. But nothing could Mick see, and the shouting and hallooing following him every step of the way till he got up to Jack Brien's door; and he was certain, too, he heard the clack of old Hanlon's mill going, through all the clatter. To be sure, he ran as fast as fear and his legs could carry him, and never once looked behind him, well knowing that the Duhallow hounds were out in quite another quarter that day, and that nothing good could come out of the noise of Hanlon's mill.

Well, Michael Noonan got his brogues, and well heeled they were, and well pleased was he with them; when who should be seated at Jack Brien's before him, but a gossip of his, one Darby Haynes, a mighty decent man, that had a horse and car of his own, and that used to be travelling with it, taking loads like the royal mail coach between Cork and Limerick; and when he was at home, Darby was a near neighbour of Michael Noonan's.

“Is it home you’re going with the brogues this blessed night?” said Darby to him.

“Where else would it be?” replied Mick: “but, by my word, ’tis not across the Inch back again I’m going, after all I heard coming here; ’tis to no good that old Hanlon’s mill is busy again.”

“True, for you,” said Darby; “and may be you’d take the horse and car home for me, Mick, by way of company, as ’tis along the road you go. I’m waiting here to see a sister’s son of mine that I expect from Kilcoleman.” “That same I’ll do,” answered Mick, “with a thousand welcomes.” So Mick drove the car fair and easy, knowing that the poor beast had come off a long journey; and Mick — God reward him for it — was always tender-hearted and good to the dumb creatures.

The night was a beautiful one; the moon was better than a quarter old; and Mick, looking up at her, could not help bestowing a blessing on her beautiful face, shining down so sweetly upon the gentle Awbeg. He had now got out of the open road, and had come to where the trees grew on each side of it: he proceeded for some space in the chequered light which the moon gave through them. At one time, when a big old tree got between him and the moon, it was so dark, that he could hardly see the horse’s head; then, as he passed on, the moonbeams would stream through the open boughs and variegate the road with light and shade. Mick was lying down in the car at his ease, having got clear of the plantation, and was watching the bright piece of a moon in a little pool at the road-side, when he saw it disappear all of a sudden as if a great cloud came over the sky. He turned round on his elbow to see if it was so; but how was Mick astonished at finding, close along-side of the car, a great high black coach drawn by six black horses, with long black tails reaching almost down to the ground, and a coachman dressed all in black sitting up on the box. But what surprised Mick the most was, that he could see no sign of a head either upon coachman or horses. It swept rapidly by him, and he could perceive the horses raising their feet as if they were in a fine slinging trot, the coachman touching them up with his long whip, and the wheels spinning round like hoddy-doddies; still he could hear no noise, only the regular step of his gossip Darby’s horse, and the squeaking of the gudgeons of the car, that were as good as lost entirely for want of a little grease.

Poor Mick’s heart almost died within him, but he said nothing, only looked on; and the black coach swept away and was soon lost among some distant trees. Mick saw nothing more of it, or, indeed, of any thing else. He got home just as the moon was going down behind Mount Hillery — took the tackling off the horse, turned the beast out in the field for the night, and got to his bed.

Next morning, early, he was standing at the road-side, thinking of all that had happened the night before, when he saw Dan Madden, that was Mr. Wrixon’s huntsman, coming on the master’s best horse down the hill, as hard as ever he went at the tail of the hounds. Mick’s mind instantly misgave him that all was not right, so he stood out in the very middle of the road, and caught hold of Dan’s bridle when he came up.

“Mick, dear — for the love of heaven! don’t stop me,” cried Dan.

“Why, what’s the hurry?” said Mick.

“Oh, the master! — he’s off, — he’s off — he’ll never cross a horse again till the day of judgment!”

“Why, what would ail his honour?” said Mick; “sure it is no later than yesterday morning that I was talking to him, and he stout and hearty; and says he to me, Mick, says he—”

“Stout and hearty was he?” answered Madden; “and was he not out with me in the kennel last night, when I was feeding the dogs; and didn’t he come out to the stable, and give a ball to Peg Pullaway with his own hand, and tell me he’d ride the old General to-day; and sure,” said Dan, wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his coat, “who’d have thought that the first thing I’d see this morning was the mistress standing at my bed-side, and bidding me get up and ride off like fire for Doctor Galway; for the master had got a fit, and” — poor Dan’s grief choked his voice— “oh, Mick! if you have a heart in you, run over yourself, or send the gossoon for Kate Finnigan, the midwife; she’s a cruel skilful woman, and may be she might save the master, till I get the doctor.”

Dan struck his spurs into the hunter, and Michael Noonan flung off his newly-mended brogues, and cut across the fields to Kate Finnigan’s; but neither the doctor nor Katty was of any avail, and the next night’s moon saw Ballygibblin — and more’s the pity — a house of mourning.

THE DEATH COACH.

XXVIII.

’Tis midnight! — how gloomy and dark!
By Jupiter there’s not a star! —
’Tis fearful!— ’tis awful! — and hark!
What sound is that comes from afar?

Still rolling and rumbling, that sound
Makes nearer and nearer approach;
Do I tremble, or is it the ground? —
Lord save us! — what is it? — a coach! —

A coach! — but that coach has no head;
And the horses are headless as it:
Of the driver the same may be said,
And the passengers inside who sit.

See the wheels! how they fly o’er the stones!
And whirl, as the whip it goes crack:
Their spokes are of dead men’s thigh bones,
And the pole is the spine of the back!

The hammer-cloth, shabby display,
Is a pall rather mildew’d by damps;

And to light this strange coach on its way,
Two hollow skulls hang up for lamps!

From the gloom of Rathcooney church-yard,
They dash down the hill of Glanmire;
Pass Lota in gallop as hard
As if horses were never to tire!

With people thus headless ’tis fun
To drive in such furious career;
Since *headlong* their horses can’t run,
Nor coachman be *heady* from beer.

Very steep is the Tivoli lane,
But up-hill to them is as down;
Nor the charms of Woodhill can detain
These Dullahans rushing to town.

Could they feel as I've felt — in a song —
A spell that forbade them depart;
They'd a lingering visit prolong,
And after their head lose their heart!

No matter!— 'tis past twelve o'clock;
Through the streets they sweep on like the wind,
And, taking the road to Blackrock,
Cork city is soon left behind.

Should they hurry thus reckless along,
To supper instead of to bed,
The landlord will surely be wrong,
If he charge it at so much a head!

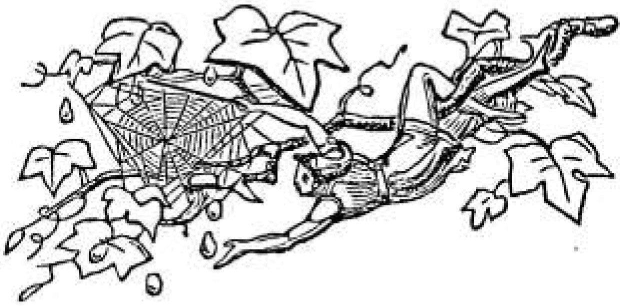
Yet mine host may suppose them too poor
To bring to his wealth an increase;
As till now, all who drove to his door,
Possess'd at least *one crown* a-piece.

Up the Deadwoman's hill they are roll'd;
Boreenmannah is quite out of sight;
Ballintemple they reach, and behold!
At its church-yard they stop and alight.

"Who's there?" said a voice from the ground,
"We've no room, for the place is quite full."
"O! room must be speedily found,
For we come from the parish of Skull.

"Though Murphys and Crowleys appear
On headstones of deep-letter'd pride;
Though Scannels and Murleys lie here,
Fitzgeralds and Toonies beside;

"Yet here for the night we lie down,
To-morrow we speed on the gale;
For having no heads of our own,
We seek the Old Head of Kinsale."



THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN.

XXIX.

"God speed you, and a safe journey this night to you, Charley," ejaculated the master of the little sheebeen house at Ballyhooley after his old friend and good customer, Charley Culnane, who at length had turned his face homewards, with the prospect of as dreary a ride and as dark a night as ever fell upon the Blackwater, along the banks of which he was about to journey.

Charley Culnane knew the country well, and, moreover, was as bold a rider as any Mallow-boy that ever *rattled* a four-year-old upon Drumrue race-course. He had gone to Fermoy in the morning, as well for the purpose of purchasing some ingredients required for the Christmas dinner by his wife, as to gratify his own vanity by having new reins fitted to his snaffle, in which he intended showing off the old mare at the approaching St. Stephen's day hunt.

Charley did not get out of Fermoy until late; for although he was not one of your "nasty particular sort of fellows" in any thing that related to the common occurrences of life, yet in all the appointments connected with hunting, riding, leaping, in short, in whatever was connected with the old mare, "Charley," the saddlers said, "was the devil to *plase*." An illustration of this fastidiousness was afforded by his going such a distance for his snaffle bridle. Mallow was full twelve miles nearer "Charley's farm" (which lay just three quarters of a mile below Carrick) than Fermoy; but Charley had quarrelled with all the Mallow saddlers, from hard-working and hard-drinking Tim Clancey, up to Mr. Ryan, who wrote himself "Saddler to the Duhallow Hunt;" and no one could content him in all particulars but honest Michael Twomey of Fermoy, who used to assert — and who will doubt it — that he could stitch a saddle better than the lord-lieutenant, although they made him all as one as king over Ireland.

This delay in the arrangement of the snaffle bridle did not allow Charley Culnane to pay so long a visit as he had at first intended to his old friend and gossip, Con Buckley, of the "Harp of Erin." Con, however, knew the value of time, and insisted upon Charley making good use of what he had to spare. "I won't bother you waiting for water, Charley, because I think you'll have enough of that same before you get home; so drink off your liquor, man. It's as good *parliament* as ever a gentleman tasted, ay, and holy church too, for it will bear 'x *waters*,' and carry the bead after that, may be."

Charley, it must be confessed, nothing loath, drank success to Con, and success to the jolly "Harp of Erin," with its head of beauty and its strings of the hair of gold, and to their better acquaintance, and so on, from the bottom of his soul, until the bottom of the bottle reminded him that Carrick was at the bottom of the hill on the other side of Castletown Roche, and that he had got no farther on his journey than his gossip's at Ballyhooley, close to the big gate of Convamore. Catching hold of his oil-skin hat, therefore, whilst

Con Buckley went to the cupboard for another bottle of the "real stuff," he regularly, as it is termed, bolted from his friend's hospitality, darted to the stable, tightened his girths, and put the old mare into a canter towards home.

The road from Ballyhooley to Carrick follows pretty nearly the course of the Blackwater, occasionally diverging from the river and passing through rather wild scenery, when contrasted with the beautiful seats that adorn its banks. Charley cantered gaily, regardless of the rain, which, as his friend Con had anticipated, fell in torrents: the good woman's currants and raisins were carefully packed between the folds of his yeomanry cloak, which Charley, who was proud of showing that he belonged to the "Royal Mallow Light Horse Volunteers," always strapped to the saddle before him, and took care never to destroy the military effect of by putting it on. — Away he went singing like a thrush —

"Sporting, belleing, dancing, drinking,
Breaking windows — (*hiccup*!) — sinking,
Ever raking — never thinking,
Live the rakes of Mallow.

"Spending faster than it comes,
Beating — (*hiccup, hic*,) and duns,
Duhallow's true-begotten sons,
Live the rakes of Mallow."

Notwithstanding that the visit to the jolly "Harp of Erin" had a little increased the natural complacency of his mind, the drenching of the new snaffle reins began to disturb him; and then followed a train of more anxious thoughts than even were occasioned by the dreaded defeat of the pride of his long-anticipated *turn out* on St. Stephen's day. In an hour of good fellowship, when his heart was warm, and his head not over cool, Charley had backed the old mare against Mr. Jephson's bay filly Desdemona for a neat hundred, and he now felt sore misgivings as to the prudence of the match. In a less gay tone he continued —

"Living short, but merry lives,
Going where the devil drives,
Keeping — —"

"Keeping" he muttered, as the old mare had reduced her canter to a trot at the bottom of Kilcummer Hill. Charley's eye fell on the old walls that belonged, in former times, to the Templars: but the silent gloom of the ruin was broken only by the heavy rain which splashed and pattered on the gravestones. He then looked up at the sky, to see if there was, among the clouds, any hopes for mercy on his new snaffle reins; and no sooner were his eyes lowered, than his attention was arrested by an object so extraordinary as almost led him to doubt the evidence of his senses. The head, apparently, of a white horse, with short cropped ears, large open nostrils and immense eyes, seemed rapidly to follow him. No connexion with body, legs, or rider, could possibly be traced — the head advanced — Charley's old mare, too, was moved at this unnatural sight, and snorting violently, increased her trot up the hill. The head moved forward, and passed on: Charley, pursuing it with astonished gaze, and wondering by what means, and for what purpose, this detached head thus proceeded through the air, did not perceive the corresponding body until he was suddenly startled by finding it close at his side. Charley turned to examine what was thus so sociably jogging on with him, when a most unexampled apparition presented itself to his view. A figure, whose height (judging as well as the obscurity of the night would permit him) he computed to be at least eight feet, was seated on the body and legs of a white horse full eighteen hands and a half high. In this measurement Charley could not be mistaken, for his own mare was exactly fifteen hands, and the body that thus jogged alongside he could at once determine, from his practice in horseflesh, was at least three hands and a half higher.

After the first feeling of astonishment, which found vent in the exclamation "I'm sold now for ever!" was over, the attention of Charley, being a keen sportsman, was naturally directed to this extraordinary body; and having examined it with the eye of a connoisseur, he proceeded to reconnoitre the figure so unusually mounted, who had hitherto remained perfectly mute. Wishing to see whether his companion's silence proceeded from bad temper, want of conversational powers, or from a distaste to water, and the fear that the opening of his mouth might subject him to have it filled by the rain, which was then drifting in violent gusts against them, Charley endeavoured to catch a sight of his companion's face, in order to form an opinion on that point. But his vision failed in carrying him farther than the top of the collar of the figure's coat, which was a scarlet single-breasted hunting frock, having a waist of a very old-fashioned cut reaching to the saddle, with two huge shining buttons at about a yard distance behind. "I ought to see farther than this, too," thought Charley, "although he is mounted on his high horse, like my cousin Darby, who was made barony constable last week, unless 'tis Con's whiskey that has blinded me entirely." However, see farther he could not, and after straining his eyes for a considerable time to no purpose, he exclaimed, with pure vexation, "'By the big bridge of Mallow, it is no head at all he has!"

"Look again, Charley Culnane," said a hoarse voice, that seemed to proceed from under the right arm of the figure.

Charley did look again, and now in the proper place, for he clearly saw, under the aforesaid right arm, that head from which the voice had proceeded, and such a head no mortal ever saw before. It looked like a large cream cheese hung round with black puddings; no speck of colour enlivened the ashy paleness of the depressed features; the skin lay stretched over the unearthly surface, almost like the parchment head of a drum. Two fiery eyes of prodigious circumference, with a strange and irregular motion, flashed like meteors upon Charley, and to complete all, a mouth reached from either extremity of two ears, which peeped forth from under a profusion of matted locks of lustreless blackness. This head, which the figure had evidently hitherto concealed from Charley's eyes, now burst upon his view in all its hideousness. Charley, although a lad of proverbial courage in the county of Cork, yet could not but feel his nerves a little shaken by this unexpected visit from the headless horseman, whom he considered his fellow-traveller must be. The cropped-eared head of the gigantic horse moved steadily forward, always keeping from six to eight yards in advance. The horseman, unaided by whip or spur, and disdaining the use of stirrups, which dangled uselessly from the saddle, followed at a trot by Charley's side, his hideous head now lost behind the lappet of his coat, now starting forth in all its horror, as the motion of the horse caused his arm to move to and fro. The ground shook under the weight of its supernatural burden, and the water in the pools became agitated into waves as he trotted by them.

On they went — heads without bodies, and bodies without heads. — The deadly silence of night was broken only by the fearful clattering of hoofs, and the distant sound of thunder, which rumbled above the mystic hill of Cecaune a Mona Finnea. Charley, who was naturally a merry-hearted, and rather a talkative fellow, had hitherto felt tongue-tied by apprehension, but finding his companion showed no evil disposition towards him, and having become somewhat more reconciled to the Patagonian dimensions of the horseman and his headless steed, plucked up all his courage, and thus addressed the stranger: —

"Why, then, your honour rides mighty well without the stirrups!"

"Humph," growled the head from under the horseman's right arm.

"'Tis not an over civil answer," thought Charley; "but no matter, he was taught in one of them riding-houses, may be, and thinks nothing at all about bumping his leather breeches at the rate of ten miles an hour. I'll try him on the other track. Ahem!" said Charley, clearing his throat, and feeling at the same time rather daunted at this second attempt to establish a conversation. "Ahem! that's a mighty neat coat of your honour's, although 'tis a little too long in the waist for the present cut."

"Humph," growled again the head.

This second humph was a terrible thump in the face to poor Charley, who was fairly bothered to know what subject he could start that would prove more agreeable. "'Tis a sensible head," thought Charley, "although an ugly one, for 'tis plain enough the man does not like flattery." A third attempt, however, Charley was determined to make, and having failed in his observations as to the riding and coat of his fellow-traveller, thought he would just drop a trifling allusion to the wonderful headless horse, that was jogging on so sociably beside his old mare; and as Charley was considered about Carrick to be very knowing in horses, besides, being a full private in the Royal Mallow Light Horse Volunteers, which were every one of them mounted like real Hessians, he felt rather sanguine as to the result of his third attempt.

“To be sure, that’s a brave horse your honour rides,” recommenced the persevering Charley.

“You may say that, with your own ugly mouth,” growled the head.

Charley, though not much flattered by the compliment, nevertheless chuckled at his success in obtaining an answer, and thus continued: —

“May be your honour wouldn’t be after riding him across the country?”

“Will you try me, Charley?” said the head, with an inexpressible look of ghastly delight.

“Faith, and that’s what I’d do,” responded Charley, “only I’m afraid, the night being so dark, of laming the old mare, and I’ve every halfpenny of a hundred pounds on her heels.”

This was true enough; Charley’s courage was nothing dashed at the headless horseman’s proposal; and there never was a steeple-chase, nor a fox-chase, riding or leaping in the country, that Charley Culnane was not at it, and foremost in it.

“Will you take my word,” said the man who carried his head so snugly under his right arm, “for the safety of your mare?”

“Done,” said Charley; and away they started, helter skelter, over every thing, ditch and wall, pop, pop, the old mare never went in such style, even in broad daylight: and Charley had just the start of his companion, when the hoarse voice called out, “Charley Culnane, Charley, man, stop for your life, stop!”

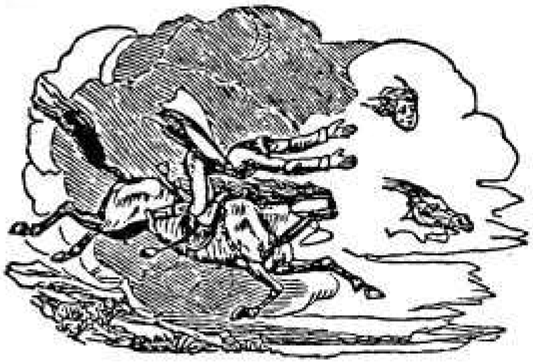
Charley pulled up hard. “Ay,” said he, “you may beat me by the head, because it always goes so much before you; but if the bet was neck-and-neck, and that’s the go between the old mare and Desdemona, I’d win it hollow!”

It appeared as if the stranger was well aware of what was passing in Charley’s mind, for he suddenly broke out quite loquacious.

“Charley Culnane,” says he, “you have a stout soul in you, and are every inch of you a good rider. I’ve tried you, and I ought to know; and that’s the sort of man for my money. A hundred years it is since my horse and I broke our necks at the bottom of Kilcummer hill, and ever since I have been trying to get a man that dared to ride with me, and never found one before. Keep, as you have always done, at the tail of the hounds, never balk a ditch, nor turn away from a stone wall, and the headless horseman will never desert you nor the old mare.”

Charley, in amazement, looked towards the stranger’s right arm, for the purpose of seeing in his face whether or not he was in earnest, but behold! the head was snugly lodged in the huge pocket of the horseman’s scarlet hunting-coat. The horse’s head had ascended perpendicularly above them, and his extraordinary companion, rising quickly after his avant-coureur, vanished from the astonished gaze of Charley Culnane.

Charley, as may be supposed, was lost in wonder, delight, and perplexity; the pelting rain, the wife’s pudding, the new snaffle — even the match against squire Jephson — all were forgotten; nothing could he think of, nothing could he talk of, but the headless horseman. He told it, directly that he got home, to Judy; he told it the following morning to all the neighbours; and he told it to the hunt on St. Stephen's day: but what provoked him after all the pains he took in describing the head, the horse, and the man, was that one and all attributed the creation of the headless horseman to his friend Con Buckley's "X water parliament." This, however, should be told, that Charley's old mare beat Mr. Jephson's bay filly, Desdemona, by Diamond, and Charley pocketed his cool hundred; and if he didn't win by means of the headless horseman, I am sure I don't know any other reason for his doing so.



Dullahan or Dulachan signifies a dark sullen person. The word *Durrachan* or *Dullahan*, by which in some places the goblin is known, has the same signification. It comes from *Dorr* or *Durr*, anger, or *Durrach*, malicious, fierce, &c. — *MS. communication from the late* Mr. Edward O'Reilly.

The correctness of this last etymology may be questioned, as black is evidently a component part of the word.

The Death Coach, or Headless Coach and Horses, is called in Ireland "*Coach a bower*;" and its appearance is generally regarded as a sign of death, or an omen of some misfortune.

The belief in the appearance of headless people and horses appears to be, like most popular superstitions, widely extended.

In England, see the Spectator (No. 110) for mention of a spirit that had appeared in the shape of a black horse without a head.

In Wales, the apparition of "*Fenyw heb un pen*," the headless woman, and "*Ceffyl heb un pen*," the headless horse, are generally accredited. — *MS. communication from* Miss Williams.

"The Irish Dullahan puts me in mind of a spectre at Drumlanrig Castle, of no less a person than the Duchess of Queensberry,— 'Fair Kitty, blooming, young, and gay,' — who, instead of setting fire to the world in mamma's chariot, amuses herself with wheeling her own head in a wheel-barrow through the great gallery." — *MS. communication from* Sir Walter Scott.

In Scotland, so recently as January, 1826, that veritable paper, the Glasgow Chronicle, records, upon the occasion of some silk-weavers being out of employment at Paisley, that "Visions have been seen of carts, caravans, and coaches, going up Gleniffer braes without horses, with horses without heads," &c.

Cervantes mentions tales of the “*Caballo sin cabeça* among the *cuentos de viejas con que se entretienen al fuego las dilatadas noches del invierno*,” &c.

“The people of Basse Brétagne believe, that when the death of any person is at hand, a hearse drawn by skeletons (which they call *carriquet au nankon*,) and covered with a white sheet, passes by the house where the sick person lies, and the creaking of the wheels may be plainly heard.” — *Journal des Sciences*, 1826, *communicated by* Dr. William Grimm.

See also *Thiele's Danske Folkesagn*, vol. iv. , &c.

THE FIR DARRIG.

Whene'er such wanderers I meete,
As from their night-sports they trudge home,
With counterfeiting voice I greete,
And call them on with me to roame
Through woods, through lakes,
Through bogs, through brakes;
Or else, unseene, with them I go,
All in the nicke,
To play some tricke,
And frolicke it, with ho, ho, ho!

— *Old Song.*

DIARMID BAWN, THE PIPER

XXX.

One stormy night Patrick Burke was seated in the chimney corner smoking his pipe quite contentedly after his hard day's work; his two little boys were roasting potatoes in the ashes, while his rosy daughter held a splinter to her mother, who, seated on a siesteen, was mending a rent in Patrick's old coat; and Judy, the maid, was singing merrily to the sound of her wheel, that kept up a beautiful humming noise, just like the sweet drone of a bagpipe. Indeed they all seemed quite contented and happy; for the storm howled without, and they were warm and snug within, by the side of a blazing turf fire. "I was just thinking," said Patrick, taking the dudeen from his mouth and giving it a rap on his thumb-nail to shake out the ashes— "I was just thinking how thankful we ought to be to have a snug bit of a cabin this pelting night over our heads, for in all my born days I never heard the like of it."

"And that's no lie for you, Pat," said his wife; "but, whisht! what noise is that I *hard*?" and she dropped her work upon her knees, and looked fearfully towards the door. "The *Vargin* herself defend us all!" cried Judy, at the same time rapidly making a pious sign on her forehead, "if 'tis not the banshee!"

"Hold your tongue, you fool," said Patrick, "it's only the old gate swinging in the wind;" and he had scarcely spoken, when the door was assailed by a violent knocking. Molly began to mumble her prayers, and Judy proceeded to mutter over the muster-roll of saints; the youngsters scampered off to hide themselves behind the settle-bed; the storm howled louder and more fiercely than ever, and the rapping was renewed with redoubled violence.

"Whisht, whisht!" said Patrick— "what a noise ye're all making about nothing at all. Judy a-roon, can't you go and see who's at the door?" for, notwithstanding his assumed bravery, Pat Burke preferred that the maid should open the door.

"Why, then, is it me you're speaking to?" said Judy in the tone of astonishment; "and is it cracked mad you are, Mister Burke; or is it, may be, that you want me to be *rund* away with, and made a horse of, like my grandfather was? — the sorrow a step will I stir to open the door, if you were as great a man again as you are, Pat Burke."

"Bother you, then! and hold your tongue, and I'll go myself." So saying, up got Patrick, and made the best of his way to the door. "Who's there?" said he, and his voice trembled mightily all the while. "In the name of Saint Patrick, who's there?" "'Tis I, Pat," answered a voice which he immediately knew to be the young squire's. In a moment the door was opened, and in walked a young man, with a gun in his hand, and a brace of dogs at his heels. "Your honour's honour is quite welcome, entirely," said Patrick; who was a very civil sort of a fellow, especially to his betters. "Your honour's honour is quite welcome; and if ye'll be so condescending as to demean yourself by taking off your wet jacket, Molly can give ye a bran new blanket, and ye can sit forenent the fire while the clothes are drying." "Thank you, Pat," said the squire, as he wrapt himself, like Mr. Weld, in the proffered blanket.

"But what made you keep me so long at the door?"

"Why then, your honour, 'twas all along of Judy, there, being so much afraid of the good people; and a good right she has, after what happened to her grandfather — the Lord rest his soul!"

"And what was that, Pat?" said the squire.

"Why, then, your honour must know that Judy had a grandfather; and he was *ould* Diarmid Bawn, the piper, as personable a looking man as any in the five parishes he was; and he could play the pipes so sweetly, and make them *spake* to such perfection, that it did one's heart good to hear him. We never had any one, for that matter, in this side of the country like him, before or since, except James Gandsey, that is own piper to Lord Headley — his honour's lordship is the real good gentleman — and 'tis Mr. Gandsey's music that is the pride of Killarney lakes. Well, as I was saying, Diarmid was Judy's grandfather, and he rented a small mountainy farm; and he was walking about the fields one moonlight night, quite melancholy-like in himself for want of the *tobaccy*; because why, the river was flooded, and he could not get across to buy any, and Diarmid would rather go to bed without his supper than a whiff of the dudeen. Well, your honour, just as he came to the old fort in the far field, what should he see? — but a large army of the good people, 'coutered for all the world just like the dragoons! 'Are ye all ready?' said a little fellow at their head dressed out like a general. 'No,' said a little curmudgeon of a chap all dressed in red, from the crown of his cocked hat to the sole of his boot. 'No, general,' said he: 'if you don't get the Fir darrig a horse he must stay behind, and ye'll lose the battle."

"'There's Diarmid Bawn,' said the general, pointing to Judy's grandfather, your honour, 'make a horse of him.'

"So with that master Fir darrig comes up to Diarmid, who, you may be sure, was in a mighty great fright; but he determined, seeing there was no help for him, to put a bold face on the matter; and so he began to cross himself, and to say some blessed words, that nothing bad could stand before.

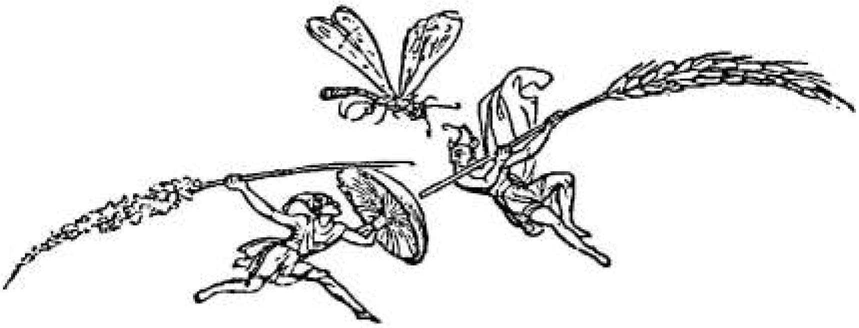
"'Is that what you'd be after, you spalpeen?' said the little red imp, at the same time grinning a horrible grin; 'I'm not the man to care a straw for either your words or your crossings.' So, without more to do, he gives poor Diarmid a rap with the flat side of his sword, and in a moment he was changed into a horse, with little Fir darrig stuck fast on his back.

"Away they all flew over the wide ocean, like so many wild geese, screaming and chattering all the time, till they came to Jamaica; and there they had a murdering fight with the good people of that country. Well, it was all very well with them, and they stuck to it manfully, and fought it out fairly, till one of the Jamaica men made a cut with his sword under Diarmid's left eye. And then, sir, you see, poor Diarmid lost his temper entirely, and he dashed into the very middle of them, with Fir darrig mounted upon his back, and he threw out his heels, and whisked his tail about, and wheeled and turned round and round at such a rate, that he soon made a fair clearance of them, horse, foot, and dragoons. At last Diarmid's faction got the better, all through his means; and then they had such feasting and rejoicing, and gave Diarmid, who was the finest horse amongst them all, the best of every thing.

"'Let every man take a hand of *tobaccy* for Diarmid Bawn,' said the general; and so they did; and away they flew, for 'twas getting near morning, to the old fort back again, and there they vanished like the mist from the mountain.

"When Diarmid looked about, the sun was rising, and he thought it was all a dream, till he saw a big rick of *tobaccy* in the old fort, and felt the blood running from his left eye: for sure enough he was wounded in the battle, and would have been *kilt* entirely, if it wasn't for a gospel composed by father Murphy that hung about his neck ever since he had the scarlet fever; and for certain, it was enough to have given him another scarlet fever to have had the little red man all night on his back, whip and spur for the bare life. However, there was the *tobaccy* heaped up in a great heap by his side; and he heard a voice, although he could see no one, telling him, 'That 'twas all his own, for his good behaviour in the battle; and that whenever Fir darrig would want a horse again he'd know where to find a clever beast, as he never rode a better than Diarmid Bawn.' That's what he said, sir."

"Thank you, Pat," said the squire; "it certainly is a wonderful story, and I am not surprised at Judy's alarm. But now, as the storm is over, and the moon shining brightly, I'll make the best of my way home." So saying, he disrobed himself of the blanket, put on his coat, and whistling his dogs, set off across the mountain; while Patrick stood at the door, bawling after him, "May God and the blessed Virgin preserve your honour, and keep ye from the good people; for 'twas of a moonlight night like this that Diarmid Bawn was made a horse of, for the Fir darrig to ride."



TEIGUE OF THE LEE.

XXXI.

"I can't stop in the house — I won't stop in it for all the money that is buried in the old castle of Carrigrohan. If ever there was such a thing in the world! — to be abused to my face night and day, and nobody to the fore doing it! and then, if I'm angry, to be laughed at with a great roaring ho, ho, ho! I won't stay in the house after to-night, if there was not another place in the country to put my head under." This angry soliloquy was pronounced in the hall of the old manor-house of Carrigrohan by John Sheehan. John was a new servant: he had been only three days in the house, which had the character of being haunted, and in that short space of time he had been abused and laughed at by a voice which sounded as if a man spoke with his head in a cask; nor could he discover who was the speaker, or from whence the voice came. "I'll not stop here," said John; "and that ends the matter."

"Ho, ho, ho! be quiet, John Sheehan, or else worse will happen to you."

John instantly ran to the hall window, as the words were evidently spoken by a person immediately outside, but no one was visible. He had scarcely placed his face at the pane of glass, when he heard another loud "Ho, ho, ho!" as if behind him in the hall; as quick as lightning he turned his head, but no living thing was to be seen.

"Ho, ho, ho, John!" shouted a voice that appeared to come from the lawn before the house; "do you think you'll see Teigue? — oh, never! as long as you live! so leave alone looking after him, and mind your business; there's plenty of company to dinner from Cork to be here to-day, and 'tis time you had the cloth laid."

"Lord bless us! there's more of it! — I'll never stay another day here," repeated John.

"Hold your tongue, and stay where you are quietly, and play no tricks on Mr. Pratt, as you did on Mr. Jervois about the spoons."

John Sheehan was confounded by this address from his invisible persecutor, but nevertheless he mustered courage enough to say— "Who are you? — come here, and let me see you, if you are a man;" but he received in reply only a laugh of unearthly derision, which was followed by a "Good-bye — I'll watch you at dinner, John!"

"Lord between us and harm! this beats all! — I'll watch you at dinner! — may be you will;— 'tis the broad daylight, so 'tis no ghost; but this is a terrible place, and this is the last day I'll stay in it. How does he know about the spoons? — if he tells it, I'm a ruined man! — there was no living soul could tell it to him but Tim Barrett, and he's far enough off in the wilds of Botany Bay now, so how could he know it — I can't tell for the world! But what's that I see there at the corner of the wall?— 'tis not a man! — oh, what a fool I am! 'tis only the old stump of a tree! — But this is a shocking place — I'll never stop in it, for I'll leave the house to-morrow; the very look of it is enough to frighten any one."

The mansion had certainly an air of desolation; it was situated in a lawn, which had nothing to break its uniform level, safe a few tufts of narcissuses and a couple of old trees coeval with the building. The house stood at a short distance from the road; it was upwards of a century old, and Time was doing his work upon it; its walls were weather-stained in all colours, its roof showed various white patches, it had no look of comfort; all was dim and dingy without, and within there was an air of gloom, of departed and departing greatness, which harmonized well with the exterior. It required all the exuberance of youth and of gaiety to remove the impression, almost amounting to awe, with which you trod the huge square hall, paced along the gallery which surrounded the hall, or explored the long rambling passages below stairs. The ball-room, as the large drawing-room was called, and several other apartments, were in a state of decay: the walls were stained with damp; and I remember well the sensation of awe which I felt creeping over me when, boy as I was, and full of boyish life, and wild and ardent spirits, I descended to the vaults; all without and within me became chilled beneath their dampness and gloom — their extent, too, terrified me; nor could the merriment of my two schoolfellows, whose father, a respectable clergyman, rented the dwelling for a time, dispel the feelings of a romantic imagination, until I once again ascended to the upper regions.

John had pretty well recovered himself as the dinner-hour approached, and the several guests arrived. They were all seated at table, and had begun to enjoy the excellent repast, when a voice was heard from the lawn: —

"Ho, ho, ho, Mr. Pratt, won't you give poor Teigue some dinner? ho, ho, a fine company you have there, and plenty of every thing that's good; sure you won't forget poor Teigue?"

John dropped the glass he had in his hand.

"Who is that?" said Mr. Pratt's brother, an officer of the artillery.

"That is Teigue," said Mr. Pratt, laughing, "whom you must often have heard me mention."

"And pray, Mr. Pratt," inquired another gentleman, "who *is* Teigue?"

"That," he replied, "is more than I can tell. No one has ever been able to catch even a glimpse of him. I have been on the watch for a whole evening with three of my sons, yet, although his voice sometimes sounded almost in my ear, I could not see him. I fancied, indeed, that I saw a man in a white frieze jacket pass into the door from the garden to the lawn, but it could be only fancy, for I found the door locked, while the fellow whoever he is, was laughing at our trouble. He visits us occasionally, and sometimes a long interval passes between his visits, as in the present case; it is now nearly two years since we heard that hollow voice outside the window. He has never done any injury that we know of, and once when he broke a plate, he brought one back exactly like it."

"It is very extraordinary," said several of the company.

"But," remarked a gentleman to young Mr. Pratt, "your father said he broke a plate; how did he get it without your seeing him?"

"When he asks for some dinner, we put it outside the window and go away; whilst we watch he will not take it, but no sooner have we withdrawn, than it is gone."

"How does he know that you are watching?"

"That's more than I can tell, but he either knows or suspects. One day my brothers Robert and James with myself were in our back parlour, which has a window into the garden, when he came outside and said, 'Ho, ho, ho! master James, and Robert, and Henry, give poor Teigue a glass of whisky.' James went out of the room, filled a glass with whisky, vinegar, and salt, and brought it to him. 'Here Teigue,' said he, 'come for it now.' 'Well, put it down, then, on the step outside the window.' This was done, and we stood looking at it. 'There, now, go away,' he shouted. We retired, but still watched it. 'Ho, ho! you are watching Teigue; go out of the room, now, or I won't take it.' We went outside the door and returned; the glass was gone, and a moment after we heard him roaring and cursing frightfully. He took away the glass, but the next day the glass was on the stone step under the window, and there were crumbs of bread in the inside, as if he had put it in his pocket; from that time he was not heard till to-day."

"Oh," said the colonel, "I'll get a sight of him; you are not used to these things; an old soldier has the best chance; and as I shall finish my dinner with this wing, I'll be ready for him when he speaks next. — Mr. Bell, will you take a glass of wine with me?"

"Ho, ho! Mr. Bell," shouted Teigue. "Ho, ho! Mr. Bell, you were a quaker long ago. Ho, ho! Mr. Bell, you're a pretty boy; — a pretty quaker you were; and now you're no quaker, nor any thing else: — ho, ho! Mr. Bell. And there's Mr. Parkes: to be sure, Mr. Parkes looks mighty fine to-day, with his powdered head, and his grand silk stockings, and his bran new rakish-red waistcoat. — And there's Mr. Cole, — did you ever see such a fellow? a pretty company you've brought together, Mr. Pratt: kiln-dried quakers, butter-buying buckeens from Mallow-lane, and a drinking exciseman from the Coal-quay, to meet the great thundering artillery-general that is come out of the Indies, and is the biggest dust of them all."

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the colonel: "I'll make you show yourself;" and snatching up his sword from a corner of the room, he sprang out of the window upon the lawn. In a moment a shout of laughter, so hollow, so unlike any human sound, made him stop, as well as Mr. Bell, who with a huge oak stick was close at the colonel's heels; others of the party followed on the lawn, and the remainder rose and went to the windows. "Come on, colonel," said Mr. Bell; "let us catch this impudent rascal."

"Ho, ho! Mr. Bell, here I am — here's Teigue — why don't you catch him? — Ho, ho! Colonel Pratt, what a pretty soldier you are to draw your sword upon poor Teigue, that never did any body harm."

"Let us see your face, you scoundrel," said the colonel.

"Ho, ho, ho! — look at me — look at me: do you see the wind, colonel Pratt? — you'll see Teigue as soon; so go in and finish your dinner."

"If you're upon the earth I'll find you, you villain!" said the colonel, whilst the same unearthly shout of derision seemed to come from behind an angle of the building. "He's round that corner," said Mr. Bell— "run, run."

They followed the sound, which was continued at intervals along the garden wall, but could discover no human being; at last both stopped to draw breath, and in an instant, almost at their ears, sounded the shout.

"Ho, ho, ho! colonel Pratt, do you see Teigue now? — do you hear him? — Ho, ho, ho! you're a fine colonel to follow the wind."

"Not that way, Mr. Bell — not that way; come here," said the colonel.

"Ho, ho, ho! what a fool you are; do you think Teigue is going to show himself to you in the field, there? But colonel, follow me if you can: — you a soldier! — ho, ho, ho!" The colonel was enraged — he followed the voice over hedge and ditch, alternately laughed at and taunted by the unseen object of his pursuit — (Mr. Bell, who was heavy, was soon thrown out,) until at length, after being led a weary chase, he found himself at the top of the cliff, over that part of the river Lee, which from its great depth, and the blackness of its water, has received the name of Hell-hole. Here, on the edge of the cliff, stood the colonel out of breath, and mopping his forehead with his handkerchief, while the voice, which seemed close at his feet, exclaimed— "Now, colonel Pratt — now, if you're a soldier, here's a leap for you; — now look at Teigue — why don't you look at him? — Ho, ho, ho! Come along: you're warm, I'm sure, colonel Pratt, so come in and cool yourself; Teigue is going to have a swim!" The voice seemed as descending amongst the trailing ivy and brushwood which clothes this picturesque cliff nearly from top to bottom, yet it was impossible that any human being could have found footing. "Now, colonel, have you courage to take the leap? — Ho, ho, ho! what a pretty soldier you are. Good-bye — I'll see you again in ten minutes above, at the house — look at your watch, colonel: — there's a dive for you!" and a heavy plunge into the water was heard. The colonel stood still, but no sound followed, and he walked slowly back to the house, not quite half a mile from the Crag.

"Well, did you see Teigue?" said his brother, whilst his nephews, scarcely able to smother their laughter, stood by.— "Give me some wine," said the colonel. "I never was led such a dance in my life: the fellow carried me all round and round, till he brought me to the edge of the cliff, and then down he went into Hell-hole, telling me he'd be here in ten minutes: 'tis more than that now, but he's not come."

"Ho, ho, ho! colonel, isn't he here? — Teigue never told a lie in his life: but, Mr. Pratt, give me a drink and my dinner, and then good night to you all, for I'm tired; and that's the colonel's doing." A plate of food was ordered: it was placed by John, with fear and trembling, on the lawn under the window. Every one kept on the watch, and the plate remained undisturbed for some time.

"Ah! Mr. Pratt, will you starve poor Teigue? Make every one go away from the windows, and master Henry out of the tree, and master Richard off the garden-wall."

The eyes of the company were turned to the tree and the garden-wall; the two boys' attention was occupied in getting down: the visiters were looking at them; and "Ho, ho, ho! — good luck to you, Mr. Pratt!— 'tis a good dinner, and there's the plate, ladies and gentlemen — good-bye to you, colonel — good-bye, Mr. Bell! — good-bye to you all!" — brought their attention back, when they saw the empty plate lying on the grass; and Teigue's voice was heard no more for that evening. Many visits were afterwards paid by Teigue; but never was he seen, nor was any discovery ever made of his person or character.

NED SHEEHY'S EXCUSE.

XXXII.

Ned Sheehy was servant-man to Richard Gumbleton, Esquire, of Mountbally, Gumbletonmore, in the north of the county of Cork; and a better servant than Ned was not to be found in that honest county, from Cape Clear to the Kilworth Mountains; for nobody — no, not his worst enemy — could say a word against him, only that he was rather given to drinking, idling, lying, and loitering, especially the last; for send Ned of a five-minute message at nine o'clock in the morning, and you were a lucky man if you saw him before dinner. If there happened to be a public-house in the way, or even a little out of it, Ned was sure to mark it as dead as a pointer; and, knowing every body, and every body liking him, it is not to be wondered at he had so much to say and to hear, that the time slipped away as if the sun somehow or other had knocked two hours into one.

But when he came home, he never was short of an excuse: he had, for that matter, five hundred ready upon the tip of his tongue; so much so, that I doubt if even the very reverend doctor Swift, for many years Dean of St. Patrick's, in Dublin, could match him in that particular, though his reverence had a pretty way of his own of writing things which brought him into very decent company. In fact, Ned would fret a saint, but then he was so good-humoured a fellow, and really so handy about a house, — for, as he said himself, he was as good as a lady's maid, — that his master could not find it in his heart to part with him.

In your grand houses — not that I am saying that Richard Gumbleton, esquire of Mountbally, Gumbletonmore, did not keep a good house, but a plain country gentleman, although he is second-cousin to the last high-sheriff of the county, cannot have all the army of servants that the lord-lieutenant has in the castle of Dublin — I say, in your grand houses, you can have a servant for every kind of thing, but in Mountbally, Gumbletonmore, Ned was expected to please master and mistress; or, as counsellor Curran said, — by the same token the counsellor was a little dark man — one day that he dined there, on his way to the Clonmel assizes — Ned was minister for the home and foreign departments.

But to make a long story short, Ned Sheehy was a good butler, and a right good one too, and as for a groom, let him alone with a horse: he could dress it, or ride it, or shoe it, or physic it, or do any thing with it but make it speak — he was a second whisperer! — there was not his match in the barony, or the next one neither. A pack of hounds he could manage well, ay, and ride after them with the boldest man in the land. It was Ned who leaped the old bounds' ditch at the turn of the boreen of the lands of Reenascreena, after the English captain pulled up on looking at it, and cried out it was "No go." Ned rode that day Brian Boro, Mr. Gumbleton's famous chestnut, and people call it Ned Sheehy's Leap to this hour.

So, you see, it was hard to do without him: however, many a scolding he got; and although his master often said of an evening, “I’ll turn off Ned,” he always forgot to do so in the morning. These threats mended Ned not a bit; indeed, he was mending the other way, like bad fish in hot weather.

One cold winter’s day, about three o’clock in the afternoon, Mr. Gumbleton said to him,

“Ned,” said he, “go take Modderaroo down to black Falvey, the horse-doctor, and bid him look at her knees; for Doctor Jenkinson, who rode her home last night, has hurt her somehow. I suppose he thought a parson’s horse ought to go upon its knees; but, indeed, it was I was the fool to give her to him at all, for he sits twenty stone if he sits a pound, and knows no more of riding, particularly after his third bottle, than I do of preaching. Now mind and be back in an hour at farthest, for I want to have the plate cleaned up properly for dinner, as Sir Augustus O’Toole, you know, is to dine here to-day. — Don’t loiter, for your life.”

“Is it I, sir?” says Ned. “Well, that beats any thing; as if I’d stop out a minute!” So, mounting Modderaroo, off he set.

Four, five, six o’clock came, and so did Sir Augustus and lady O’Toole, and the four misses O’Toole, and Mr. O’Toole, and Mr. Edward O’Toole, and Mr. James O’Toole, which were all the young O’Tooles that were at home, but no Ned Sheehy appeared to clean the plate, or to lay the table-cloth, or even to put dinner on. It is needless to say how Mr. and Mrs. Dick Gumbleton fretted and fumed; but it was all to no use. They did their best, however, only it was a disgrace to see long Jem the stableboy, and Bill the gossoon that used to go of errands, waiting, without any body to direct them, when there was a real baronet and his lady at table; for Sir Augustus was none of your knights. But a good bottle of claret makes up for much, and it was not one only they had that night. However, it is not to be concealed that Mr. Dick Gumbleton went to bed very cross, and he awoke still crosser.

He heard that Ned had not made his appearance for the whole night; so he dressed himself in a great fret, and, taking his horsewhip in his hand, he said,

“There is no farther use in tolerating this scoundrel; I’ll go look for him, and if I find him, I’ll cut the soul out of his vagabond body! so I will.”

“Don’t say so, Dick, dear,” said Mrs. Gumbleton (for she was always a mild woman, being daughter of fighting Tom Crofts, who shot a couple of gentlemen, friends of his, in the cool of the evening, after the Mallow races, one after the other,) “don’t swear, Dick, dear,” said she; “but do, my dear, oblige me by cutting the flesh off his bones, for he richly deserves it. I was quite ashamed of Lady O’Toole, yesterday, I was, ‘pon honour.”

Out sallied Mr. Gumbleton; and he had not far to walk, for, not more than two hundred yards from the house, he found Ned lying fast asleep under a ditch (a hedge,) and Modderaroo standing by him, poor beast, shaking every limb. The loud snoring of Ned, who was lying with his head upon a stone as easy and as comfortable as if it had been a bed of down or a hop-bag, drew him to the spot, and Mr. Gumbleton at once perceived, from the disarray of

Ned's face and person, that he had been engaged in some perilous adventure during the night. Ned appeared not to have descended in the most regular manner; for one of his shoes remained sticking in the stirrup, and his hat, having rolled down a little slope, was imbedded in green mud. Mr. Gumbleton, however, did not give himself much trouble to make a curious survey, but with a vigorous application of his thong, soon banished sleep from the eyes of Ned Sheehy.

"Ned!" thundered his master in great indignation, — and on this occasion it was not a word and blow, for with that one word came half a dozen: "Get up, you scoundrel," said he.

Ned roared lustily, and no wonder, for his master's hand was not one of the lightest; and he cried out, between sleeping and waking— "O, sir! — don't be angry, sir! — don't be angry, and I'll roast you easier — easy as a lamb!"

"Roast me easier, you vagabond!" said Mr. Gumbleton; "what do you mean? — I'll roast you, my lad. Where were you all night? — Modderaroo will never get over it. — Pack out of my service, you worthless villain, this moment; and, indeed, you may be thankful that I don't get you transported."

"Thank God, master dear," said Ned, who was now perfectly awakened— "it's yourself, any how. There never was a gentleman in the whole country ever did so good a turn to a poor man as your honour has been after doing to me: the Lord reward you for that same. Oh! but strike me again, and let me feel that it is yourself, master dear; — may whisky be my poison—"

"It will be your poison, you good-for-nothing scoundrel," said Mr. Gumbleton.

"Well, then, *may* whiskey be my poison," said Ned, "if 'twas not I was — in the blackest of misfortunes, and they were before me, whichever way I turned 'twas no matter. Your honour sent me last night, sure enough, with Modderaroo to mister Falvey's — I don't deny it — why should I? for reason enough I have to remember what happened."

"Ned, my man," said Mr. Gumbleton, "I'll listen to none of your excuses: just take the mare into the stable and yourself off, for I vow—"

"Begging your honour's pardon," said Ned, earnestly, "for interrupting your honour; but, master, master! make no vows — they are bad things: I never made but one in all my life, which was, to drink nothing at all for a year and a day, and 'tis myself rep*i*nted of it for the clean twelvemonth after. But if your honour would only listen to reason: I'll just take in the poor baste, and if your honour don't pardon me this one time may I never see another day's luck or grace."

"I know you, Ned," said Mr. Gumbleton. "Whatever your luck has been, you never had any grace to lose: but I don't intend discussing the matter with you. Take in the mare, sir."

Ned obeyed, and his master saw him to the stables. Here he reiterated his commands to quit, and Ned Sheehy's excuse for himself began. That it was heard uninterruptedly is more than I can affirm; but as interruptions, like explanations, spoil a story, we must let Ned tell it his own way.

"No wonder your honour," said he, "should be a bit angry — grand company coming to the house and all, and no regular serving-man to wait, only long Jem; so I don't blame your honour the least for being fretted like; but when all's heard, you will see that no poor man is more to be pitied for last night than myself. Fin Mac Coul never went through more in his born days than I did, though he was a great *joint* (giant,) and I only a man.

"I had not rode half a mile from the house, when it came on, as your honour must have perceived clearly, mighty dark all of a sudden, for all the world as if the sun had tumbled down plump out of the fine clear blue sky. It was not so late, being only four o'clock at the most, but it was as black as your honour's hat. Well, I didn't care much, seeing I knew the road as well as I knew the way to my mouth, whether I saw it or not, and I put the mare into a smart canter; but just as I turned down by the corner of Terence Leahy's field — sure your honour ought to know the place well — just at the very spot the fox was killed when your honour came in first out of a whole field of a hundred and fifty gentlemen, and may be more, all of them brave riders."

(Mr. Gumbleton smiled.)

"Just then, there, I heard the low cry of the good people wafting upon the wind. 'How early you are at your work, my little fellows!' says I to myself; and, dark as it was, having no wish for such company, I thought it best to get out of their way; so I turned the horse a little up to the left, thinking to get down by the boreen, that is that way, and so round to Falvey's; but there I heard the voice plainer and plainer close behind, and I could hear these words: —

'Ned! Ned!
By my cap so red!
You're as good, Ned,
As a man that is dead.'

'A clean pair of spurs is all that's for it now,' said I; so off I set, as hard as I could lick, and in my hurry knew no more where I was going than I do the road to the hill of Tarah. Away I galloped on for some time, until I came to the noise of a stream, roaring away by itself in the darkness. 'What river is this?' said I to myself — for there was nobody else to ask— 'I thought,' says I, 'I knew every inch of ground, and of water too, within twenty miles, and never the river surely is there in this direction.' So I stopped to look about; but I might have spared myself that trouble, for I could not see as much as my hand. I didn't know what to do; but I thought in myself, it's a queer river, surely, if somebody does not live near it; and I shouted out as loud as I could, Murder! murder! — fire! — robbery! — any thing that would be natural in such a place — but not a sound did I hear except my own voice echoed back to me, like a hundred packs of hounds in full cry above and below, right and left. This didn't do at all; so I dismounted, and guided myself along the stream, directed by the noise of the water, as cautious as if

I was treading upon eggs, holding poor Modderaroo by the bridle, who shook, the poor brute, all over in a tremble, like my old grandmother, rest her soul any how! in the ague. Well, sir, the heart was sinking in me, and I was giving myself up, when, as good luck would have it, I saw a light. ‘May be,’ said I, ‘my good fellow, you are only a jacky lantern, and want to bog me and Modderaroo.’ But I looked at the light hard, and I thought it was too *study* (steady) for a jacky lantern. ‘I’ll try you,’ says I— ‘so here goes; and, walking as quick as a thief, I came towards it, being very near plumping into the river once or twice, and being stuck up to my middle, as your honour may perceive cleanly the marks of, two or three times in the *slob*. At last I made the light out, and it coming from a bit of a house by the road-side; so I went to the door and gave three kicks at it, as strong as I could.

“‘Open the door for Ned Sheehy,’ said a voice inside. Now, besides that I could not, for the life of me, make out how any one inside should know me before I spoke a word at all, I did not like the sound of that voice, ’twas so hoarse and so hollow, just like a dead man’s! — so I said nothing immediately. The same voice spoke again, and said, ‘Why don’t you open the door to Ned Sheehy?’ ‘How pat my name is to you,’ said I, without speaking out, ‘on tip of your tongue, like butter;’ and I was between two minds about staying or going, when what should the door do but open, and out came a man holding a candle in his hand, and he had upon him a face as white as a sheet.

“‘Why, then, Ned Sheehy,’ says he, ‘how grand you’re grown, that you won’t come in and see a friend, as you’re passing by?’

“‘Pray, sir,’ says I, looking at him — though that face of his was enough to dumbfounder any honest man like myself— ‘Pray, sir,’ says I, ‘may I make so bold as to ask if you are not Jack Myers that was drowned seven years ago, next Martinmas, in the ford of Ah-na-fourish?’

“‘Suppose I was,’ says he: ‘has not a man a right to be drowned in the ford facing his own cabin-door any day of the week that he likes, from Sunday morning to Saturday night?’

“‘I’m not denying that same, Mr. Myers, sir,’ says I, ‘if ’tis yourself is to the fore speaking to me.’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘no more words about that matter now: sure you and I, Ned, were friends of old; come in, and take a glass; and here’s a good fire before you, and nobody shall hurt or harm you, and I to the fore, and myself able to do it.’

“Now, your honour, though ’twas much to drink with a man that was drowned seven years before, in the ford of Ah-na-fourish, facing his own door, yet the glass was hard to be withstood — to say nothing of the fire that was blazing within — for the night was mortal cold. So tying Modderaroo to the hasp of the door — if I don’t love the creature as I love my own life — I went in with Jack Myers.

“Civil enough he was — I’ll never say otherwise to my dying hour — for he handed me a stool by the fire, and bid me sit down and make myself comfortable. But his face, as I said before, was as white as the snow on the hills, and his two eyes fell dead on me, like the eyes of a cod without any life in them. Just as I was going to put the glass to my lips, a voice— 'twas the same that I heard bidding the door be opened — spoke out of a cupboard that was convenient to the left-hand side of the chimney, and said, 'Have you any news for me, Ned Sheehy?'

"'The never a word, sir,' says I, making answer before I tasted the whisky, all out of civility; and, to speak the truth, never the least could I remember at that moment of what had happened to me, or how I got there; for I was quite bothered with the fright.

"'Have you no news,' says the voice, 'Ned, to tell me, from Mountbally Gumbletonmore; or from the Mill; or about Moll Trantum that was married last week to Bryan Oge, and you at the wedding?'

"'No, sir,' says I, 'never the word.'

"'What brought you in here, Ned, then?' says the voice. I could say nothing; for, whatever other people might do, I never could frame an excuse; and I was loath to say it was on account of the glass and the fire, for that would be to speak the truth.

"'Turn the scoundrel out,' says the voice; and at the sound of it, who would I see but Jack Myers making over to me with a lump of a stick in his hand, and it clenched on the stick so wicked. For certain, I did not stop to feel the weight of the blow; so, dropping the glass, and it full of the stuff too, I bolted out of the door, and never rested from running away, for as good, I believe, as twenty miles, till I found myself in a big wood.

"'The Lord preserve me! what will become of me now!' says I. 'Oh, Ned Sheehy!' says I, speaking to myself, 'my man, you're in a pretty hobble; and to leave poor Modderaroo after you!' But the words were not well out of my mouth, when I heard the dismallest ullagoane in the world, enough to break any one's heart that was not broke before, with the grief entirely; and it was not long till I could plainly see four men coming towards me, with a great black coffin on their shoulders. 'I'd better get up in a tree,' says I, 'for they say 'tis not lucky to meet a corpse: I'm in the way of misfortune to-night, if ever man was.'

"I could not help wondering how a *berrin* (funeral) should come there in the lone wood at that time of night, seeing it could not be far from the dead hour. But it was little good for me thinking, for they soon came under the very tree I was roosting in, and down they put the coffin, and began to make a fine fire under me. I'll be smothered alive now, thinks I, and that will be the end of me; but I was afraid to stir for the life, or to speak out to bid them just make their fire under some other tree, if it would be all the same thing to them. Presently they opened the coffin, and out they dragged as fine-looking a man as you'd meet with in a day's walk.

"'Where's the spit?' says one.

"'Here 'tis,' says another, handing it over; and for certain they spitted him, and began to turn him before the fire.

"If they are not going to eat him, thinks I, like the *Hannibals* father Quinlan told us about in his *sarmint* last Sunday.

"'Who'll turn the spit while we go for the other ingredients?' says one of them that brought the coffin, and a big ugly-looking blackguard he was.

"'Who'd turn the spit but Ned Sheehy?' says another.

"Burn you! thinks I, how should you know that I was here so handy to you up in the tree?

"'Come down, Ned Sheehy, and turn the spit,' says he.

"'I'm not here at all, sir,' says I, putting my hand over my face that he might not see me.

"'That won't do for you, my man,' says he; 'you'd better come down, or may be I'd make you.'

"'I'm coming, sir,' says I; for 'tis always right to make a virtue of necessity. So down I came, and there they left me turning the spit in the middle of the wide wood.

"'Don't scorch me, Ned Sheehy, you vagabond,' says the man on the spit.

"'And my lord, sir, and ar'n't you dead, sir,' says I, 'and your honour taken out of the coffin and all?'

"'I ar'n't,' says he.

"'But surely you are, sir,' says I, 'for 'tis to no use now for me denying that I saw your honour, and I up in the tree.'

"'I ar'n't,' says he again, speaking quite short and snappish.

"So I said no more, until presently he called out to me to turn him easy, or that may be 'twould be the worse turn for myself.

"'Will that do, sir?' says I, turning him as easy as I could.

"'That's too easy,' says he: so I turned him faster.

"'That's too fast,' says he; so finding that, turn him which way I would, I could not please him, I got into a bit of a fret at last, and desired him to turn himself, for a grumbling spalpeen as he was, if he liked it better.

"Away I ran, and away he came hopping, spit and all, after me, and he but half-roasted. 'Murder!' says I, shouting out; 'I'm done for at long last — now or never!' — when all of a sudden, and 'twas really wonderful, not knowing where I was rightly, I found myself at the door of the very little cabin by the road-side that I had bolted out of from Jack Myers; and there was Modderaroo standing hard by.

"'Open the door for Ned Sheehy,' says the voice, — for 'twas shut against me, — and the door flew open in an instant. In I ran without stop or stay, thinking it better to be beat by Jack Myers, he being an old friend of mine, than to be spitted like a Michaelmas goose by a man that I knew nothing about, either of him or his family, one or the other.

"'Have you any news for me?' says the voice, putting just the same question to me that it did before.

"'Yes, sir,' says I, 'and plenty.' So I mentioned all that had happened to me in the big wood, and how I got up in the tree, and how I was made come down again, and put to turning the spit, roasting the gentleman, and how I could not please him, turn him fast or easy, although I tried my best, and how he ran after me at last, spit and all.

"'If you had told me this before, you would not have been turned out in the cold,' said the voice.

"'And how could I tell it to you, sir,' says I, 'before it happened?'

"'No matter,' says he, 'you may sleep now till morning on that bundle of hay in the corner there, and only I was your friend, you'd have been *kilt* entirely.' So down I lay, but I was dreaming, dreaming all the rest of the night; and when you, master dear, woke me with that blessed blow, I thought 'twas the man on the spit had hold of me, and could hardly believe my eyes, when I found myself in your honour's presence, and poor Modderaroo safe and sound by my side; but how I came there is more than I can say, if 'twas not Jack Myers, although he did make the offer to strike me, or some one among the good people that befriended me."

"It is all a drunken dream, you scoundrel," said Mr. Gumbleton; "have I not had fifty such excuses from you?"

"But never one, your honour, that really happened before," said Ned, with unblushing front. "Howsomever, since your honour fancies 'tis drinking I was, I'd rather never drink again to the world's end, than lose so good a master as yourself, and if I'm forgiven this once, and get another trial — —"

"Well," said Mr. Gumbleton, "you may, for this once, go into Mountbally Gumbletonmore again; let me see that you keep your promise as to not drinking, or mind the consequences; and, above all, let me hear no more of the good people, for I don't believe a single word about them, whatever I may do of bad ones."

So saying, Mr. Gumbleton turned on his heel, and Ned's countenance relaxed into its usual expression.

"Now I would not be after saying about the good people what the master said last," exclaimed Peggy, the maid, who was within hearing, and who, by the way, had an eye after Ned: "I would not be after saying such a thing; the good people, may be, will make him feel the *differ* (difference) to his cost."

Nor was Peggy wrong; for whether Ned Sheehy dreamt of the Fir Darrig or not, within a fortnight after, two of Mr. Gumbleton's cows, the best milkers in the parish, ran dry, and before the week was out, Modderaroo was lying dead in the stone quarry.

THE LUCKY GUEST.

XXXIII.

The kitchen of some country houses in Ireland presents in no ways a bad modern translation of the ancient feudal hall. Traces of clanship still linger round its hearth in the numerous dependants on “the master’s” bounty. Nurses, foster-brothers, and other hangers-on, are there as matter of right, while the strolling piper, full of mirth and music, the benighted traveller, even the passing beggar, are received with a hearty welcome, and each contributes planxty, song, or superstitious tale, towards the evening’s amusement.

An assembly, such as has been described, had collected round the kitchen fire of Ballyrahenhouse, at the foot of the Galtee mountains, when, as is ever the case, one tale of wonder called forth another; and with the advance of the evening each succeeding story was received with deep and deeper attention. The history of Cough na Looba’s dance with the black friar at Rahill, and the fearful tradition of *Coum an ‘ir morriv* (the dead man’s hollow,) were listened to in breathless silence. A pause followed the last relation, and all eyes rested on the narrator, an old nurse who occupied the post of honour, that next the fire-side. She was seated in that peculiar position which the Irish name “*currigguib*,” a position generally assumed by a veteran and determined story-teller. Her haunches resting upon the ground, and her feet bundled under the body; her arms folded across and supported by her knees, and the outstretched chin of her hooded head pressing on the upper arm; which compact arrangement nearly reduced the whole figure into a perfect triangle.

Unmoved by the general gaze, Bridget Doyle made no change of attitude, while she gravely asserted the truth of the marvellous tale concerning the Dead Man’s Hollow; her strongly marked countenance at the time receiving what painters term a fine chiaro-obscuro effect from the fire-light.

“I have told you,” she said, “what happened to my own people, the Butlers and the Doyles, in the old times; but here is little Ellen Connell from the county Cork, who can speak to what happened under her own father and mother’s roof.”

Ellen, a young and blooming girl of about sixteen, was employed in the dairy at Ballyrahen. She was the picture of health and rustic beauty; and at this hint from nurse Doyle, a deep blush mantled over her countenance; yet, although “unaccustomed to public speaking,” she, without farther hesitation or excuse, proceeded as follows: —

“It was one May eve, about thirteen years ago, and that is, as every body knows, the airiest day in all the twelve months. It is the day above all other days,” said Ellen, with her large dark eyes cast down on the ground, and drawing a deep sigh, “when the young boys and the young girls go looking after the *Drutheen*, to learn from it rightly the name of their sweethearts.

"My father, and my mother, and my two brothers, with two or three of the neighbours, were sitting round the turf fire, and were talking of one thing or another. My mother was hushoing my little sister, striving to quieten her, for she was cutting her teeth at the time, and was mighty uneasy through the means of them. The day, which was threatening all along, now that it was coming on to dusk, began to rain, and the rain increased and fell fast and faster, as if it was pouring through a sieve out of the wide heavens; and when the rain stopped for a bit there was a wind which kept up such a whistling and racket, that you would have thought the sky and the earth were coming together. It blew and it blew, as if it had a mind to blow the roof off the cabin, and that would not have been very hard for it to do, as the thatch was quite loose in two or three places. Then the rain began again, and you could hear it spitting and hissing in the fire, as it came down through the big *chimbley*.

"'God bless us,' says my mother, 'but 'tis a dreadful night to be at sea,' says she, 'and God be praised that we have a roof, bad as it is, to shelter us.'

"I don't, to be sure, recollect all this, mistress Doyle, but only as my brothers told it to me, and other people, and often have I heard it; for I was so little then, that they say I could just go under the table without tipping my head. Any way, it was in the very height of the pelting and whistling that we heard something speak outside the door. My father and all of us listened, but there was no more noise at that time. We waited a little longer, and then we plainly heard a sound like an old man's voice, asking to be let in, but mighty feeble and weak. Tim bounced up, without a word, to ask us whether we'd like to let the old man, or whoever he was, in — having always a heart as soft as a mealy potato before the voice of sorrow. When Tim pulled back the bolt that did the door, in marched a little bit of a shrivelled, weather-beaten creature, about two feet and a half high.

"We were all watching to see who'd come in, for there was a wall between us and the door; but when the sound of the undoing of the bolt stopped, we heard Tim give a sort of a screech, and instantly he bolted in to us. He had hardly time to say a word, or we either, when the little gentleman shuffled in after him, without a God save all here, or by your leave, or any other sort of thing that any decent body might say. We all, of one accord, scrambled over to the farthest end of the room, where we were, old and young, every one trying who'd get nearest the wall, and farthest from him. All the eyes of our body were stuck upon him, but he didn't mind us no more than that frying-pan there does now. He walked over to the fire, and squatting himself down like a frog, took the pipe that my father dropped from his mouth in the hurry, put it into his own, and then began to smoke so hearty, that he soon filled the room of it.

"We had plenty of time to observe him, and my brothers say that he wore a sugar-loaf hat that was as red as blood: he had a face as yellow as a kite's claw, and as long as to-day and to-morrow put together, with a mouth all screwed and puckered up like a washerwoman's hand, little blue eyes, and rather a highish nose; his hair was quite gray and lengthy, appearing under his hat, and flowing over the cape of a long scarlet coat, which almost trailed the ground behind him, and the ends of which he took up and planked on his knees to dry, as he sat facing the fire. He had smart corduroy breeches, and woollen stockings drawn up over the knees, so as to hide the kneebuckles, if he had the pride to have them; but, at any rate, if he hadn't them in his knees he had buckles in his shoes, out before his spindle legs. When we came to ourselves a little we thought to escape from the room, but no one would go first, nor no one would stay last; so we huddled ourselves together and made a dart out of the room. My little gentleman never minded any thing of the scrambling, nor hardly stirred himself, sitting quite at his ease before the fire. The neighbours, the very instant minute they got to the door, although it still continued pelting rain, cut gutter as if Oliver Cromwell himself was at their heels; and no blame to them for that, any how. It was my father, and my mother, and my brothers, and myself, a little hop-of-my-thumb midge as I was then, that were left to see what would come out of this strange visit; so we all went quietly to the *labbig*, scarcely daring to throw an eye at him as we passed the door. Never the wink of sleep could they sleep that live-long night, though, to be sure, I slept like a top, not knowing better, while they were talking and thinking of the little man.

"When they got up in the morning, every thing was as quiet and as tidy about the place as if nothing had happened, for all that the chairs and stools were tumbled here there, and every where, when we saw the lad enter. Now, indeed, I forget whether he came next night or not, but any way, that was the first time we ever laid eye upon him. This I know for certain, that, about a month after that he came regularly every night, and used to give us a signal to be on the move, for 'twas plain he did not like to be observed. This sign was always made about eleven o'clock; and then, if we'd look towards the door, there was a little hairy arm thrust in through the keyhole, which would not have been big enough, only there was a fresh hole made near the first one, and the bit of stick between them had been broken away, and so 'twas just fitting for the little arm.

"The Fir Darrig continued his visits, never missing a night, as long as we attended to the signal; smoking always out of the pipe he made his own of, and warming himself till day dawned before the fire, and then going no one living knows where: but there was not the least mark of him to be found in the morning; and 'tis as true, nurse Doyle, and honest people, as you are all here sitting before me and by the side of me, that the family continued thriving, and my father and brothers rising in the world while ever he came to us. When we observed this, we used always look for the very moment to see when the arm would come, and then we'd instantly fly off with ourselves to our rest. But before we found the luck, we used sometimes sit still and not mind the arm, especially when a neighbour would be with my father, or that two or three or four of them would have a drop among them, and then they did not care for all the arms, hairy or not, that ever were seen. No one, however, dared to speak to it or of it insolently, except, indeed, one night that Davy Kennane — but he was drunk — walked over and hit it a rap on the back of the wrist: the hand was snatched off like lightning; but every one knows that Davy did not live a month after this happened, though he was only about ten days sick. The like of such tricks are ticklish things to do.

"As sure as the red man would put in his arm for a sign through the hole in the door, and that we did not go and open it to him, so sure, some mishap befell the cattle: the cows were elf-stoned, or overlooked, or something or another went wrong with them. One night my brother Dan refused to go at the signal, and the next day, as he was cutting turf in Crogh-na-drimina bog, within a mile and a half of the house, a stone was thrown at him which broke fairly, with the force, into two halves. Now, if that had happened to hit him he'd be at this hour as dead as my great great grandfather. It came whack slap against the spade he had in his hand, and split at once in two pieces. He took them up and fitted them together, and they made a perfect heart. Some way or the other he lost it since, but he still has the one which was shot at the spotted milch cow, before the little man came near us. Many and many a time I saw that same; 'tis just the shape of the ace of hearts on the cards, only it is of a dark red colour, and polished up like the grate that is in the grand parlour within. When this did not kill the cow on the spot, she swelled up; but if you took and put the elf-stone under her udder, and milked her upon it to the last stroking, and then made her drink the milk, it would cure her, and she would thrive with you ever after.

"But, as I said, we were getting on well enough as long as we minded the door and watched for the hairy arm, which we did sharp enough when we found it was bringing luck to us, and we were now as glad to see the little red gentleman, and as ready to open the door to him, as we used to dread his coming at first and be frightened of him. But at long last we throve so well that the landlord — God forgive him — took notice of us, and envied us, and asked my father how he came by the penny he had, and wanted him to take more ground at a rack-rent that was more than any Christian ought to pay to another, seeing there was no making it. When my father — and small blame to him for that — refused to lease the ground, he turned us off the bit of land we had, and out of the house and all, and left us in a wide and wicked world, where my father, for he was a soft innocent man, was not up to the roguery and trickery that was practised upon him. He was taken this way by one and that way by another, and he treating them that were working his downfall. And he used to take bite and sup with them, and they with him, free enough as long as the money lasted; but when that was gone, and he had not as much ground, that he could call his own, as would sod a lark, they soon shabbed him off. The landlord died not long after; and he now knows whether he acted right or wrong in taking the house from over our heads.

"It is a bad thing for the heart to be cast down, so we took another cabin, and looked out with great desire for the Fir Darrig to come to us. But ten o'clock came and no arm, although we cut a hole in the door just the *moral* (model) of the other. Eleven o'clock! — twelve o'clock! — no, not a sign of him: and every night we watched, but all would not do. We then travelled to the other house, and we rooted up the hearth, for the landlord asked so great a rent for it from the poor people that no one could take it; and we carried away the very door off the hinges, and we brought every thing with us that we thought the little man was in any respect partial to, but he did not come, and we never saw him again.

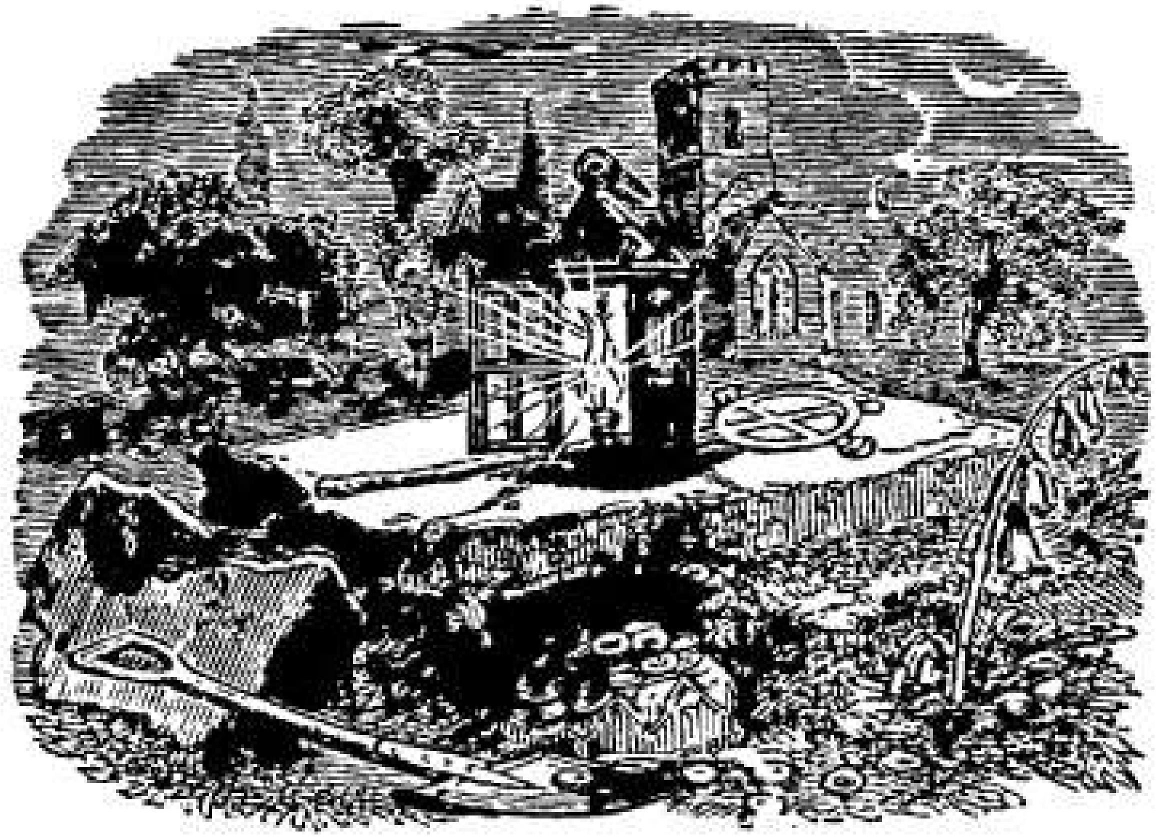
"My father and my mother, and my young sister, are since dead, and my two brothers, who could tell all about this better than myself, are both of them gone out with Ingram in his last voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, leaving me behind without kith or kin."

Here young Ellen's voice became choked with sorrow, and bursting into tears, she hid her face in her apron.

Fir Darrig means the red man, and is a member of the fairy community of Ireland, who bears a strong resemblance to the Shakspearian Puck, or Robin Goodfellow. Like that merry goblin his delight is in mischief and mockery; and this Irish spirit is doubtless the same as the Scottih *Red Cap*; which a writer in the Quarterly Review (No. XLIV. ,) tracing national analogies, asserts, is the Robin Hood of England, and the Saxon spirit Hudkin or Hodekin, so called from the hoodakin or little hood wherein he appeared, a spirit similar to the Spanish Duende. The Fir Darrig has also some traits of resemblance in common with the Scotch Brownie, the German Kobold (particularly the celebrated one, Hinzelman,) the English Hobgoblin (Milton's "Lubber Fiend") and the Follet of Gervase of Tilbury, who says of the Folletos, "Verba utique humano more audiunter et effigies non comparent. De istis pleraque miracula memini me in vita abbreviata et miraculis beatissimi Antonii reperisse." — *Otia Imperialia.*

The red dress and strange flexibility of voice possessed by the Fir Darrig form his peculiar characteristics; the latter, according to Irish tale-tellers, is like the sound of the waves; and again it is compared to the music of angels; the warbling of birds, &c.; and the usual address to this fairy is, Do not mock us. His entire dress, when he is seen, is invariably described as crimson: whereas, Irish fairies generally appear in a black hat, a green suit, white stockings, and red shoes.

TREASURE LEGENDS.



“Bell, book, and candle, shall not drive me back
When gold and silver becks me to come on.”

King John.
“This is fairy gold, boy, and ‘twill prove so.”
Winter’s Tale.

DREAMING TIM JARVIS.

XXXIV.

Timothy Jarvis was a decent, honest, quiet, hard-working man, as every body knows that knows Balledehob.

Now Balledehob is a small place, about forty miles west of Cork. It is situated on the summit of a hill, and yet it is in a deep valley; for on all sides there are lofty mountains that rise one above another in barren grandeur, and seem to look down with scorn upon the little busy village which they surround with their idle and unproductive magnificence. Man and beast have alike deserted them to the dominion of the eagle, who soars majestically over them. On the highest of those mountains there is a small, and as is commonly believed, unfathomable lake, the only inhabitant of which is a huge serpent, who has been sometimes seen to stretch its enormous head above the waters, and frequently is heard to utter a noise which shakes the very rocks to their foundation.

But, as I was saying, every body knew Tim Jarvis to be a decent, honest, quiet, hard-working man, who was thriving enough to be able to give his daughter Nelly a fortune of ten pounds; and Tim himself would have been snug enough besides, but that he loved the drop sometimes. However, he was seldom backward on rent-day. His ground was never distrained but twice, and both times through a small bit of a mistake; and his landlord had never but once to say to him— "Tim Jarvis, you're all behind, Tim, like the cow's tail." Now it so happened that, being heavy in himself, through the drink, Tim took to sleeping, and the sleep set Tim dreaming, and he dreamed all night, and night after night, about crocks full of gold and other precious stones; so much so, that Norah Jarvis his wife could get no good of him by day, and have little comfort with him by night. The gray dawn of the morning would see Tim digging away in a bog-hole, may be, or rooting under some old stone walls like a pig. At last he dreamt that he found a mighty great crock of gold and silver — and where do you think? Every step of the way upon London-bridge, itself! Twice Tim dreamt it, and three times Tim dreamt the same thing; and at last he made up his mind to transport himself, and go over to London, in Pat Mahoney's coaster — and so he did!

Well, he got there, and found the bridge without much difficulty. Every day he walked up and down looking for the crock of gold, but never the find did he find it. One day, however, as he was looking over the bridge into the water, a man, or something like a man, with great black whiskers, like a Hessian, and a black cloak that reached down to the ground, taps him on the shoulder, and says he— "Tim Jarvis, do you see me?"

"Surely I do, sir," said Tim; wondering that any body should know him in that strange place.

"Tim," says he, "what is it brings you here in foreign parts, so far away from your own cabin by the mine of gray copper at Balledehob?"

“Please your honour,” says Tim, “I’m come to seek my fortune.”

“You’re a fool for your pains, Tim, if that’s all,” remarked the stranger in the black cloak; “this is a big place to seek one’s fortune in, to be sure, but it’s not so easy to find it.”

Now Tim, after debating a long time with himself, and considering, in the first place, that it might be the stranger who was to find the crock of gold for him; and in the next, that the stranger might direct him where to find it, came to the resolution of telling him all.

“There’s many a one like me comes here seeking their fortunes,” said Tim.

“True,” said the stranger.

“But,” continued Tim, looking up, “the body and bones of the cause for myself leaving the woman, and Nelly, and the boys, and travelling so far, is to look for a crock of gold that I’m told is lying somewhere hereabouts.”

“And who told you that, Tim?”

“Why then, sir, that’s what I can’t tell myself rightly — only I dreamt it.”

“Ho, ho! is that all, Tim!” said the stranger, laughing; “I had a dream myself; and I dreamed that I found a crock of gold, in the Fort field, on Jerry Driscoll’s ground at Balledehob; and by the same token, the pit where it lay was close to a large furze bush, all full of yellow blossom.”

Tim knew Jerry Driscoll’s ground well; and, moreover, he knew the Fort field as well as he knew his own potato garden; he was certain, too, of the very furze bush at the north end of it — so, swearing a bitter big oath, says he —

“By all the crosses in a yard of check, I always thought there was money in that same field!”

The moment he rapped out the oath, the stranger disappeared, and Tim Jarvis, wondering at all that had happened to him, made the best of his way back to Ireland. Norah, as may well be supposed, had no very warm welcome for her runaway husband — the dreaming blackguard, as she called him — and so soon as she set eyes upon him, all the blood of her body in one minute was into her knuckles to be at him; but Tim, after his long journey, looked so cheerful and so happy-like, that she could not find it in her heart to give him the first blow! He managed to pacify his wife by two or three broad hints about a new cloak and a pair of shoes, that, to speak honestly, were much wanting for her to go to chapel in; and decent clothes for Nelly to go to the patron with her sweetheart, and brogues for the boys, and some corduroy for himself. “It wasn’t for nothing,” says Tim, “I went to foreign parts all the ways; and you’ll see what’ll come out of it — mind my words.”

A few days afterwards Tim sold his cabin and his garden, and bought the Fort field of Jerry Driscoll, that had nothing in it, but was full of thistles, and old stones, and blackberry bushes; and all the neighbours — as well they might — thought he was cracked!

The first night that Tim could summon courage to begin his work, he walked off to the field with his spade upon his shoulder; and away he dug all night by the side of the furze bush, till he came to a big stone. He struck his spade against it, and he heard a hollow sound; but as the morning had begun to dawn, and the neighbours would be going out to their work, Tim, not wishing to have the thing talked about, went home to the little hovel, where Norah and the children were huddled together under a heap of straw; for he had sold every thing he had in the world to purchase Driscoll's field, though it was said to be "the back-bone of the world, picked by the devil."

It is impossible to describe the epithets and reproaches bestowed by the poor woman on her unlucky husband for bringing her into such a way. Epithets and reproaches, which Tim had but one mode of answering, as thus: — "Norah, did you see e'er a cow you'd like?" — or, "Norah, dear, hasn't Poll Deasy a feather-bed to sell?" — or, "Norah honey, wouldn't you like your silver buckles as big as Mrs. Doyle's?"

As soon as night came Tim stood beside the furze-bush, spade in hand. The moment he jumped down into the pit he heard a strange rumbling noise under him, and so, putting his ear against the great stone, he listened, and overheard a discourse that made the hair on his head stand up like bulrushes, and every limb tremble.

"How shall we bother Tim?" said one voice.

"Take him to the mountain, to be sure, and make him a toothful for the *ould sarpint*; 'tis long since he has had a good meal," said another voice.

Tim shook like a potato-blossom in a storm.

"No," said a third voice; "plunge him in the bog, neck and heels."

Tim was a dead man, barring the breath.

"Stop!" said a fourth; but Tim heard no more, for Tim was dead entirely. In about an hour, however, the life came back into him, and he crept home to Norah.

When the next night arrived, the hopes of the crock of gold got the better of his fears, and taking care to arm himself with a bottle of potheen, away he went to the field. Jumping into the pit, he took a little sup from the bottle to keep his heart up — he then took a big one — and then, with desperate wrench, he wrenched up the stone. All at once, up rushed a blast of wind, wild and fierce, and down fell Tim — down, down and down he went — until he thumped upon what seemed to be, for all the world, like a floor of sharp pins, which made him bellow out in earnest. Then he heard a whisk and a hurra, and instantly voices beyond number cried out —

"Welcome, Tim Jarvis, dear!
Welcome, down here!"

Though Tim's teeth chattered like magpies with the fright, he continued to make answer— "I'm he-he-har-ti-ly ob-ob-liged to-to you all, gen-gentlemen, fo-for your civility to-to a poor stranger like myself." But though he had heard all the voices about him, he could see nothing, the place was so dark and so lonesome in itself for want of the light. Then something pulled Tim by the hair of his head, and dragged him, he did not know how far, but he knew he was going faster than the wind, for he heard it behind him, trying to keep up with him and it could not. On, on, on, he went, till all at once, and suddenly, he was stopped, and somebody came up to him, and said, “Well, Tim Jarvis, and how do you like your ride?”

“Mighty well! I thank your honour,” said Tim; “and ’twas a good beast I rode, surely!”

There was a great laugh at Tim’s answer; and then there was a whispering, and a great cugger mugger, and coshering; and at last, a pretty little bit of a voice said, “Shut your eyes, and you’ll see, Tim.”

“By my word, then,” said Tim, “that is the queer way of seeing; but I’m not the man to gainsay you, so I’ll do as you bid me, any how.” Presently he felt a small warm hand rubbed over his eyes with an ointment, and in the next minute he saw himself in the middle of thousands of little men and women, not half so high as his brogue, that were pelting one another with golden guineas and lily white thirteens, as if they were so much dirt. The finest dressed and the biggest of them all went up to Tim, and says he, “Tim Jarvis, because you are a decent, honest, quiet, civil, well-spoken man,” says he, “and know how to behave yourself in strange company, we’ve altered our minds about you, and will find a neighbour of yours that will do just as well to give to the old serpent.”

“Oh, then, long life to you, sir!” said Tim, “and there’s no doubt of that.”

“But what will you say, Tim,” inquired the little fellow, “if we fill your pockets with these yellow boys? What will you say, Tim, and what will you do with them?”

“Your honour’s honour, and your honour’s glory,” answered Tim, “I’ll not be able to say my prayers for one month with thanking you — and indeed I’ve enough to do with them. I’d make a grand lady, you see, at once of Norah — she has been a good wife to me. We’ll have a nice bit of pork for dinner; and, may be, I’d have a glass, or may be two glasses; or sometimes, if ’twas with a friend, or acquaintance, or gossip, you know, three glasses every day; and I’d build a new cabin; and I’d have a fresh egg every morning, myself, for my breakfast; and I’d snap my fingers at the ‘squire, and beat his hounds, if they’d come coursing through my fields; and I’d have a new plough; and Norah, your honour, would have a new cloak, and the boys would have shoes and stockings as well as Biddy Leary’s brats — that’s my sister that was — and Nelly would marry Bill Long of Affadown; and, your honour, I’d have some corduroy for myself to make breeches, and a cow, and a beautiful coat with shining buttons, and a horse to ride, or may be two. I’d have every thing,” said Tim, “in life, good or bad, that is to be got for love or money — hurra-whoop! — and that’s what I’d do.”

“Take care, Tim,” said the little fellow, “your money would not go faster than it came, with your hurra-whoop.”

But Tim heeded not this speech: heaps of gold were around him, and he filled and filled away as hard as he could, his coat and his waistcoat and his breeches pockets; and he thought himself very clever, moreover, because he stuffed some of the guineas into his brogues. When the little people perceived this, they cried out— “Go home, Tim Jarvis, go home, and think yourself a lucky man.”

“I hope, gentlemen,” said he, “we won’t part for good and all; but may be ye’ll ask me to see you again, and to give you a fair and square account of what I’ve done with your money.”

To this there was no answer, only another shout— “Go home, Tim Jarvis — go home — fair play is a jewel; but shut your eyes, or ye’ll never see the light of day again.”

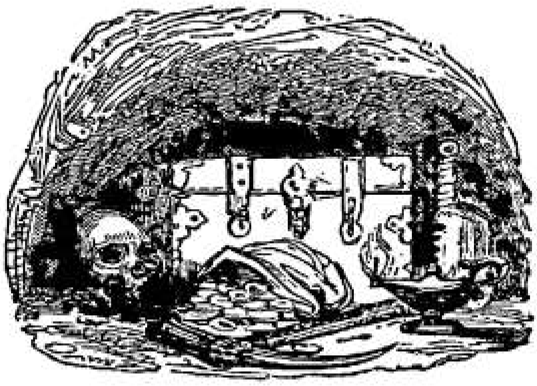
Tim shut his eyes, knowing now that was the way to see clearly; and away he was whisked as before — away, away he went till he again stopped all of a sudden.

He rubbed his eyes with his two thumbs — and where was he? Where, but in the very pit in the field that was Jer Driscoll’s, and his wife Norah above with a big stick ready to beat “her dreaming blackguard.” Tim roared out to the woman to leave the life in him, and put his hands in his pockets to show her the gold; but he pulled out nothing only a handful of small stones mixed with yellow furze blossoms. The bush was under him, and the great flag-stone that he had wrenched up, as he thought, was lying, as if it was never stirred, by his side: the whisky bottle was drained to the last drop; and the pit was just as his spade had made it.

Tim Jarvis, vexed, disappointed, and almost heart-broken, followed his wife home: and, strange to say, from that night he left off drinking, and dreaming, and delving in bog holes, and rooting in old caves. He took again to his hard-working habits, and was soon able to buy back his little cabin and former potato-garden, and to get all the enjoyment he anticipated from the fairy gold.

Give Tim one, or at most two glasses of whisky punch (and neither friend, acquaintance, nor gossip can make him take more,) and he will relate the story to you much better than you have it here. Indeed, it is worth going to Balledehob to hear him tell it. He always pledges himself to the truth of every word with his fore-fingers crossed; and when he comes to speak of the loss of his guineas, he never fails to console himself by adding— “If they stayed with me I wouldn’t have luck with them, sir; and father O’Shea told me ’twas as well for me they were changed, for if they hadn’t, they’d have burned holes in my pocket, and got out that way.”

I shall never forget his solemn countenance, and the deep tones of his warning voice, when he concluded his tale, by telling me, that the next day after his ride with the fairies, Mick Dowling was missing, and he believed him to be given to the *sarpint* in his place, as he had never been heard of since. “The blessing of the saints be between all good men and harm,” was the concluding sentence of Tim Jarvis’s narrative, as he flung the remaining drops from his glass upon the green sward.



RENT-DAY.

XXXV.

“Oh ullagone, ullagone! this is a wide world, but what will we do in it, or where will we go?” muttered Bill Doody, as he sat on a rock by the Lake of Killarney. “What will we do? to-morrow’s rent-day, and Tim the Driver swears if we don’t pay up our rent, he’ll cant every *ha’perth* we have; and then, sure enough, there’s Judy and myself, and the poor little *grawls*, will be turned out to starve on the high road, for the never a halfpenny of rent have I! — Oh hone, that ever I should live to see this day!”

Thus did Bill Doody bemoan his hard fate, pouring his sorrows to the reckless waves of the most beautiful of lakes, which seemed to mock his misery as they rejoiced beneath the cloudless sky of a May morning. That lake, glittering in sunshine, sprinkled with fairy isles of rock and verdure, and bounded by giant hills of ever-varying hues, might, with its magic beauty, charm all sadness but despair; for alas,

“How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree!”

Yet Bill Doody was not so desolate as he supposed; there was one listening to him he little thought of, and help was at hand from a quarter he could not have expected.

“What’s the matter with you, my poor man?” said a tall portly-looking gentleman, at the same time stepping out of a furze-brake. Now Bill was seated on a rock that commanded the view of a large field. Nothing in the field could be concealed from him, except this furze-brake, which grew in a hollow near the margin of the lake. He was, therefore, not a little surprised at the gentleman’s sudden appearance, and began to question whether the personage before him belonged to this world or not. He, however, soon mustered courage sufficient to tell him how his crops had failed, how some bad member had charmed away his butter, and how Tim the Driver threatened to turn him out of the farm if he didn’t pay up every penny of the rent by twelve o’clock next day.

“A sad story indeed,” said the stranger; “but surely, if you represented the case to your landlord’s agent, he won’t have the heart to turn you out.”

“Heart, your honour! where would an agent get a heart!” exclaimed Bill. “I see your honour does not know him: besides, he has an eye on the farm this long time for a fosterer of his own; so I expect no mercy at all at all, only to be turned out.”

“Take this, my poor fellow, take this,” said the stranger, pouring a purse-full of gold into Bill’s old hat, which in his grief he had flung on the ground. “Pay the fellow your rent, but I’ll take care it shall do him no good. I remember the time when things went otherwise in this country, when I would have hung up such a fellow in the twinkling of an eye!”

These words were lost upon Bill, who was insensible to every thing but the sight of the gold, and before he could unfix his gaze, and lift up his head to pour out his hundred thousand blessings, the stranger was gone. The bewildered peasant looked around in search of his benefactor, and at last he thought he saw him riding on a white horse a long way off on the lake.

"O'Donoghue, O'Donoghue!" shouted Bill; "the good, the blessed O'Donoghue!" and he ran capering like a madman to show Judy the gold, and to rejoice her heart with the prospect of wealth and happiness.

The next day Bill proceeded to the agent's; not sneakingly, with his hat in his hand, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his knees bending under him; but bold and upright, like a man conscious of his independence.

"Why don't you take off your hat, fellow; don't you know you are speaking to a magistrate?" said the agent.

"I know I'm not speaking to the king, sir," said Bill; "and I never takes off my hat but to them I can respect and love. The Eye that sees all knows I've no right either to respect or love an agent!"

"You scoundrel!" retorted the man in office, biting his lips with rage at such an unusual and unexpected opposition, "I'll teach you how to be insolent again — I have the power, remember."

"To the cost of the country, I know you have," said Bill, who still remained with his head as firmly covered as if he was the lord Kingsale himself.

"But come," said the magistrate; "have you got the money for me? — this is rent-day. If there's one penny of it wanting, or the running gale that's due, prepare to turn out before night, for you shall not remain another hour in possession."

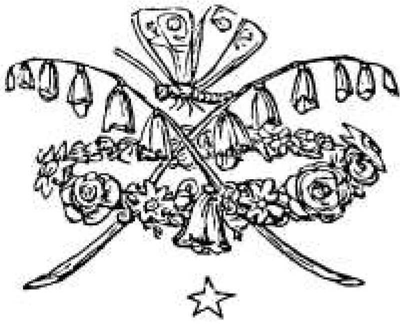
"There is your rent," said Bill, with an unmoved expression of tone and countenance; "you'd better count it, and give me a receipt in full for the running gale and all."

The agent gave a look of amazement at the gold; for it was gold — real guineas! and not bits of dirty ragged small notes, that are only fit to light one's pipe with. However willing the agent may have been to ruin, as he thought, the unfortunate tenant, he took up the gold, and handed the receipt to Bill, who strutted off with it as proud as a cat of her whiskers.

The agent going to his desk shortly after, was confounded at beholding a heap of gingerbread cakes instead of the money he had deposited there. He raved and swore, but all to no purpose; the gold had become gingerbread cakes, just marked like the guineas, with the king's head, and Bill had the receipt in his pocket; so he saw there was no use in saying any thing about the affair, as he would only get laughed at for his pains.

From that hour Bill Doody grew rich; all his undertakings prospered; and he often blesses the day that he met with O'Donoghue, the great prince that lives down under the lake of Killarney.

Like the butterfly, the spirit of O'Donoghue closely hovers over the perfume of the hills and flowers it loves; while, as the reflection of a star in the waters of a pure lake, to those who look not above, that glorious spirit is believed to dwell beneath.



LINN-NA-PAYSHTHA.

XXXVI.

Travellers go to Leinster to see Dublin and the Dargle; to Ulster, to see the Giant’s Causeway, and, perhaps, to do penance at Lough Dearg; to Munster, to see Killarney, the beautiful city of Cork, and half a dozen other fine things; but who ever thinks of the fourth province? — who ever thinks of going —

— “westward, where Dick Martin *ruled*
The houseless wilds of Cunnemara?”

The Ulster-man’s ancient denunciation “to hell or to Connaught,” has possibly led to the supposition that this is a sort of infernal place above ground — a kind of terrestrial Pandemonium — in short, that Connaught is little better than hell, or hell little worse than Connaught; but let any one only go there for a month, and, as the natives say, “I’ll warrant he’ll soon see the differ, and learn to understand that it is mighty like the rest o’ green Erin, only something poorer;” and yet it might be thought that in this particular “worse would be needless;” but so it is.

“My gracious me,” said the landlady of the Inn at Sligo, “I wonder a gentleman of your *teeste* and *curosity* would think of leaving Ireland without making a *tower* (tour) of Connaught, if it was nothing more than spending a day at Hazlewood, and up the lake, and on to the *ould* abbey at Friarstown, and the castle at Dromahair.”

Polly M’Bride, my kind hostess, might not in this remonstrance have been altogether disinterested; but her advice prevailed, and the dawn of the following morning found me in a boat on the unruffled surface of Lough Gill. Arrived at the head of that splendid sheet of water, covered with rich and wooded islands with their ruined buildings, and bounded by towering mountains, noble plantations, grassy slopes, and precipitous rocks, which give beauty, and, in some places, sublimity to its shores, I proceeded at once up the wide river which forms its principal tributary. The “old abbey” is chiefly remarkable for having been built at a period nearer to the Reformation than any other ecclesiastical edifice of the same class. Full within view of it, and at the distance of half a mile, stands the shattered remnant of Breffni’s princely hall. I strode forward with the enthusiasm of an antiquary, and the high-beating heart of a patriotic Irishman. I felt myself on classic ground, immortalized by the lays of Swift and of Moore. I pushed my way into the hallowed precincts of the grand and venerable edifice. I entered its chambers, and, oh my countrymen, I found them converted into the domicile of pigs, cows, and poultry! But the exterior of “O’Rourke’s old hall,” gray, frowning, and ivy-covered, is well enough; it stands on a beetling precipice, round which a noble river wheels its course. The opposite bank is a very steep ascent, thickly wooded, and rising to a height of at least seventy feet; and, for a quarter of a mile, this beautiful copse follows the course of the river.

The first individual I encountered was an old cowherd; nor was I unfortunate in my cicerone, for he assured me there were plenty of old stories about strange things that used to be in the place; "but," continued he, "for my own share, I never met any thing worse nor myself. If it bees ould stories that your honour's after, the story about Linnna-Payshtha and Poul-maw-Gullyawn is the only thing about this place that's worth one jack-straw. Does your honour see that great big black hole in the river yonder below?" He pointed my attention to a part of the river about fifty yards from the old hall, where a long island occupied the centre of the wide current, the water at one side running shallow, and at the other assuming every appearance of unfathomable depth. The spacious pool, dark and still, wore a death-like quietude of surface. It looked as if the speckled trout would shun its murky precincts — as if even the daring pike would shrink from so gloomy a dwelling-place. "That's Linn-na-Payshtha, sir," resumed my guide, "and Poul-maw-Gullyawn is just the very *moral* of it, only that it's round, and not in a river, but standing out in the middle of a green field, about a short quarter of a mile from this. Well, 'tis as good as fourscore years — I often *hard* my father, God be merciful to him! tell the story — since Manus O'Rourke, a great buckeen, a cockfighting, drinking blackguard that was long ago, went to sleep one night, and had a dream about Linn-na-Payshtha. This Manus, the dirty spalpeen, there was no ho with him; he thought to ride rough-shod over his betters through the whole country, though he was not one of the real stock of the O'Rourkes. Well, this fellow had a dream that if he dived in Linn-na-Payshtha at twelve o'clock of a Hollow-eve night, he'd find more gold than would make a man of him and his wife, while grass grew or water ran. The next night he had the same dream, and sure enough, if he had it the second night, it came to him the third in the same form. Manus, well becomes him, never told mankind or womankind, but swore to himself, by all the books that were ever shut or open, that, any how, he would go to the bottom of the big hole. What did he care for the Payshtha-more that was lying there to keep guard on the gold and silver of the old ancient family that was buried there in the wars, packed up in the brewing-pan? Sure he was as good an O'Rourke as the best of them, taking care to forget that his grandmother's father was a cow-boy to the earl O'Donnel. At long last Hollow-eve comes, and sly and silent master Manus creeps to bed early, and just at midnight steals down to the river-side. When he came to the bank his mind misgave him, and he wheeled up to Frank M'Clure's — the old Frank that was then at that time — and got a bottle of whisky, and took it with him, and 'tis unknown how much of it he drank. He walked across to the island, and down he went gallantly to the bottom like a stone. Sure enough the Payshtha was there afore him, lying like a great big conger eel, seven yards long, and as thick as a bull in the body, with a mane upon his neck like a horse. The Payshtha-more reared himself up; and, looking at the poor man as if he'd eat him, says he, in good English, "'Arrah, then, Manus,' says he, 'what brought you here? It would have been better for you to have blown your brains out at once with a pistol, and have made a quiet end of yourself, than to have come down here for me to deal with you.'

"'Oh, plase your honour,' says Manus, 'I beg my life:' and there he stood shaking like a dog in a wet sack.

"'Well, as you have some blood of the O'Rourkes in you, I forgive you this once; but, by this and by that, if ever I see you, or any one belonging to you, coming about this place again, I'll hang a quarter of you on every tree in the wood.'

"'Go home,' says the Payshtha— 'go home, Manus,' says he; 'and if you can't make better use of your time, get drunk; but don't come here, bothering me. Yet, stop! since you are here, and have ventured to come, I'll show you something that you'll remember till you go to your grave, and ever after, while you live.'

"With that, my dear, he opens an iron door in the bed of the river, and never the drop of water ran into it; and there Manus sees a long dry cave, or under-ground cellar like, and the Payshtha drags him in, and shuts the door. It wasn't long before the baste began to get smaller, and smaller, and smaller; and at last he grew as little as a taughn of twelve years old; and there he was a brownish little man, about four feet high.

"'Plase your honour,' says Manus, 'if I might make so bold, may be you are one of the good people?'

"'May be I am, and may be I am not; but, any how, all you have to understand is this, that I'm bound to look after the Thiernas of Breffni, and take care of them through every generation; and that my present business is to watch this cave, and what's in it, till the old stock is reigning over this country once more.'

"'May be you are a sort of a banshee?'

"'I am not, you fool,' said the little man. 'The banshee is a woman. My business is to live in the form you first saw me, in guarding this spot. And now hold your tongue, and look about you.'

"Manus rubbed his eyes and looked right and left, before and behind; and there were the vessels of gold and the vessels of silver, the dishes, and the plates, and the cups, and the punch-bowls, and the tankards: there was the golden mether, too, that every Thierna at his wedding used to drink out of to the kerne in real usquebaugh. There was all the money that ever was saved in the family since they got a grant of this manor, in the days of the Firbolgs, down to the time of their outer ruination. He then brought Manus on with him to where there was arms for three hundred men; and the sword set with diamonds, and the golden helmet of the O'Rourke; and he showed him the staff made out of an elephant's tooth, and set with rubies and gold, that the Thierna used to hold while he sat in his great hall, giving justice and the laws of the Brehons to all his clan. The first room in the cave, ye see, had the money and the plate, the second room had the arms, and the third had the books, papers, parchments, title-deeds, wills, and every thing else of the sort belonging to the family.

"'And now, Manus,' says the little man, 'ye seen the whole o' this, and go your ways; but never come to this place any more, or allow any one else. I must keep watch and ward till the Sassanach is druv out of Ireland, and the Thiernas o' Breffni in their glory again.' The little man then stopped for awhile and looked up in Manus's face, and says to him in a great passion, 'Arrah! bad luck to ye, Manus, why don't ye go about your business?'

"'How can I? — sure you must show me the way out,' says Manus, making answer. The little man then pointed forward with his finger.

"'Can't we go out the way we came?' says Manus.

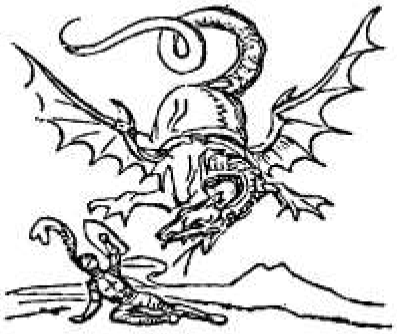
"'No, you must go out at the other end — that's the rule o' this place. Ye came in at Linn-na-Payshtha, and you must go out at Poul-maw-Gullyawn: ye came down like a stone to the bottom of one hole, and ye must spring up like a cork to the top of the other.' With that the little man gave him one *hoise*, and all that Manus remembers was the roar of the water in his ears; and sure enough he was found the next morning, high and dry, fast asleep with the empty bottle beside him, but far enough from the place he thought he landed, for it was just below yonder on the island that his wife found him. My father, God be merciful to him! heard Manus swear to every word of the story."

As there are few things which excite human desire throughout all nations more than wealth, the legends concerning the concealment, discovery and circulation of money, are, as may be expected, widely extended; yet in all the circumstances, which admit of so much fanciful embellishment, there every where exists a striking similarity.

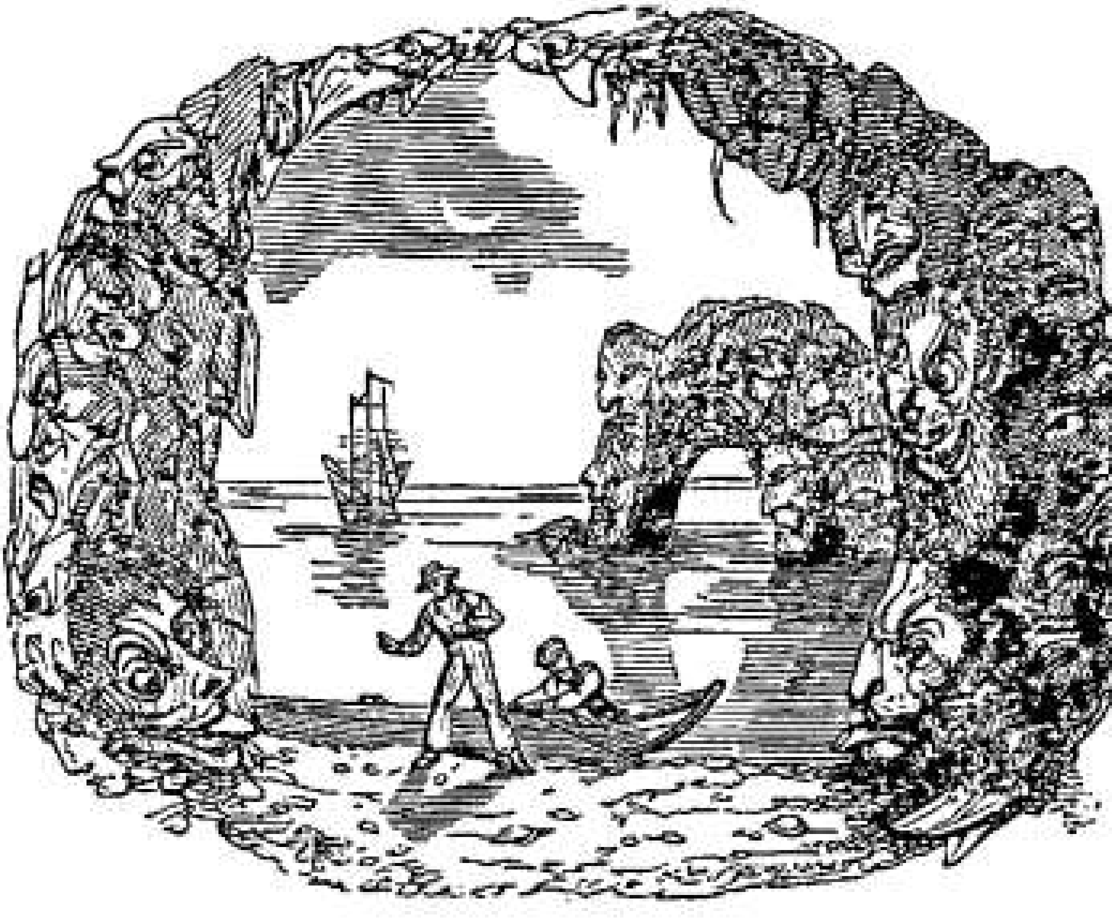
Like the golden apples of the Hesperides, treasure is guarded by a dragon or serpent. Vide Creuzer, Religions de l'Antiquite, traduction de Guigniaut, i. 248. Paris, 1825. Stories of its discovery in consequence of dreams or spiritual agency are so numerous, that, if collected, they would fill many volumes, yet they vary little in detail beyond the actors and locality. Vide Grimm's Deutsche Sagen, i. 290. Thiele's Danske Folkesagn, i. 112, ii. 24. Kirke's Secret Commonwealth, , &c.

The circulation of money bestowed by the fairies or supernatural personages, like that of counterfeit coin, is seldom extensive. See story, in the Arabian Nights, of the old rogue whose fine-looking money turned to leaves. When Waldemar, Holgar, and Grœn Jette in Danish tradition, bestow money upon the boors whom they meet, their gift sometimes turns to fire, sometimes to pebbles, and sometimes is so hot, that the receiver drops it from his hand, when the gold, or what appeared to be so, sinks into the ground.

In poor Ireland, the wretched peasant contents himself by soliloquizing—"Money is the devil, they say; and God is good that He keeps it from us."



ROCKS AND STONES.



“Forms in silence frown’d,
Shapeless and nameless; and to mine eye
Sometimes they rolled off cloudily,
Wedding themselves with gloom — or grew
Gigantic to my troubled view,
And seem’d to gather round me.”

Banim’s *Celt’s Paradise*.

THE LEGEND OF CAIRN THIERNA.

XXXVII.

From the town of Fermoy, famous for the excellence of its bottled ale, you may plainly see the mountain of Cairn Thierna. It is crowned with a great heap of stones, which, as the country people remark, never came there without “a crooked thought and a cross job.” Strange it is, that any work of the good old times should be considered one of labour; for round towers then sprung up like mushrooms in one night, and people played marbles with pieces of rock, that can now no more be moved than the hills themselves.

This great pile on the top of Cairn Thierna was caused by the words of an old woman, whose bed still remains — *Labacally*, the hag’s bed — not far from the village of Glanworth. She was certainly far wiser than any woman, either old or young, of my immediate acquaintance. Jove defend me, however, from making an envious comparison between ladies; but facts are stubborn things, and the legend will prove my assertion.

O’Keefe was lord of Fermoy before the Roches came into that part of the country; and he had an only son — never was there seen a finer child; his young face filled with innocent joy was enough to make any heart glad, yet his father looked on his smiles with sorrow, for an old hag had foretold that this boy should be drowned before he grew up to manhood.

Now, although the prophecies of Pastorini were a failure, it is no reason why prophecies should altogether be despised. The art in modern times may be lost, as well as that of making beer out of the mountain heath, which the Danes did to great perfection. But I take it, the malt of Tom Walker is no bad substitute for the one; and if evil prophecies were to come to pass, like the old woman’s, in my opinion we are far more comfortable without such knowledge.

“Infant heir of proud Fermoy,
Fear not fields of slaughter;
Storm and fire fear not, my boy,
But shun the fatal water.”

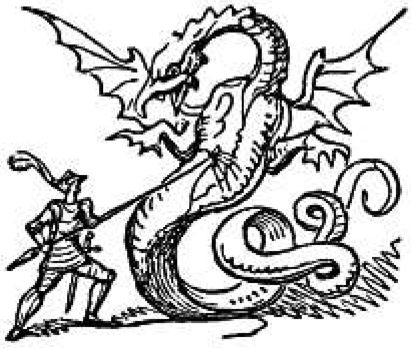
These were the warning words which caused the chief of Fermoy so much unhappiness. His infant son was carefully prevented all approach to the river, and anxious watch was kept over every playful movement. The child grew up in strength and in beauty, and every day became more dear to his father, who, hoping to avert the doom, which, however, was inevitable, prepared to build a castle far removed from the dreaded element.

The top of Cairn Thierna was the place chosen; and the lord’s vassals were assembled, and employed in collecting materials for the purpose. Hither came the fated boy; with delight he viewed the laborious work of raising mighty stones from the base to the summit of the mountain, until the vast heap which now forms its rugged crest was accumulated. The workmen were about to commence the building, and the boy, who was considered in safety when on the mountain, was allowed to rove about at will. In his case how true are the words of the great dramatist:

— — "Put but a little water in a spoon,
And it shall be, as all the ocean,
Enough to stifle such a *being* up."

A vessel which contained a small supply of water, brought there for the use of the workmen, attracted the attention of the child. He saw, with wonder, the glitter of the sunbeams within it; he approached more near to gaze, when a form resembling his own arose before him. He gave a cry of joy and astonishment and drew back; the image drew back also, and vanished. Again he approached; again the form appeared, expressing in every feature delight corresponding with his own. Eager to welcome the young stranger, he bent over the vessel to press his lips; and, losing his balance, the fatal prophecy was accomplished.

The father in despair abandoned the commenced building; and the materials remain a proof of the folly of attempting to avert the course of fate.



THE ROCK OF THE CANDLE.

XXXVIII.

A few miles west of Limerick stands the once formidable castle of Carrigogunnel. Its riven tower and broken archway remain in mournful evidence of the sieges sustained by that city. Time, however, the great soother of all things, has destroyed the painful effect which the view of recent violence produces on the mind. The ivy creeps around the riven tower, concealing its injuries, and upholding it by a tough swathing of stalks. The archway is again united by the long-armed brier which grows across the rent, and the shattered buttresses are decorated with wild flowers, which gaily spring from their crevices and broken places.

Boldly situated on a rock, the ruined walls of Carrigogunnel now form only a romantic feature in the peaceful landscape. Beneath them, on one side, lies the flat marshy ground called Corcass land, which borders the noble river Shannon; on the other side is seen the neat parish church of Kilkeedy, with its glebe-house and surrounding improvements; and at a short distance appear the irregular mud cabins of the little village of Ballybrown, with the venerable trees of Tervoo.

On the rock of Carrigogunnel, before the castle was built, or Brien Boro born to build it, dwelt a hag named Grana, who made desolate the surrounding country. She was gigantic in size, and frightful in appearance. Her eyebrows grew into each other with a grim curve, and beneath their matted bristles, deeply sunk in her head, two small gray eyes darted forth baneful looks of evil. From her deeply-wrinkled forehead issued forth a hooked beak, dividing two shrivelled cheeks. Her skinny lips curled with a cruel and malignant expression, and her prominent chin was studded with bunches of grisly hair.

Death was her sport. Like the angler with his rod, the hag Grana would toil, and watch, nor think it labour, so that the death of a victim rewarded her vigils. Every evening did she light an enchanted candle upon the rock, and whoever looked upon it died before the next morning's sun arose. Numberless were the victims over whom Grana rejoiced; one after the other had seen the light, and their death was the consequence. Hence came the country round to be desolate, and Carrigogunnel, the Rock of the Candle, by its dreaded name.

These were fearful times to live in. But the Finnii of Erin were the avengers of the oppressed. Their fame had gone forth to distant shores, and their deeds were sung by a hundred bards. To them the name of danger was an invitation to a rich banquet. The web of enchantment stopped their course as little as the swords of an enemy. Many a mother of a son — many a wife of a husband — many a sister of a brother, had the valour of the Finnian heroes bereft. Dismembered limbs quivered, and heads bounded on the ground before their progress in battle. They rushed forward with the strength of the furious wind, tearing up the trees of the forest by their roots. Loud was their warcry as the thunder, raging was their impetuosity above that of common men, and fierce was their anger as the stormy waves of the ocean!

It was the mighty Finn himself who lifted up his voice, and commanded the fatal candle of the hag Grana to be extinguished. “Thine, Regan, be the task,” he said, and to him he gave a cap thrice charmed by the magician Luno of Lochlin.

With the star of the same evening the candle of death burned on the rock, and Regan stood beneath it. Had he beheld the slightest glimmer of its blaze, he, too, would have perished, and the hag Grana, with the morning’s dawn, rejoiced over his corse. When Regan looked towards the light, the charmed cap fell over his eyes and prevented his seeing. The rock was steep, but he climbed up its craggy side with such caution and dexterity, that, before the hag was aware, the warrior, with averted head, had seized the candle, and flung it with prodigious force into the river Shannon; the hissing waters of which quenched its light for ever!

Then flew the charmed cap from the eyes of Regan, and he beheld the enraged hag, with outstretched arms, prepared to seize and whirl him after her candle. Regan instantly bounded westward from the rock just two miles, with a wild and wondrous spring. Grana looked for a moment at the leap, and then tearing up a huge fragment of the rock, flung it after Regan with such tremendous force, that her crooked hands trembled and her broad chest heaved with heavy puffs, like a smith’s labouring bellows, from the exertion.

The ponderous stone fell harmless to the ground, for the leap of Regan far exceeded the strength of the furious hag. In triumph he returned to Fin;

“The hero valiant, renowned, and learned;
White-tooth’d, graceful, magnanimous, and active.”

The hag Grana was never heard of more; but the stone remains, and deeply imprinted in it, is still to be seen the mark of the hag’s fingers. That stone is far taller than the tallest man, and the power of forty men would fail to move it from the spot where it fell.

The grass may wither around it, the spade and plough destroy dull heaps of earth, the walls of castles fall and perish, but the fame of the Finnii of Erin endures with the rocks themselves, and *Clough-a-Regaun* is a monument fitting to preserve the memory of the deed!

CLOUGH NA CUDDY.

XXXIX.

Above all the islands in the lakes of Killarney give me Innisfallen— “sweet Innisfallen,” as the melodious Moore calls it. It is, in truth, a fairy isle, although I have no fairy story to tell you about it; and if I had, these are such unbelieving times, and people of late have grown so skeptical, that they only smile at my stories, and doubt them.

However, none will doubt that a monastery once stood upon Innisfallen island, for its ruins may still be seen; neither, that within its walls dwelt certain pious and learned persons called Monks. A very pleasant set of fellows they were, I make not the smallest doubt; and I am sure of this, that they had a very pleasant spot to enjoy themselves in after dinner — the proper time, believe me, and I am no bad judge of such matters, for the enjoyment of a fine prospect.

Out of all the monks you could not pick a better fellow nor a merrier soul than Father Cuddy; he sung a good song, he told a good story, and had a jolly, comfortable-looking paunch of his own, that was a credit to any refectory table. He was distinguished above all the rest by the name of “the fat father.” Now there are many that will take huff at a name; but Father Cuddy had no nonsense of that kind about him; he laughed at it — and well able he was to laugh, for his mouth nearly reached from one ear to the other: his might, in truth, be called an open countenance. As his paunch was no disgrace to his food, neither was his nose to his drink. ’Tis a doubt to me if there were not more carbuncles upon it than ever were seen at the bottom of the lake, which is said to be full of them. His eyes had a right merry twinkle in them, like moonshine dancing on the water; and his cheeks had the roundness and crimson glow of ripe arbutus berries.

“He ate, and drank, and prayed, and slept. — What then?
He ate, and drank, and prayed, and slept again!”

Such was the tenor of his simple life: but when he prayed a certain drowsiness would come upon him, which, it must be confessed, never occurred when a well-filled “blackjack” stood before him. Hence his prayers were short and his draughts were long. The world loved him, and he saw no good reason why he should not in return love its venison and usquebaugh. But, as times went, he must have been a pious man, or else what befell him never would have happened.

Spiritual affairs — for it was respecting the importation of a tun of wine into the island monastery — demanded the presence of one of the brotherhood of Innisfallen at the abbey of Irelagh, now called Mucruss. The superintendence of this important matter was committed to Father Cuddy, who felt too deeply interested in the future welfare of any community of which he was a member, to neglect or delay such mission. With the morning's light he was seen guiding his shallop across the crimson waters of the lake towards the peninsula of Mucruss; and having moored his little bark in safety beneath the shelter of a wave-worn rock, he advanced with becoming dignity towards the abbey.

The stillness of the bright and balmy hour was broken by the heavy footsteps of the zealous father. At the sound the startled deer, shaking the dew from their sides, sprung up from their lair, and as they bounded off— "Hah!" exclaimed Cuddy, "what a noble haunch goes there! — how delicious it would look smoking upon a goodly platter!"

As he proceeded, the mountain-bee hummed his tune of gladness around the holy man, save when he buried in the foxglove bell, or revelling upon a fragrant bunch of thyme; and even then the little voice murmured out happiness in low and broken tones of voluptuous delight. Father Cuddy derived no small comfort from the sound, for it presaged a good metheglin season, and metheglin he regarded, if well manufactured, to be no bad liquor, particularly when there was no stint of usquebaugh in the brewing.

Arrived within the abbey garth, he was received with due respect by the brethren of Irelagh, and arrangements for the embarkation of the wine were completed to his entire satisfaction. "Welcome, Father Cuddy," said the prior: "grace be on you."

"Grace before meat, then," said Cuddy, "for a long walk always makes me hungry, and I am certain I have not walked less than half a mile this morning, to say nothing of crossing the water."

A pasty of choice flavour felt the truth of this assertion, as regarded Father Cuddy's appetite. After such consoling repast, it would have been a reflection on monastic hospitality to depart without partaking of the grace-cup; moreover, Father Cuddy had a particular respect for the antiquity of that custom. He liked the taste of the grace-cup well: — he tried another, — it was no less excellent; and when he had swallowed the third he found his heart expand, and put forth its fibres, willing to embrace all mankind. Surely, then, there is Christian love and charity in wine!

I said he sung a good song. Now though psalms are good songs, and in accordance with his vocation, I did not mean to imply that he was a mere psalm-singer. It was well known to the brethren, that wherever Father Cuddy was, mirth and melody were with him; mirth in his eye and melody on his tongue; and these, from experience, are equally well known to be thirsty commodities; but he took good care never to let them run dry. To please the brotherhood, whose excellent wine pleased him, he sung, and as "*in vino veritas*" his song will well become this veritable history.

CANTAT MONACHUS.

I.

Hoc erat in votis,
Et bene sufficerit totis
Si dum porto sacculum

Bonum esset ubique jentaculum!
Et si parvis
In arvis
Nullam
Invenero pullam,
Ovum gentiliter preæbebit recens
Puella decens.
Manu nec dabis invitâ
Flos vallium harum,
Decus puellarum,
Candida Marguerita!

THE FRIAR’S SONG.

I.

My vows I can never fulfil,
Until
I have breakfasted, one way or other;
And I freely protest,
That I never can rest
‘Till I borrow or beg
An egg,
Unless I can come at the ould hen, its mother.
But Maggy, my dear,
While you’re here,
I don’t fear
To want eggs that have just been laid newly;
For och! you’re a pearl
Of a girl,
And you’re called so in *Latin* most truly.

II.

Me hora jucunda cœnæ
Dilectat bene,
Et rerum sine dubio grandium
Maxima est prandium:
Sed mihi crede,
In hâc æde,
Multo magis gaudeo,
Cum gallicantum audio,
In sinu tuo
Videns ova duo.
Oh semper me tractes ita!
Panibus de hordeo factis,
Et copiâ lactis,

Candida Margarita!

III.

There is most to my mind something that is still upper
Than supper,
Though it must be admitted I feel no way thinner
After dinner:
But soon as I hear the cock crow
In the morning,
That eggs you are bringing full surely I know,
By that warning,
While your buttermilk helps me to float
Down my throat
Those sweet cakes made of oat.
I don't envy an earl,
Sweet girl,
Och, 'tis you are a beautiful pearl.

Such was his song. Father Cuddy smacked his lips at the recollection of Margery's delicious fried eggs, which always imparted a peculiar relish to his liquor. The very idea provoked Cuddy to raise the cup to his mouth, and with one hearty pull thereat he finished its contents.

This is, and ever was a censorious world, often construing what is only a fair allowance into an excess: but I scorn to reckon up any man's drink, like an unrelenting host; therefore, I cannot tell how many brimming draughts of wine, bedecked with *the venerable Bead*, Father Cuddy emptied into his "soul-case," so he figuratively termed the body.

His respect for the goodly company of the monks of Irelagh detained him until their adjournment to vespers, when he set forward on his return to Innisfallen. Whether his mind was occupied in philosophic contemplation or wrapped in pious musings, I cannot declare, but the honest father wandered on in a different direction from that in which his shallop lay. Far be it from me to insinuate that the good liquor, which he had so commended caused him to forget his road, or that his track was irregular and unsteady. Oh no! — he carried his drink bravely, as became a decent man and a good Christian; yet somehow, he thought he could distinguish two moons. "Bless my eyes," said Father Cuddy, "every thing is changing now-a-days! — the very stars are not in the same places they used to be; I think *Camceachta* (the Plough) is driving on at a rate I never saw it before to-night; but I suppose the driver is drunk, for there are blackguards every where."

Cuddy had scarcely uttered these words, when he saw, or fancied he saw, the form of a young woman, who, holding up a bottle, beckoned him towards her. The night was extremely beautiful, and the white dress of the girl floated gracefully in the moonlight, as with gay step she tripped on before the worthy father, archly looking back upon him over her shoulder.

"Ah, Margery, merry Margery!" cried Cuddy, "you tempting little rogue!

'Flos vallium harum,
Decus puellarum,
Candida Margarita.'

"I see you, I see you and the bottle! let me but catch you, Candida Margarita!" and on he followed, panting and smiling, after this alluring apparition.

At length his feet grew weary, and his breath failed, which obliged him to give up the chase; yet such was his piety, that unwilling to rest in any attitude but that of prayer, down dropped Father Cuddy on his knees. Sleep, as usual, stole upon his devotions; and the morning was far advanced, when he awoke from dreams, in which tables groaned beneath their load of viands, and wine poured itself free and sparkling as the mountain spring.

Rubbing his eyes, he looked about him, and the more he looked the more he wondered at the alteration which appeared in the face of the country. "Bless my soul and body!" said the good father, "I saw the stars changing last night, but here is a change!" Doubting his senses, he looked again. The hills bore the same majestic outline as on the preceding day, and the lake spread itself beneath his view in the same tranquil beauty, and studded with the same number of islands; but every smaller feature in the landscape was strangely altered. What had been naked rocks were now clothed with holly and arbutus. Whole woods had disappeared, and waste places had become cultivated fields; and, to complete the work of enchantment, the very season itself seemed changed. In the rosy dawn of a summer's morning he had left the monastery of Innisfallen, and he now felt in every sight and sound the dreariness of winter. The hard ground was covered with withered leaves; icicles depended from leafless branches; he heard the sweet low note of the robin, who familiarly approached him; and he felt his fingers numbed from the nipping frost. Father Cuddy found it rather difficult to account for such sudden transformations, and to convince himself it was not the illusion of a dream, he was about to rise, when lo! he discovered that both his knees were buried at least six inches in the solid stone; for, notwithstanding all these changes, he had never altered his devout position.

Cuddy was now wide awake, and felt, when he got up, his joints sadly cramped, which it was only natural they should be, considering the hard texture of the stone, and the depth his knees had sunk into it. But the great difficulty was to explain how, in one night, summer had become winter, whole woods had been cut down, and well-grown trees had sprouted up. The miracle, nothing else could he conclude it to be, urged him to hasten his return to Innisfallen, where he might learn some explanation of these marvellous events.

Seeing a boat moored within reach of the shore, he delayed not, in the midst of such wonders, to seek his own bark, but, seizing the oars, pulled stoutly towards the island; and here new wonders awaited him.

Father Cuddy waddled, as fast as cramped limbs could carry his rotund corporation, to the gate of the monastery, where he loudly demanded admittance.

"Holloa! whence come you, master monk, and what's your business?" demanded a stranger who occupied the porter's place.

"Business! — my business!" repeated the confounded Cuddy,— "why, do you not know me? Has the wine arrived safely?"

"Hence, fellow!" said the porter's representative, in a surly tone; "nor think to impose on me with your monkish tales."

"Fellow!" exclaimed the father: "mercy upon us, that I should be so spoken to at the gate of my own house! — Scoundrel!" cried Cuddy, raising his voice, "do you not see my garb — my holy garb?"

"Ay, fellow," replied he of the keys— "the garb of laziness and filthy debauchery, which has been expelled from out these walls. Know you not, idle knave, of the suppression of this nest of superstition, and that the abbey lands and possessions were granted in August last to Master Robert Collam, by our Lady Elizabeth, sovereign queen of England, and paragon of all beauty — whom God preserve!"

"Queen of England!" said Cuddy; "there never was a sovereign queen of England — this is but a piece with the rest. I saw how it was going with the stars last night — the world's turned upside down. But surely this is Innisfallen island, and I am the Father Cuddy who yesterday morning went over to the abbey of Irelagh, respecting the tun of wine. Do you not know me now?"

"Know you! — how should I know you?" said the keeper of the abbey. "Yet, true it is, that I have heard my grandmother, whose mother remembered the man, often speak of the fat Father Cuddy of Innisfallen, who made a profane and godless ballad in praise of fresh eggs, of which he and his vile crew knew more than they did of the word of God; and who, being drunk, it is said, tumbled into the lake one night, and was drowned; but that must have been a hundred, ay, more than a hundred years since."

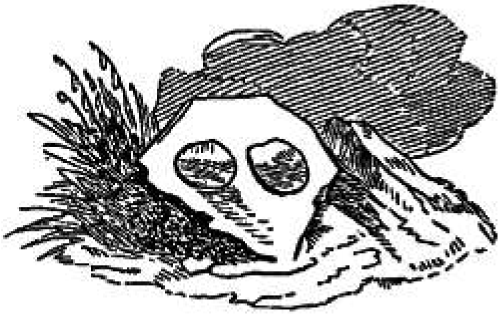
"'Twas I who composed that song in praise of Margery's fresh eggs, which is no profane and godless ballad — no other Father Cuddy than myself ever belonged to Innisfallen," earnestly exclaimed the holy man. "A hundred years! — what was your great-grandmother's name?"

"She was a Mahony of Dunlow — Margaret ni Mahony; and my grandmother—"

"What! merry Margery of Dunlow your great-grandmother!" shouted Cuddy. "St. Brandon help me! — the wicked wench, with that tempting bottle! — why, 'twas only last night — a hundred years! — your great-grandmother, said you? — There has, indeed, been a strange torpor over me; I must have slept all this time!"

That Father Cuddy had done so, I think is sufficiently proved by the changes which occurred during his nap. A reformation, and a serious one it was for him, had taken place. Pretty Margery's fresh eggs were no longer to be had in Innisfallen; and with a heart as heavy as his footsteps, the worthy man directed his course towards Dingle, where he embarked in a vessel on the point of sailing for Malaga. The rich wine of that place had of old impressed him with a high respect for its monastic establishments, in one of which he quietly wore out the remainder of his days.

The stone impressed with the mark of Father Cuddy's knees may be seen to this day. Should any incredulous persons doubt my story, I request them to go to Killarney, where Clough na Cuddy — so is the stone called — remains in Lord Kenmare's park, an indisputable evidence of the fact. Spillane, the bugle-man, will be able to point it out to them, as he did so to me; and here is my sketch by which they may identify it.



THE GIANT’S STAIRS.

XL.

On the road between Passage and Cork there is an old mansion called Ronayne’s Court. It may be easily known from the stack of chimneys and the gable ends, which are to be seen, look at it which way you will. Here it was that Maurice Ronayne and his wife Margaret Gould kept house, as may be learned to this day from the great old chimney-piece, on which is carved their arms. They were a mighty worthy couple, and had but one son, who was called Philip, after no less a person than the king of Spain.

Immediately on his smelling the cold air of this world the child sneezed; and it was naturally taken to be a good sign of having a clear head; but the subsequent rapidity of his learning was truly amazing; for on the very first day a primer was put into his hand, he tore out the A, B, C page and destroyed it, as a thing quite beneath his notice. No wonder then that both father and mother were proud of their heir, who gave such indisputable proofs of genius, or, as they call it in that part of the world, “*genus*.”

One morning, however, Master Phil, who was then just seven years old, was missing, and no one could tell what had become of him: servants were sent in all directions to seek him, on horseback and on foot; but they returned without any tidings of the boy, whose disappearance altogether was most unaccountable. A large reward was offered, but it produced them no intelligence, and years rolled away without Mr. and Mrs. Ronayne having obtained any satisfactory account of the fate of their lost child.

There lived, at this time, near Carigaline, one Robert Kelly, a blacksmith by trade. He was what is termed a handy man, and his abilities were held in much estimation by the lads and the lasses of the neighbourhood: for, independent of shoeing horses which he did to great perfection, and making plough-irons, he interpreted dreams for the young women, sung Arthur O’Bradley at their weddings, and was so good-natured a fellow at a christening, that he was gossip to half the country round.

Now it happened that Robin had a dream himself, and young Philip Ronayne appeared to him in it at the dead hour of the night. Robin thought he saw the boy mounted upon a beautiful white horse, and that he told him how he was made a page to the giant Mahon Mac Mahon, who had carried him off, and who held his court in the hard heart of the rock. “The seven years — my time of service, — are clean out, Robin,” said he, “and if you release me this night, I will be the making of you for ever after.”

“And how will I know,” said Robin — cunning enough, even in his sleep — “but this is all a dream?”

“Take that,” said the boy, “for a token” — and at the word the white horse struck out with one of his hind legs, and gave poor Robin such a kick in the forehead, that thinking he was a dead man, he roared as loud as he could after his brains, and woke up calling a thousand murders. He found himself in bed, but he had the mark of the blow, the regular print of a horse-shoe upon his forehead as red as blood; and Robin Kelly, who never before found himself puzzled at the dream of any other person, did not know what to think of his own.

Robin was well acquainted with the Giant's Stairs, as, indeed, who is not that knows the harbour? They consist of great masses of rock, which, piled one above another, rise like a flight of steps, from very deep water, against the bold cliff of Carrigmahon. Nor are they badly suited for stairs to those who have legs of sufficient length to stride over a moderate-sized house, or to enable them to clear the space of a mile in a hop, step, and jump. Both these feats the giant Mac Mahon was said to have performed in the days of Finnian glory; and the common tradition of the country placed his dwelling within the cliff up whose side the stairs led.

Such was the impression which the dream made on Robin, that he determined to put its truth to the test. It occurred to him, however, before setting out on this adventure, that a plough-iron may be no bad companion, as, from experience, he knew it was an excellent knock-down argument, having, on more occasions than one, settled a little disagreement very quietly: so, putting one on his shoulder, off he marched in the cool of the evening through Glaun a Thowk (the Hawk's Glen) to Monkstown. Here an old gossip of his (Tom Clancey by name) lived, who, on hearing Robin's dream, promised him the use of his skiff, and moreover offered to assist in rowing it to the Giant's Stairs.

After a supper which was of the best, they embarked. It was a beautiful still night, and the little boat glided swiftly along. The regular dip of the oars, the distant song of the sailor, and sometimes the voice of a belated traveller at the ferry of Carrigaloe, alone broke the quietness of the land and sea and sky. The tide was in their favour, and in a few minutes Robin and his gossip rested on their oars in the dark shadow of the Giant's Stairs. Robin looked anxiously for the entrance to the Giant's Palace, which, it was said, may be found by any one seeking it at midnight; but no such entrance could he see. His impatience had hurried him there before that time, and after waiting a considerable space in a state of suspense not to be described, Robin, with pure vexation, could not help exclaiming to his companion, "'Tis a pair of fools we are, Tom Clancey, for coming here at all on the strength of a dream."

"And whose doing is it," said Tom, "but your own?"

At the moment he spoke they perceived a faint glimmering light to proceed from the cliff, which gradually increased until a porch big enough for a king's palace unfolded itself almost on a level with the water. They pulled the skiff directly towards the opening, and Robin Kelly, seizing his plough-iron, boldly entered with a strong hand and a stout heart. Wild and strange was that entrance; the whole of which appeared formed of grim and grotesque faces, blending so strangely each with the other that it was impossible to define any: the chin of one formed the nose of another: what appeared to be a fixed and stern eye, if dwelt upon, changed to a gaping mouth; and the lines of the lofty forehead grew into a majestic and flowing beard. The more Robin allowed himself to contemplate the forms around him, the more terrific they became; and the stony expression of this crowd of faces assumed a savage ferocity as his imagination converted feature after feature into a different shape and character. Losing the twilight in which these indefinite forms were visible, he advanced through a dark and devious passage, whilst a deep and rumbling noise sounded as if the rock was about to close upon him and swallow him up alive for ever. Now, indeed, poor Robin felt afraid.

"Robin, Robin," said he, "if you were a fool for coming here, what in the name of fortune are you now?" But, as before, he had scarcely spoken, when he saw a small light twinkling through the darkness of the distance, like a star in the midnight sky. To retreat was out of the question; for so many turnings and windings were in the passage, that he considered he had but little chance of making his way back. He therefore proceeded towards the bit of light, and came at last into a spacious chamber, from the roof of which hung the solitary lamp that had guided him. Emerging from such profound gloom, the single lamp afforded Robin abundant light to discover several gigantic figures seated round a massive stone table as if in serious deliberation, but no word disturbed the breathless silence which prevailed. At the head of this table sat Mahon Mac Mahon himself, whose majestic beard had taken root, and in the course of ages grown into the stone slab. He was the first who perceived Robin; and instantly starting up, drew his long beard from out the huge lump of rock in such haste and with so sudden a jerk, that it was shattered into a thousand pieces.

"What seek you?" he demanded in a voice of thunder.

"I come," answered Robin, with as much boldness as he could put on — for his heart was almost fainting within him— "I come," said he, "to claim Philip Ronayne, whose time of service is out this night."

"And who sent you here?" said the giant.

"'Twas of my own accord I came," said Robin.

"Then you must single him out from among my pages," said the giant; "and if you fix on the wrong one your life is the forfeit. Follow me." He led Robin into a hall of vast extent and filled with lights; along either side of which were rows of beautiful children all apparently seven years old, and none beyond that age, dressed in green, and every one exactly dressed alike.

"Here," said Mahon, "you are free to take Philip Ronayne, if you will; but, remember, I give but one choice."

Robin was sadly perplexed; for there were hundreds upon hundreds of children; and he had no very clear recollection of the boy he sought. But he walked along the hall, by the side of Mahon, as if nothing was the matter, although his great iron dress clanked fearfully at every step, sounding louder than Robin's own sledge battering on his anvil.

They had nearly reached the end of the hall without speaking, when Robin, seeing that the only means he had was to make friends with the giant, determined to try what effect a few soft words might have upon him.

“’Tis a fine wholesome appearance the poor children carry,” remarked Robin, “although they have been here so long shut out from the fresh air and the blessed light of heaven. ’Tis tenderly your honour must have reared them!”

“Ay,” said the giant, “that is true for you; so give me your hand; for you are, I believe, a very honest fellow for a blacksmith.”

Robin at the first look did not much like the huge size of the hand, and therefore presented his plough-iron, which the giant seizing, twisted in his grasp round and round again as if it had been a potato-stalk; on seeing this all the children set up a shout of laughter. In the midst of their mirth Robin thought he heard his name called; and, all ear and eye, he put his hand on the boy who he fancied had spoken, crying out at the same time, “Let me live or die for it, but this is young Phil Ronayne.”

“It is Philip Ronayne — happy Philip Ronayne,” said his young companions; and in an instant the hall became dark. Crashing noises were heard, and all was in strange confusion: but Robin held fast his prize, and found himself lying in the gray dawn of the morning at the head of the Giant’s Stairs, with the boy clasped in his arms.

Robin had plenty of gossips to spread the story of his wonderful adventure — Passage, Monkstown, Ringaskiddy, Seamount, Carrigaline — the whole barony of Kerricurrihy rung with it.

“Are you quite sure, Robin, it is young Phil Ronayne, you have brought back with you?” was the regular question; for although the boy had been seven years away, his appearance now was just the same as on the day he was missed. He had neither grown taller nor older in look, and he spoke of things which had happened before he was carried off as one awakened from sleep, or as if they had occurred yesterday.

“Am I sure? Well, that’s a queer question,” was Robin’s reply; “seeing the boy has the blue eyes of the mother, with the foxy hair of the father, to say nothing of the *purly* wart on the right side of his little nose.”

However Robin Kelly may have been questioned, the worthy couple of Ronayne’s court doubted not that he was the deliverer of their child from the power of the giant Mac Mahon; and the reward they bestowed upon him equalled their gratitude.

Philip Ronayne lived to be an old man; and he was remarkable to the day of his death for his skill in working brass and iron, which it was believed he had learned during his seven years’ apprenticeship to the giant Mahon Mac Mahon.

And now, farewell! the fairy dream is o’er;
The tales my infancy had loved to hear,
Like blissful visions fade and disappear.
Such tales Momonia’s peasant tells no more!
Vanish’d are MERMAIDS from the sea beat shore;
Check’d is the Headless Horseman’s strange career;
Fir Darrig’s voice no longer mocks the ear,
Nor ROCKS bear wondrous imprints as of yore!
Such is “the march of mind.” But did the fays
(Creatures of whim — the gossamers of will)
In Ireland work such sorrow and such ill
As stormier spirits of our modern days?
Oh land beloved! no angry voice I raise:
My constant prayer— “may peace be with thee still!”

APPENDIX.

LETTER FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE AUTHOR OF THE IRISH FAIRY LEGENDS.

Sir,

I have been obliged by the courtesy which sent me your very interesting work on Irish superstitions, and no less by the amusement which it has afforded me, both from the interest of the stories, and the lively manner in which they are told. You are to consider this, Sir, as a high compliment from one, who holds him on the subject of elves, ghosts, visions, &c. nearly as strong as William Churne of Staffordshire —

"Who every year can mend your cheer
With tales both old and new."

The extreme similarity of your fictions to ours in Scotland, is very striking. The Cluricaune (which is an admirable subject for a pantomime) is not known here. I suppose the Scottish cheer was not sufficient to tempt to the hearth either him, or that singular demon called by Heywood the Buttery Spirit, which diminished the profits of an unjust landlord by eating up all that he cribbed for his guests.

The beautiful superstition of the banshee seems in a great measure peculiar to Ireland, though in some Highland families there is such a spectre, particularly in that of Mac Lean of Lochbuy; but I think I could match all your other tales with something similar.

I can assure you, however, that the progress of philosophy has not even yet entirely "pulled the old woman out of our hearts," as Addison expresses it. Witches are still held in reasonable detestation, although we no longer burn or even *score above the breath*. As for the water bull, they live who will take their oaths to having seen him emerge from a small lake on the boundary of my property here, scarce large enough to have held him, I should think. Some traits in his description seem to answer the hippopotamus, and these are always mentioned both in highland and lowland story: strange if we could conceive there existed, under a tradition so universal, some shadowy reference to those fossil bones of animals which are so often found in the lakes and bogs.

But to leave antediluvian stories for the freshest news from fairy land, I cannot resist the temptation to send you an account of King Oberon's court, which was verified before me as a magistrate, with all the solemnities of a court of justice, within this fortnight past. A young shepherd, a lad of about eighteen years of age, well brought up, and of good capacity, and, that I may be perfectly accurate, in the service of a friend, a most respectable farmer, at Oakwood, on the estate of Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden, made oath and said, that going to look after some sheep which his master had directed to be put upon turnips, and passing in the gray of the morning a small copse-wood adjacent to the river Etterick, he was surprised at the sight of four or five little personages, about two feet or thirty inches in height, who were seated under the trees, apparently in deep conversation. At this singular appearance he paused till he had refreshed his noble courage with a prayer and a few recollections of last Sunday's sermon, and then advanced to the little party. But observing that, instead of disappearing, they seemed to become yet more magnificently distinct than before, and now doubting nothing, from their foreign dresses and splendid decorations, that they were the choice ornaments of the fairy court, he fairly turned tail and went "to raise the water," as if the South'ron had made a raid. Others came to the rescue, and yet the fairy *cortege* awaited their arrival in still and silent dignity. I wish I could stop here, for the devil take all explanations, they stop duels and destroy the credit of apparitions, neither allow ghosts to be made in an honourable way, or to be believed in (poor souls!) when they revisit the glimpses of the moon.

I must however explain, like other honourable gentlemen, elsewhere. You must know, that, like our neighbours, we have a school of arts for our mechanics at G —— , a small manufacturing town in this country, and that the tree of knowledge there as elsewhere produces its usual crop of good and evil. The day before this avatar of Oberon was a fair-day at Selkirk, and amongst other popular divertisements, was one which, in former days, I would have called a puppet-show, and its master a puppet-showman. He has put me right, however, by informing me, that he writes himself *artist from Vauxhall*, and that he exhibits *fantoccini*; call them what you will, it seems they gave great delight to the unwashed artificers of G —— . Formerly they would have been contented to wonder and applaud, but not so were they satisfied in our modern days of investigation, for they broke into Punch's sanctuary forcibly, after he had been laid aside for the evening, made violent seizure of his person, and carried off him, his spouse, and heaven knows what captives besides, in their plaid nooks, to be examined at leisure. All this they literally did (forcing a door to accomplish their purpose) in the spirit of science alone, or but slightly stimulated by that of malt whisky, with which last we have been of late deluged. Cool reflection came as they retreated by the banks of the Etterick; they made the discovery that they could no more make Punch move than Lord —— could make him speak; and recollecting, I believe, that there was such a person as the Sheriff in the world, they abandoned their prisoners, in hopes, as they pretended, that they would be found and restored in safety to their proper owner.

It is only necessary to add that the artist had his losses made good by a subscription, and the scientific inquirers escaped with a small fine, as a warning not to indulge such an irregular spirit of research in future.

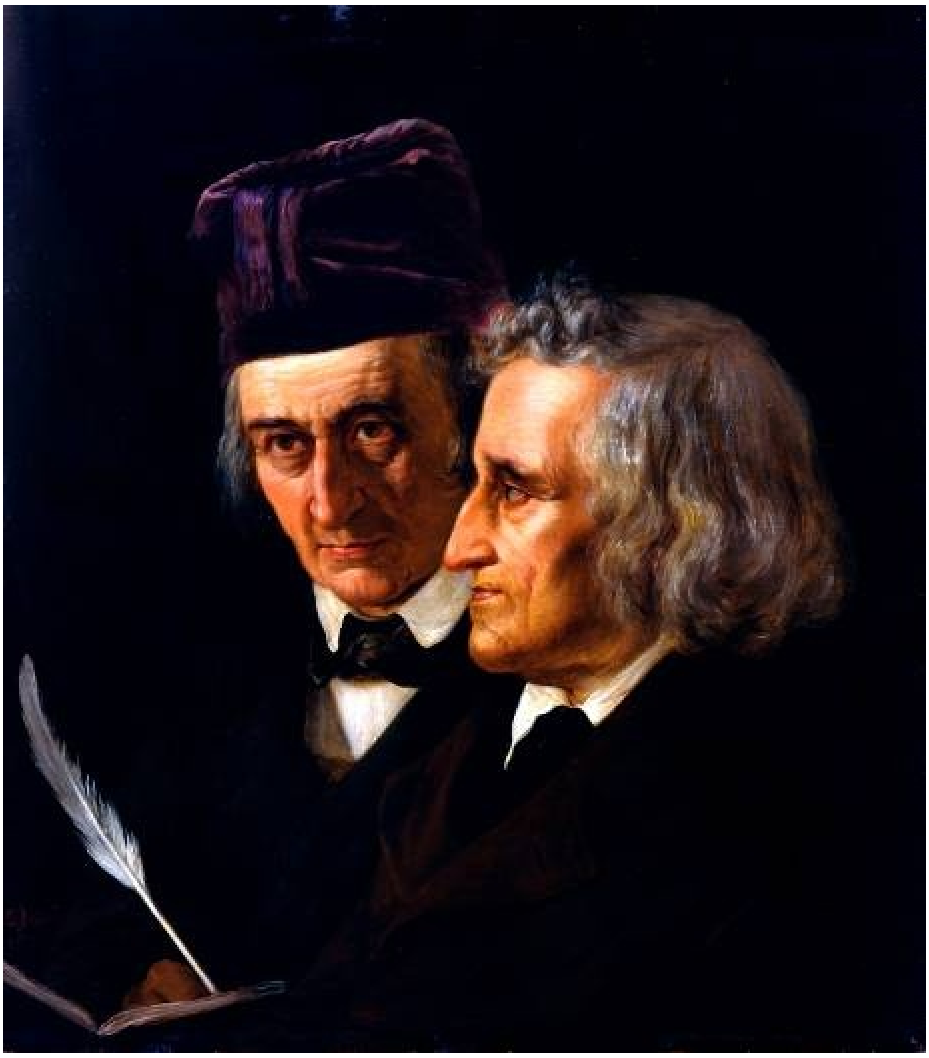
As this somewhat tedious story contains the very last news from fairy land, I hope you will give it acceptance, and beg you to believe me very much

Your obliged and thankful servant,
Walter Scott.

27th April, 1825.
Abbotsford, Melrose.

THE END

The Biography



Wilhelm Grimm (left) and Jacob Grimm by Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann, 1855

THE BROTHERS GRIMM by Henry Sweet

From '1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 12'

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JACOB LUDWIG CARL GRIMM

JACOB LUDWIG CARL GRIMM (1785-1863), German philologist and mythologist, was born on the 4th of January 1785 at Hanau, in Hesse-Cassel. His father, who was a lawyer, died while he was a child, and the mother was left with very small means; but her sister, who was lady of the chamber to the landgravine of Hesse, helped to support and educate her numerous family. Jacob, with his younger brother Wilhelm (born on the 24th of February 1786), was sent in 1798 to the public school at Cassel. In 1802 he proceeded to the university of Marburg, where he studied law, a profession for which he had been destined by his father. His brother joined him at Marburg a year later, having just recovered from a long and severe illness, and likewise began the study of law. Up to this time Jacob Grimm had been actuated only by a general thirst for knowledge and his energies had not found any aim beyond the practical one of making himself a position in life. The first definite impulse came from the lectures of Savigny, the celebrated investigator of Roman law, who, as Grimm himself says (in the preface to the *Deutsche Grammatik*), first taught him to realize what it meant to study any science. Savigny's lectures also awakened in him that love for historical and antiquarian investigation which forms the basis of all his work. Then followed personal acquaintance, and it was in Savigny's well-provided library that Grimm first turned over the leaves of Bodmer's edition of the Old German minnesingers and other early texts, and felt an eager desire to penetrate further into the obscurities and half-revealed mysteries of their language. In the beginning of 1805 he received an invitation from Savigny, who had removed to Paris, to help him in his literary work. Grimm passed a very happy time in Paris, strengthening his taste for the literatures of the middle ages by his studies in the Paris libraries. Towards the close of the year he returned to Cassel, where his mother and Wilhelm had settled, the latter having finished his studies. The next year he obtained a situation in the war office with the very small salary of 100 thalers. One of his grievances was that he had to exchange his stylish Paris suit for a stiff uniform and pigtail. But he had full leisure for the prosecution of his studies. In 1808, soon after the death of his mother, he was appointed superintendent of the private library of Jerome Buonaparte, king of Westphalia, into which Hesse-Cassel had been incorporated by Napoleon. Jerome appointed him an auditor to the state council, while he retained his other post. His salary was increased in a short interval from 2000 to 4000 francs, and his official duties were hardly more than nominal. After the expulsion of Jerome and the reinstalment of an elector, Grimm was appointed in 1813 secretary of legation, to accompany the Hessian minister to the headquarters of the allied army. In 1814 he was sent to Paris to demand restitution of the books carried off by the French, and in 1814-1815 he attended the congress of Vienna as secretary of legation. On his return he was again sent to Paris on the same errand as before. Meanwhile Wilhelm had received an appointment in the

Cassel library, and in 1816 Jacob was made second librarian under Völkel. On the death of Völkel in 1828 the brothers expected to be advanced to the first and second librarianships respectively, and were much dissatisfied when the first place was given to Rommel, keeper of the archives. So they removed next year to Göttingen, where Jacob received the appointment of professor and librarian, Wilhelm that of under-librarian. Jacob Grimm lectured on legal antiquities, historical grammar, literary history, and diplomatics, explained Old German poems, and commented on the *Germania* of Tacitus. At this period he is described as small and lively in figure, with a harsh voice, speaking a broad Hessian dialect. His powerful memory enabled him to dispense with the manuscript which most German professors rely on, and he spoke extempore, referring only occasionally to a few names and dates written on a slip of paper. He himself regretted that he had begun the work of teaching so late in life; and as a lecturer he was not successful: he had no idea of digesting his facts and suiting them to the comprehension of his hearers; and even the brilliant, terse and eloquent passages which abound in his writings lost much of their effect when jerked out in the midst of a long array of dry facts. In 1837, being one of the seven professors who signed a protest against the king of Hanover's abrogation of the constitution established some years before, he was dismissed from his professorship, and banished from the kingdom of Hanover. He returned to Cassel together with his brother, who had also signed the protest, and remained there till, in 1840, they accepted an invitation from the king of Prussia to remove to Berlin, where they both received professorships, and were elected members of the Academy of Sciences. Not being under any obligation to lecture, Jacob seldom did so, but together with his brother worked at the great dictionary. During their stay at Cassel Jacob regularly attended the meetings of the academy, where he read papers on the most varied subjects. The best known of these are those on Lachmann, Schiller, and his brother Wilhelm (who died in 1850), on old age, and on the origin of language. He also described his impressions of Italian and Scandinavian travel, interspersing his more general observations with linguistic details, as is the case in all his works.

Grimm died in 1863, working up to the last. He was never ill, and worked on all day, without haste and without pause. He was not at all impatient of interruption, but seemed rather to be refreshed by it, returning to his work without effort. He wrote for the press with great rapidity, and hardly ever made corrections. He never revised what he had written, remarking with a certain wonder of his brother, “Wilhelm reads his manuscripts over again before sending them to press!” His temperament was uniformly cheerful, and he was easily amused. Outside his own special work he had a marked taste for botany. The spirit which animated his work is best described by himself at the end of his autobiography. “Nearly all my labours have been devoted, either directly or indirectly, to the investigation of our earlier language, poetry and laws. These studies may have appeared to many, and may still appear, useless; to me they have always seemed a noble and earnest task, definitely and inseparably connected with our common fatherland, and calculated to foster the love of it. My principle has always been in these investigations to under-value nothing, but to utilize the small for the illustration of the great, the popular tradition for the elucidation of the written monuments.”

The purely scientific side of Grimm’s character developed slowly. He seems to have felt the want of definite principles of etymology without being able to discover them, and indeed even in the first edition of his grammar (1819) he seems to be often groping in the dark. As early as 1815 we find A. W. Schlegel reviewing the *Altdeutsche Wälder* (a periodical published by the two brothers) very severely, condemning the lawless etymological combinations it contained, and insisting on the necessity of strict philological method and a fundamental investigation of the laws of language, especially in the correspondence of sounds. This criticism is said to have had a considerable influence on the direction of Grimm’s studies.

The first work he published, *Über den altdeutschen Meistergesang* (1811), was of a purely literary character. Yet even in this essay Grimm showed that *Minnesang and Meistersang* were really one form of poetry, of which they merely represented different stages of development, and also announced his important discovery of the invariable division of the *Lied* into three strophic parts.

His text-editions were mostly prepared in common with his brother. In 1812 they published the two ancient fragments of the *Hildebrandslied* and the *Weissenbrunner Gebet*, Jacob having discovered what till then had never been suspected — the alliteration in these poems. However, Jacob had little taste for text-editing, and, as he himself confessed, the evolving of a critical text gave him little pleasure. He therefore left this department to others, especially Lachmann, who soon turned his brilliant critical genius, trained in the severe school of classical philology, to Old and Middle High German poetry and metre. Both brothers were attracted from the beginning by all national poetry, whether in the form of epics, ballads or popular tales. They published in 1816-1818 an analysis and critical sifting of the oldest epic traditions of the Germanic races under the title of *Deutsche Sagen*. At the same time they collected all the popular tales they could find, partly from the mouths of the people, partly from manuscripts and books, and published in 1812-1815 the first edition of those *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* which have carried the name of the brothers Grimm into every household of the civilized world, and founded the science of folk-lore. The closely allied subject of the satirical beast epic of the middle ages also had a great charm for Jacob Grimm, and he published an edition of the *Reinhart Fuchs* in 1834. His first contribution to mythology was the first volume of an edition of the Eddaic songs, undertaken conjointly with his brother, published in 1815, which, however, was not followed by any more. The first edition of his *Deutsche Mythologie* appeared in 1835. This great work covers the whole range of the subject, tracing the mythology and superstitions of the old Teutons back to the very dawn of direct evidence, and following their decay and loss down to the popular traditions, tales and expressions in which they still linger.

Although by the introduction of the Code Napoléon into Westphalia Grimm's legal studies were made practically barren, he never lost his interest in the scientific study of law and national institutions, as the truest exponents of the life and character of a people. By the publication (in 1828) of his *Rechtsalterthümer* he laid the foundations of that historical study of the old Teutonic laws and constitutions which was continued with brilliant success by Georg L. Maurer and others. In this work Grimm showed the importance of a linguistic study of the old laws, and the light that can be thrown on many a dark passage in them by a comparison of the corresponding words and expressions in the other old cognate dialects. He also knew how — and this is perhaps the most original and valuable part of his work — to trace the spirit of the laws in countless allusions and sayings which occur in the old poems and sagas, or even survive in modern colloquialisms.

Of all his more general works the boldest and most far-reaching is his *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, where at the same time the linguistic element is most distinctly brought forward. The subject of the work is, indeed, nothing less than the history which lies hidden in the words of the German language — the oldest national history of the Teutonic tribes determined by means of language. For this purpose he laboriously collects the scattered words and allusions to be found in classical writers, and endeavours to determine the relations in which the German language stood to those of the Getae, Thracians, Scythians, and many other nations whose languages are known only by doubtfully identified, often extremely corrupted remains preserved by Greek and Latin authors. Grimm's results have been greatly modified by the wider range of comparison and improved methods of investigation which now characterize linguistic science, and many of the questions raised by him will probably for ever remain obscure; but his book will always be one of the most fruitful and suggestive that have ever been written.

Grimm's famous *Deutsche Grammatik* was the outcome of his purely philological work. The labours of past generations — from the humanists onwards — had collected an enormous mass of materials in the shape of text-editions, dictionaries and grammars, although most of it was uncritical and often untrustworthy. Something had even been done in the way of comparison and the determination of general laws, and the conception of a comparative Teutonic grammar had been clearly grasped by the illustrious Englishman George Hickes, at the beginning of the 18th century, and partly carried out by him in his *Thesaurus*. Ten Kate in Holland had afterwards made valuable contributions to the history and comparison of the Teutonic languages. Even Grimm himself did not at first intend to include all the languages in his grammar; but he soon found that Old High German postulated Gothic, that the later stages of German could not be understood without the help of the Low German dialects, including English, and that the rich literature of Scandinavia could as little be ignored. The first edition of the first part of the *Grammar*, which appeared in 1819, and is now extremely rare, treated of the inflections of all these languages, together with a general introduction, in which he vindicated the importance of an historical study of the German language against the a priori, quasi-philosophical methods then in vogue.

In 1822 this volume appeared in a second edition — really a new work, for, as Grimm himself says in the preface, it cost him little reflection to mow down the first crop to the ground. The wide distance between the two stages of Grimm's development in these two editions is significantly shown by the fact that while the first edition gives only the inflections, in the second volume phonology takes up no fewer than 600 pages, more than half of the whole volume. Grimm had, at last, awakened to the full conviction that all sound philology must be based on rigorous adhesion to the laws of sound-change, and he never afterwards swerved from this principle, which gave to all his investigations, even in their boldest flights, that iron-bound consistency, and that force of conviction which distinguish science from dilettanteism; up to Grimm's time philology was nothing but a more or less laborious and conscientious dilettanteism, with occasional flashes of scientific inspiration; he made it into a science. His advance must be attributed mainly to the influence of his contemporary R. Rask. Rask was born two years later than Grimm, but his remarkable precocity gave him somewhat the start. Even in Grimm's first editions his Icelandic paradigms are based entirely on Rask's grammar, and in his second edition he relied almost entirely on Rask for Old English. His debt to Rask can only be estimated at its true value by comparing his treatment of Old English in the two editions; the difference is very great. Thus in the first edition he declines *dœg*, *dœges*, plural *dœgas*, not having observed the law of vowel-change pointed out by Rask. There can be little doubt that the appearance of Rask's Old English grammar was a main inducement for him to recast his work from the beginning. To Rask also belongs the merit of having first distinctly formulated the laws of sound-correspondence in the different languages, especially in the vowels, those more fleeting elements of speech which had hitherto been ignored by etymologists.

This leads to a question which has been the subject of much controversy, — Who discovered what is known as *Grimm's law*? This law of the correspondence of consonants in the older Indo-germanic, Low and High German languages respectively was first fully stated by Grimm in the second edition of the first part of his grammar. The correspondence of single consonants had been more or less clearly recognized by several of his predecessors; but the one who came nearest to the discovery of the complete law was the Swede J. Ihre, who established a considerable number of "literarum permutationes," such as *b* for *f*, with the examples *bœra* = *ferre*, *befwer* = *fiber*. Rask, in his essay on the origin of the Icelandic language, gives the same comparisons, with a few additions and corrections, and even the very same examples in most cases. As Grimm in the preface to his first edition expressly mentions this essay of Rask, there is every probability that it gave the first impulse to his own investigations. But there is a wide difference between the isolated permutations of his predecessors and the comprehensive generalizations under which he himself ranged them. The extension of the law to High German is also entirely his own. The only fact that can be adduced in support of the assertion that Grimm wished to deprive Rask of his claims to priority is that he does not expressly mention Rask's results in his second edition. But this is part of the plan of his work, viz. to refrain from all controversy or reference to the works of others. In his first edition he expressly calls attention to Rask's essay, and praises it most ungrudgingly. Rask himself refers as little to Ihre, merely alluding in a general way to Ihre's permutations, although his own debt to Ihre is infinitely greater than that of Grimm to Rask or any one else. It is true that a certain bitterness of feeling afterwards sprang up between Grimm and Rask, but this was the fault of the latter, who, impatient of contradiction and irritable in controversy, refused to acknowledge the value of Grimm's views when they involved modification of his own. The importance of Grimm's generalization in the history of philology cannot be overestimated, and even the mystic completeness and symmetry of its formulation, although it has proved a hindrance to the correct explanation of the causes of the changes, was well calculated to strike the popular mind, and give it a vivid idea of the paramount importance of law, and the necessity of disregarding mere superficial resemblance. The most lawless etymologist bows down to the authority of Grimm's law, even if he honours it almost as much in the breach as in the observance.

The grammar was continued in three volumes, treating principally of derivation, composition and syntax, which last was left unfinished. Grimm then began a third edition, of which only one part, comprising the vowels, appeared in 1840, his time being afterwards taken up mainly by the dictionary. The grammar stands alone in the annals of science for comprehensiveness, method and fullness of detail. Every law, every letter, every syllable of inflection in the different languages is illustrated by an almost exhaustive mass of material. It has served as a model for all succeeding investigators. Diez's grammar of the Romance languages is founded entirely on its methods, which have also exerted a profound influence on the wider study of the Indo-Germanic languages in general.

In the great German dictionary Grimm undertook a task for which he was hardly suited. His exclusively historical tendencies made it impossible for him to do justice to the individuality of a living language; and the disconnected statement of the facts of language in an ordinary alphabetical dictionary fatally mars its scientific character. It was also undertaken on so large a scale as to make it impossible for him and his brother to complete it themselves. The dictionary, as far as it was worked out by Grimm himself, may be described as a collection of disconnected antiquarian essays of high value.

Grimm's scientific character is notable for its combination of breadth and unity. He was as far removed from the narrowness of the specialist who has no ideas, no sympathies beyond some one author, period or corner of science, as from the shallow dabbler who feverishly attempts to master the details of half-a-dozen discordant pursuits. Even within his own special studies there is the same wise concentration; no Mezzofanti-like parrot display of useless polyglottism. The very foundations of his nature were harmonious; his patriotism and love of historical investigation received their fullest satisfaction in the study of the language, traditions, mythology, laws and literature of his own countrymen and their nearest kindred. But from this centre his investigations were pursued in every direction as far as his unerring instinct of healthy limitation would allow. He was equally fortunate in the harmony that subsisted between his intellectual and moral nature. He made cheerfully the heavy sacrifices that science demands from its disciples, without feeling any of that envy and bitterness which often torment weaker natures; and although he lived apart from his fellow men, he was full of human sympathies, and no man has ever exercised a profounder influence on the destinies of mankind. His was the very ideal of the noblest type of German character.

The following is a complete list of his separately published works, those which he published in common with his brother being marked with a star. For a list of his essays in periodicals, &c., see vol. v. of his *Kleinere Schriften*, from which the present list is taken. His life is best studied in his own "Selbstbiographie," in vol. i. of the *Kleinere Schriften*. There is also a brief memoir by K. Gödeke in *Göttinger Professoren* (Gotha (Perthes), 1872): *Über den altdeutschen Meistergesang* (Göttingen, 1811); **Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Berlin, 1812-1815) (many editions); **Das Lied von Hildebrand und das Weissenbrunner Gebet* (Cassel, 1812); *Altdeutsche Wälder* (Cassel, Frankfort, 1813-1816, 3 vols.); **Der arme Heinrich von Hartmann von der Aue* (Berlin, 1815); *Irmenstrasse und Irmensäule* (Vienna, 1815); **Die Lieder der alten Edda* (Berlin, 1815), *Silva de romances viejos* (Vienna, 1815); **Deutsche Sagen* (Berlin, 1816-1818, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1865-1866); *Deutsche Grammatik* (Göttingen, 1819, 2nd ed., Göttingen, 1822-1840) (reprinted 1870 by W. Scherer, Berlin); *Wuk Stephanovitsch's kleine serbische Grammatik, verdeutscht mit einer Vorrede* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1824); *Zur Recension der deutschen Grammatik* (Cassel, 1826); **Irische Elfenmärchen, aus dem Englischen* (Leipzig, 1826); *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* (Gottingen, 1828, 2nd ed 1854); *Hymnorum veteris ecclesiae XXVI. interpretatio theodisca* (Göttingen, 1830); *Reinhart Fuchs* (Berlin, 1834); *Deutsche Mythologie* (Göttingen, 1835, 3rd ed., 1854, 2 vols.); *Taciti Germania edidit* (Göttingen, 1835); *Über meine Entlassung* (Basel, 1838); (together with Schmeller) *Lateinische Gedichte des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1838); *Sendschreiben an Karl Lachmann über Reinhart Fuchs* (Berlin, 1840); *Weistümer*, Th. i. (Göttingen, 1840) (continued, partly by others, in 5 parts, 1840-1869); *Andreas und Elene* (Cassel, 1840); *Frau Aventure* (Berlin, 1842); *Geschtchte der deutschen*

Sprache (Leipzig, 1848, 3rd ed., 1868, 2 vols.); *Das Wort des Besitzes* (Berlin, 1850); **Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Bd. i. (Leipzig 1854); *Rede auf Wilhelm Grimm und Rede über das Alter* (Berlin, 1868, 3rd ed., 1865); *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin, 1864-1870, 5 vols.).

WILHELM CARL GRIMM

WILHELM CARL GRIMM (1786-1859). For the chief events in the life of Wilhelm Grimm see article on Jacob Grimm above. As Jacob himself said in his celebrated address to the Berlin Academy on the death of his brother, the whole of their lives were passed together. In their schooldays they had one bed and one table in common, as students they had two beds and two tables in the same room, and they always lived under one roof, and had their books and property in common. Nor did Wilhelm's marriage in any way disturb their harmony. As Cleasby said ("Life of Cleasby," prefixed to his *Icelandic Dictionary*, p. lxix.), "they both live in the same house, and in such harmony and community that one might almost imagine the children were common property." Wilhelm's character was a complete contrast to that of his brother. As a boy he was strong and healthy, but as he grew up he was attacked by a long and severe illness, which left him weak all his life. His was a less comprehensive and energetic mind than that of his brother, and he had less of the spirit of investigation, preferring to confine himself to some limited and definitely bounded field of work; he utilized everything that bore directly on his own studies, and ignored the rest. These studies were almost always of a literary nature. It is characteristic of his more aesthetic nature that he took great delight in music, for which his brother had but a moderate liking, and had a remarkable gift of story-telling. Cleasby, in the account of his visit to the brothers, quoted above, tells that "Wilhelm read a sort of farce written in the Frankfort dialect, depicting the 'malheurs' of a rich Frankfort tradesman on a holiday jaunt on Sunday. It was very droll, and he read it admirably." Cleasby describes him as "an uncommonly animated, jovial fellow." He was, accordingly, much sought in society, which he frequented much more than his brother.

His first work was a spirited translation of the Danish *Kampeviser, Altdänische Heldenlieder*, published in 1811-1813, which made his name at first more widely known than that of his brother. The most important of his text editions are — *Ruolandslied* (Göttingen, 1838); *Konrad von Würzburg's Goldene Schmiede* (Berlin, 1840); *Grave Ruodolf* (Göttingen, 1844, 2nd ed.); *Athis und Prophilias* (Berlin, 1846); *Altdeutsche Gespräche* (Berlin, 1851); *Freidank* (Göttingen, 1860, 2nd ed.). Of his other works the most important is *Deutsche Heldensage* (Berlin, 1868, 2nd ed.). His *Deutsche Runen* (Göttingen, 1821) has now only an historical interest. (H. Sw.)

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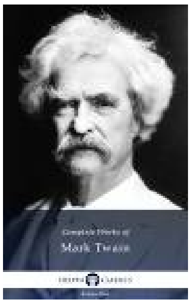

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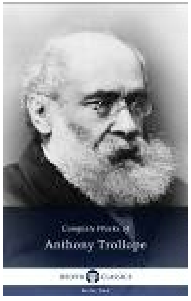

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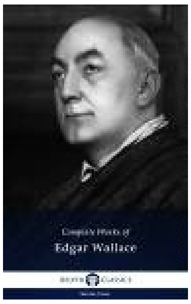
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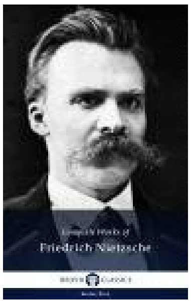

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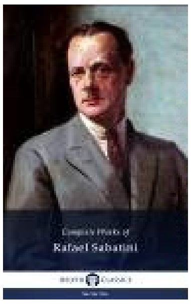

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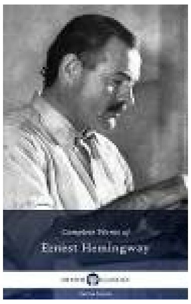

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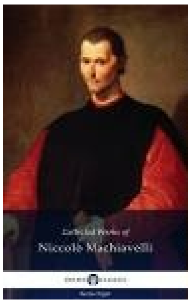

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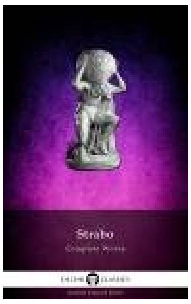

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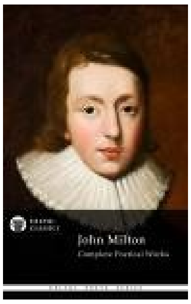

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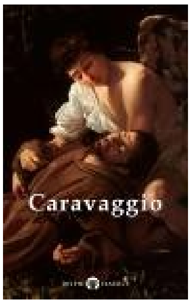

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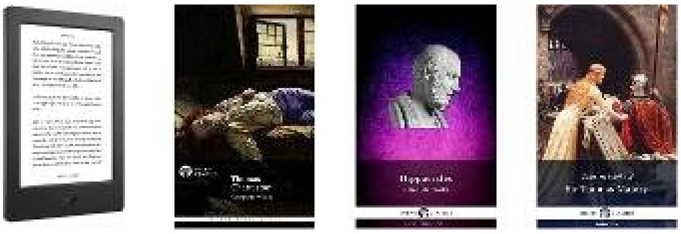

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George Gissing
George Herbert
George MacDonald
George Meredith
George Orwell
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Gertrude Stein
Gilbert and Sullivan
Giotto
Giovanni Bellini
Grant Allen
Gustav Klimt
Gustave Courbet
Gustave Flaubert (English)
Guy Boothby
Guy de Maupassant
H. G. Wells
H. P. Lovecraft
H. Rider Haggard
Hafez
Hall Caine
Hans Christian Andersen

Harriet Beecher Stowe
Heinrich Heine
Henrik Ibsen
Henry David Thoreau
Henry Fielding
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
Henry James
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Henryk Sienkiewicz
Herman Melville
Herodotus
Hesiod
Hieronymus Bosch
Hilaire Belloc
Hippocrates
Homer
Honoré de Balzac (English)
Horace
Horace Walpole
Hugh Walpole
Ian Fleming
Immanuel Kant
Isaac Rosenberg
Isocrates
Ivan Turgenev
J. M. Barrie
J. M. W. Turner
J. W. von Goethe (English)
Jack London
Jacques-Louis David
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
James Fenimore Cooper
James Joyce
James Russell Lowell
Jane Austen
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Jerome K. Jerome
Johan Ludvig Runeberg
Johannes Vermeer
John Buchan
John Bunyan
John Clare
John Constable
John Donne
John Dryden
John Galsworthy

John Keats
John Locke
John Milton
John Muir
John Ruskin
John Webster
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester
Jonathan Swift
Joseph Addison
Joseph Addison
Joseph Conrad
Josephus
Jules Verne
Julius Caesar
Juvenal
Kahlil Gibran
Karl Marx
Kate Chopin
Katherine Mansfield
Kenneth Grahame
L. Frank Baum
L. M. Montgomery
Lafcadio Hearn
Laurence Sterne
Leigh Hunt
Leo Tolstoy
Leonardo da Vinci
Lewis Carroll
Livy
Longus
Lord Byron
Lord Dunsany
Louisa May Alcott
Lucan
Lucian
Lucretius
Ludovico Ariosto
Luís de Camões
Lytton Strachey
M. E. Braddon
M. R. James
Marcel Proust (English)
Marcus Aurelius
Margaret Oliphant
Maria Edgeworth
Marie Corelli

Mark Twain
Martial
Mary Shelley
Mary Wollstonecraft
Matthew Arnold
Matthew Prior
Maxim Gorky
Michael Drayton
Michel de Montaigne
Michelangelo
Miguel de Cervantes
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Niccolò Machiavelli
Nikolai Gogol
Nikolai Nekrasov
Nonnus
O. Henry
Oliver Goldsmith
One Thousand and One Nights
Oscar Wilde
Ouida
Ovid
Paul Cézanne
Paul Gauguin
Paul Klee
Paul Laurence Dunbar
Pausanias
Percy Bysshe Shelley
Peter Paul Rubens
Petrarch
Petronius
Piero della Francesca
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Pieter Bruegel the Elder
Pindar
Plato
Plautus
Pliny the Elder
Pliny the Younger
Plotinus
Plutarch
Polybius
Procopius
Propertius
Quintus Curtius Rufus
Quintus Smyrnaeus

R. Austin Freeman
R. M. Ballantyne
Radclyffe Hall
Rafael Sabatini
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Raphael
Rembrandt van Rijn
René Descartes
Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Richard Marsh
Robert Browning
Robert Burns
Robert E. Howard
Robert Frost
Robert Louis Stevenson
Robert Southey
Robert W. Chambers
Rudyard Kipling
Rumi
Rupert Brooke
Saki
Sallust
Samuel Butler
Samuel Johnson
Samuel Pepys
Samuel Richardson
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Sandro Botticelli
Sappho
Sax Rohmer
Seneca the Younger
Septuagint
Sextus Empiricus
Sheridan Le Fanu
Sidonius
Sigmund Freud
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Sir Issac Newton
Sir Philip Sidney
Sir Richard Burton
Sir Thomas Malory
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Sir Walter Raleigh
Sir Walter Scott
Sophocles
Stanley J. Weyman

Statius
Stendhal
Stephen Crane
Strabo
Suetonius
T. S. Eliot
Tacitus
Talbot Mundy
Terence
The Brontës
The Brothers Grimm
Theocritus
Theodore Dreiser
Thomas Babington Macaulay
Thomas Carlyle
Thomas Chatterton
Thomas De Quincey
Thomas Gainsborough
Thomas Gray
Thomas Hardy
Thomas Hardy (poetry)
Thomas Hood
Thomas Middleton
Thomas Moore
Thucydides
Tibullus
Tintoretto
Titian
Tobias Smollett
Torquato Tasso
Varro
Victor Hugo
Vincent van Gogh
Virgil
Virginia Woolf
Voltaire
W. B. Yeats
W. Somerset Maugham
W. W. Jacobs
Walt Whitman
Walter Pater
Walter Savage Landor
Washington Irving
Wassily Kandinsky
Wilfred Owen
Wilkie Collins

William Blake
William Cowper
William Dean Howells
William Harrison Ainsworth
William Hazlitt
William Hope Hodgson
William Makepeace Thackeray
William Morris
William Shakespeare
William Wordsworth
Xenophon
Zane Grey

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Old St. Matthew's Churchyard, Schöneberg, Berlin — the final resting place of the Brothers Grimm

HIER LIEGT
HERMANN GRIMM
HIER LIEGT
RUDOLF GRIMM
HIER LIEGT
WILHELM GRIMM
HIER LIEGT
JACOB GRIMM

The graves of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, as well as three children of Wilhelm